

Signing the Farm Away.

FINX old farm, for a hundred years
Kept in the family name;
Cornfields rich with golden ears
Oft as the harvest came:
Crowded barn and crowded bin
And still the loads keep coming in—
Rolling in for a hundred years;
And the fourth in the family line appears.

Orchards covered the slopes of the hill;
Cider—forty barrels, they say—
Sure in season to come from the mill,
To be tasted round Thanksgiving Day!
And they drank as they worked, and they
drank as they ate—

Winter and summer, early and late—
Counting it as a great mishap
To be found "without a barrel on tap."

But, while the season crept along,
And passions to habits grew,
Their appetites became as strong
As ever a drunkard knew,
And they laboured less and squandered
more,

Chiefly for rum at the village store;
Till called by the sheriff one bitter day,
To sign the homestead farm away.

The father, shattered and scented with rum,
The mother, sick and pale, and thin,
Under the weight of her sorrows dumb,
In debt for the bed she was lying in.
Oh, I saw the wrecked household around
her stand—

And the justice lifted her trembling hand,
Helping her, as in her pain she lay,
To sign the homestead farm away.

Ah, how she wept! And the flood of tears
Swept down the temples bare;
And the father, already bowed with years,
Bowed lower with despair.
Drink! Drink! It has ripened into woe
From them and all they loved below,
And forced them, poor, and old and gray,
To sign the homestead farm away.

Conscience at the Anvil.

It was a dreary day in late winter.
There were wearisome gray clouds
overhead, and dull brown, half-melted
ridges of snow and ice under foot. In
the great iron foundry at M—the
men strode to and fro before the forges,
bared their swarthy arms to the work,
thrust huge glowing bars of metal into
the panting fires, and swung their
ponderous hammers—clang! clang!
clang! The noise of the blows and of
the ponderous machinery was so great
that talking was impossible. A hoarse
direction shouted now and then by the
overseer, with gestures of the hand
that the workers understood, was all.
At an anvil a little removed from the
central uproar stood a solitary man
fashioning a piece of iron into a shape
not unlike that of the rubber bands
sold by stationers for small parcels,
only it was over a foot long and almost
as thick as your wrist. The iron was
held tight by a pair of tongs, and was
glowing red, the sparks flying in a
constant shower as the skilful blows
fell swiftly and surely. The workman
himself was a quiet looking man, with
tightly set lips; almost sullen, you
would have said.

"Well, well," he muttered to him-
self, turning the hot iron and com-
mencing on the other side, "it's the
same old story. Pound, pound from
morning till night—no rest, no change,
no hope. I'm of no importance in

the world—it makes no difference
whether I live or die—ah!—"

He stopped suddenly, and bent
closely over the article he was shaping.
You and I would have noticed nothing
particular, but this man was evidently
puzzled. He struck the iron two or
three sharp blows, listening intently to
the sound it gave back. Then he
frowned, and poised it a moment on
the end of his tongs. The other men
were accustomed to laugh at him be-
cause he was so particular about his
workmanship in little things. Two or
three of them glanced at him now as
he stood that instant, undecided.

"Let it go, John," called one of
them over his shoulder. "One out of
a thousand won't make any differ-
ence."

But John had decided. "It's a flaw,"
he said, "I won't risk it." And,
flinging away the iron loop on a heap
of refuse metal, he patiently began
his work over again, this time com-
pleting it, as he had hundreds of others,
successfully.

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Three years passed away. It was
winter again, and the northeast wind,
roaring through the sky from the far-
off forests of Labrador, rolling huge,
foaming waves from mid-ocean against
the rocky coasts of New England, un-
roofing houses, uprooting trees, sweep-
ing over lonely lakes; and, joining its
cry with the howl of the wolf and the
cracking of ice floes, turned the night
into a tumult of darkness and doleful
uproar dreadful to hear. On the
western tracks of the A. M. & S. Rail-
road, the late express was running at
full speed. It had been delayed by
the high wind, and the engineer was
making up time. Twenty, thirty,
thirty-five miles an hour into the black
night, with only a glow from the
headlight on the steel rails, a few
hundred feet in advance of the loco-
motive, as it plunged forward faster
than ever. The fireman plied his
furnace with coal, shovelful after
shovelful. Now a few lights, dotting
the darkness, from comfortable fire-
sides in small country villages. The
engine slack its pace slightly, shrieks
at the station-master with his waving
lantern, and dashes on at thirty-eight
miles an hour. The engineer, with one
hand on the polished bar before him,
glances alternately at the steam-gauge
and the track ahead. The wind is
blowing more fiercely than ever, but he
knows nothing of that; he thinks only
of the hot, bounding, roaring creature
on whose back he rides on into the
night at forty miles an hour.

The passengers in the train are most
of them asleep. There is a baggage
and mail car, in which a few men are
at work; but in the Pullman cars be-
hind are over a hundred souls, trust-
fully awaiting the end of their journey.
There are fathers hurrying home to
their children; boys and girls with
their heads upon the rocking pillow,
dreaming of fir-trees and lights and

bright gifts, for it is just after Christ-
mas. One of the passengers has a
little girl nestling close beside him;
her mother left her for Christ's country
last week, and now she alone is left to
him. As the rails rattle beneath the
flying wheels of the train, the man be-
comes uneasy and holds the little girl
more tightly. Then he takes out his
watch and calculates the speed.

"I wonder—" he says slowly. "I
wonder—"

Crash—h—h!

Darkness, wild cries—the car dash-
ing furiously over timbers and wreck
of rail and platform like a ship upon
the rocks; screams, prayers, groans;
a terrible sideways lurch and a pro-
longed creaking of strained iron and
wood above the shrill cries of men,
women, and children. The dead, awful
stillness. One by one the terrified, half-
dressed, trembling passengers make
their way over the slanting floor of the
car, and out through the broken doors
and windows into the cold night air.

As lights began to flash upon the
scene, the bravest hid their faces and
turned pale. In the valley, far below,
as if they were looking down from a
lofty church belfry, lay the monster of
steam and iron which a few moments
before was bounding homeward with
them in apparent safety and sure
speed. Beside it were heaped the ruins
of the mail car; and on the verge of
the embankment, leaning dizzily over
those awful depths, rested the forward
Pullman. What held it back? The
locomotive left the rails and plunged
over the embankment seventy-five feet
down to the bottom, turning com-
pletely over in its course and dragging
the mail car after it. Only one man
was killed, though the train was
crowded; the forward Pullman would
have gone over after the mail car, had
it not been held back by the link
which coupled it to the next car.

So the report flew over the wires the
next morning, and so you can read it
in the newspapers, if you like. And
what of the obscure iron-worker who
would not let that iron link pass his
hands until it was perfect—a true and
honest piece of work? No one knows
his name. He never will know in this
world how that faithful half-hour saved
sixscore human lives. But there is
one who knows, and who does not for-
get the humblest, every-day duty-doing
of his children. He who said: "Thou
hast been faithful over a few things, I
will make thee ruler over many things;
enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

A Life Worth Living.

THIRTY years ago the region about
London docks contained as large a
heathen population as any district in
Africa. Back of the huge warehouses
were "innumerable courts and alleys
filled with fog and dirt, and every
horror of sight, sound and smell. It
was a rendezvous for the lowest types
of humanity." The wealthy and influ-
ential class in this settlement were the
rumsellers and keepers of gambling

hells. Children were born and grew
to middle age in these precincts who
never had heard the name of Christ,
except in an oath. Thirty thousand
souls were included in one parish here,
but the clergymen never ventured out
of the church to teach.

A young man named Charles Low-
der, belonging to an old English family,
happened to pass through this district
just after leaving Oxford. His class-
mates were going into politics, or the
army, or to the bar, full of ambition
and hope to make a name in the world;
but Lowder heard, as he said, "a cry
of mingled agony, suffering, laughter,
and blasphemy coming from these
depths that rang in his ears, go where
he would." He resolved to give up
all other work in the world to help
these people. He took a house in one
of the lowest slums, and lived in it.
"It is only one of themselves that they
will hear, not patronizing visitors." He
preached every day in the streets
and for months was pelted with brick-
bats, shot at, and driven back with
curses. He had, unfortunately, no
eloquence with which to reach them;
he was a slow, stammering speaker,
but he was bold, patient and in earnest.
Year after year he lived among them.
Even the worst ruffian learned to re-
spect the tall, thin curate, whom he
saw stopping the worst street-fights,
facing mobs, or nursing the victims of
Asiatic cholera.

Mr. Lowder lived in London docks
for twenty-three years. Night-schools
were opened, industrial schools and
refuges for drunkards, discharged pris-
oners and fallen women. A large
church was built, and several mission
chapels. His chief assistants in this
work were the men and women whom
he had rescued from "the paths that
abut on hell." A visitor to the church
said: "The congregation differs from
others in that they are all in such
deadly earnest."

Mr. Lowder broke down under his
work, and rapidly grew into an old,
careworn man. He died in a village
in the Tyrol, whither he had gone for
a month's rest. He was brought back
to the docks where he had worked so
long. Across the bridge where he had
once been chased by a furious mob
bent on his murder, his body was rever-
ently carried, while the police were
obliged to keep back the crowds of
sobbing people who pressed forward to
catch the last glimpse of "Father
Lowder," as they called him. "No
such funeral," says a London paper,
"has ever been seen in England. The
whole population of east London turned
out, stopping work for that day. The
special trains run to Chiselmhurst were
filled, and thousands followed on foot—
miserable men and women whom he
had lifted up from barbarism to life
and hope."

There are many careers open to
young men on entering the world, but
there are none nobler or that lead more
directly to heaven than that of this
modern crusader.—*Youth's Companion*,