

CHILDREN AND FORBID THEM NOT TO COME

PEACE ON EARTH

GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN

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THE DRUNKARD'S CHILD.

BY R. P. S.

She sleeps upon an outside stair,
Although the night is bleak,
And on a hard and stone-propped board
She pillows her pale cheek.

The door is closed. Within the house
No sound of life, no light.
Why sleeps the little girl outside
On such a bitter night?

Alas! the answer tells a tale
Repeated oft each day,

And will be told while over men
Drink wields despotic sway.

Nine years ago John Somerville
Was married to Jane Brown;
And for a while a happier pair
Lived not in Barlow town.

John toiled from morn till night; he was
A carpenter by trade,
And unto no one in the shop
Were higher wages paid.

Jane loved not illness; she kept
Her children neat and clean;
And for the house—a tidier home
Has never yet been seen.

John's wages were not very great,
But she with frugal care,
Had for the savings bank each week
A tidy sum to spare.

When her loved husband from his toil
At evening's hour returned,
Her smiles were brighter than the fire
That on the clear hearth burned.

And as he sat within its warmth
And drank his cup of tea,
Surrounded by his happy wife
And merry children three,

It seemed as if their lives would pass
Like some sweet summer day,
When, without cloud or rain, the hours
Roll pleasantly away.

A sad change came. John took to drink;
Wages grew less and less;
The once glad home became a scene
Of want and sore distress.

Sickness and death soon followed want;
Their youngest daughter died;
And in another month their boy
Was buried by her side.

Only poor little Nell was left
To see, for many years,
Her father's wild and wicked ways,
Her mother's woe and tears.

Then came Nell's time of bitter grief—
Her mother passed away,
Killed by the sorrow and distress
She suffered day by day.

Her death wrought ne'er a change on John:
He went from bad to worse;
Seldom was food within his door,
Or money in his purse.

For days he never worked, for nights
His drear home saw him not;
Poor Nellie mourned his wicked ways
And her own weary lot.

Nell sleeps. The midnight hour is past.
Hark! 'tis her father's tread.
She stirs not, but lies cold and pale
As if she had been dead.

While staggering he gropes his way
Unto the outside stair,
The moon breaks through a cloud and shows
His daughter lying there.

He starts and groans, and for a while
Stands conscience-struck and dumb;
She opens her eyes and faintly sighs,
"Father, I'm glad you're come."

He bears her in and chafes her limbs,
Kisses her pale cold brow,
And weeping, calls himself hard names,
Ah! he is sobered now.

"Father," again in pain she speaks,
"I came out to the stair;
I could not stay within the house,
All was so lonely there."

"I fell asleep and dreamed I saw
My mother standing by;
She looked on me with such a look
Of pity in her eye!