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THE LOST FOUND.

From the *Troy Temperance Mirror*.

We had frequently observed a heart broken looking lad pass by with a gallon oil can in his hand. His tattered garments and his melancholy face were well calculated to excite observation and pity. It was but too evident that the vessel which he carried had been diverted from its legitimate use, and that it was now used, not as an oil can, but as a whiskey jug. Having seen him pass twice in one day with his ever-present can, we had the curiosity to accost him, and did so by enquiring his place of residence. "I live," said he, "five miles from the city, on the road."

"You have been to the city once before to-day, have you not?"

"Yes, sir, I came down in the morning; but I couldn't get what I was sent for, and I had to come again."

"What was you sent for, my lad? It must be something very important to make it necessary for you to walk twenty miles in this storm."

"Why, sir, it was whiskey that I was sent for. Father had no money, and he sent me to Mr.——'s to get trusted; but he wouldn't trust any more, so I had to go home without the whiskey; but father sent me back a rain."

"How do you expect to get it now, when you couldn't get it in the morning?"

"Why, sir, I have a pair of shoes which sister sent mother. Mr.—— will give whiskey for them. He has got two or three pairs of Mother's shoes, now."

"Do you like to carry whiskey home my boy?"

"Oh, no sir, for it makes us all so unhappy; but I can't help it."

We took the responsibility of advising the boy not to fulfil his errand, and returned home with him. The family we found consisted of a husband, wife and four children; the oldest (the boy) was not more than ten years of age, while the youngest was an infant of a few months. It was a cold, blustering day. The North wind blew harshly, and came, roughly and unbidden, through the numberless crevices of the poor man's hovel. A few black embers occupied the fire-place, around which were huddled the half-starved children, and the woe stricken mother and wife. Her face was haggard—her eyes sunken—her hair dishevelled—her clothes tattered and unclean.

She was seated upon an old broken chair, and was mechanically swinging to and fro, as if endeavouring to quiet her infant, which moaned pitifully in its mother's arms. She had been sick from its birth, and it was now seemingly struggling to free itself from the harsh world into which it had but a few months previous, been ushered. There was a tear in the eye of the mother, as she gazed on the ex-acting babe. The fountain had been, long before, dried up by the internal fires which alcohol had kindled and fed. She was the picture of despair; and we could not but pity, as she sat thus, that her mind was wandering back to the happy past—the days of her infancy and girlhood, and her early home.—Poor thing! She had given her affections and her hand to a man who had taken the first steps

in intemperance. She had left her home full of buoyant hopes—hopes never to be realized—to spend a life of misery with a sot. Broken-hearted—cast out from the society of her former friends—frowned upon by the "good society" humane—spoken of as the miserable wife of a miserable drunkard—with no hand to help, no heart to pity—she very soon became a tippler and a drunkard herself.

By the side of this woe-smitten mother, kneeled a little girl of five or six years, down whose sallow cheeks tears were coursing; and who ever and anon exclaimed, "Poor little Willie, must he die?" "Oh! mother, must Willie die?" and then kissing the clammy sweat from "little Willie's" brow, covered her face with her tattered apron, and wept.

In the opposite corner of the chimney, and among the ashes which covered the hearth, sat a boy of about seven years, dragging from the half dead embers a potatoe, which he broke open with the remark, "Mother, give this to little Willie. May he be hungry. I'm hungry too, and so is sister; but Willie's sick. Give him this potatoe, mother."

"No, poor boy;" said the mother. "Willie will never be hungry again.—He will soon be dead."

This remark drew all the children around the mother and dying child. The father was sitting upon what was intended for a bedstead, without hat, shoes, or coat, with hands thrust into his pockets, apparently indifferent to all that was passing around him. His head was resting upon his breast, and his blurred eyes were fastened upon the floor, as if he were afraid to look up at the sorrowing group who were watching the countenance of the dying infant.

There was a moment of silence. Not a sound was heard. Even the sobs of the little girl had ceased. Death was crossing the hovel's threshold. The very respiration of the household seemed suspended; when a slight shivering of the limbs of the infant, and a shriek from the half-conscious mother, told all that the vital spark had fled.

For the first time the father moved. Slowly advancing to where his wife was seated, with quivering lips, he whispered—"Is Willie dead?"

"Yes, James, the poor babe is dead!" was the choking reply of the mother, who still sat, as at first, gazing upon the face of her little one.

Without uttering another word, the long brutalized father left the house, muttering as he left. "My God, how long?"

At this moment a kind-hearted lady came in, who had heard, but a few moments before, of the dangerous illness of the child. She had brought with her some medicine; but her angel visit was too late. The gentle spirit of the babe had fled, and there remained nothing for her to do but to comfort the living. This she did, while we followed the father. We related to him the circumstances which had led us to his house, and briefly spoke of the misery which inevitably follows in the wake of intemperance.

"I know it, sir," said he, "I have long known it. I have not always been what you now see me. Alcohol and my appetite have brought me to this depth of degradation."