

LITERATURE.

POETRY.

TRUST IN GOD.

When gathering clouds around I view,
And days are dark, and friends are few,
On Him I lean, who, not in vain,
Experienced every human pain;
He sees my wants, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears.

If ought should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way:
To see the good I would pursue,
Or do the sin I would not do,
Still He who felt temptation's power
Shall guard me in that dangerous hour.

When vexing thoughts within me rise,
And sore dismayed my spirit dies,
Yet He, who once vouchsafed to bear
The sickening anguish of despair,
Shall sweetly soothe, shall gently dry,
The throbbing heart, the streaming eye.

When sorrowing o'er some stone I bend
Which covers all that was a friend,
And from his hand, and voice, and smile
Divides me for a little while;
My Saviour marks the tears I shed,
For Jesus wept o'er Lazarus dead!

And O! when I have safely pass'd
Through every conflict but the last,
Still, Lord, unchanging watch beside
My dying bed, for Thou hast died.
Then point to realms of cloudless day,
And wipe the latest tears away.

LORD GLENELG.

THE PLAY HOUR.

The bell has rung, with merry shout
From school the boys are rushing out,
Now books are closed, with what delight
They grasp the marbles, ball, and kite.
Shout on, light hearts, one loves to hear
This burst of voices fresh and clear,
To watch a troop of schoolboys gay
Enjoy like you the hour of play.

How short it seems! yet to the boy
Its shortness brings a keener joy,
The hours of work that go before
Endear the hour of leisure more.
Shout on, glad hearts! in boyhood learn
Your pleasure through your toil to earn,
If life were all one idle day
You would not prize the hour of play.

Improve the golden hours that bring
Such stores of knowledge on the wing,
None have used them well but knew
That labour's path is pleasure's too.
Choose heavenly wisdom as your guide,
And peace will follow at her side,
A purer joy bless manhood's way
Than brightened boyhood's hour of play.

The Last Penny.

Thomas Claire, a son of St. Crispin, was a clever sort of a man; though not very well off in the world. He was industrious, but, as his abilities were small, his reward was proportioned thereto. His skill went but little beyond half-soles, heel-taps, and patches.—Those who, willing to encourage Thomas, ventured to order from him a new pair of boots or shoes, never repeated the order. That would have been carrying their good wishes for his prosperity rather too far.

As intimated, the income of Thomas Claire was not large. Industrious though he was, the amount earned proved so small that his frugal wife always found it insufficient for an adequate supply

of the wants of the family, which consisted of her husband, herself, and three children. It cannot be denied, however, that if Thomas had cared less about his pipe and mug of ale, the supply of bread would have been more liberal. But he had to work hard, and must have some little self-indulgence. At least, so he very unwisely argued. This self-indulgence cost from two to three shillings every week, a sum that would have purchased many comforts for the needy family.

The oldest of Claire's children, a girl ten years of age, had been sickly from her birth. She was a gentle, loving child, the favourite of all in the house, and more especially of her father. Little Lizzy would come up into the garret where Claire worked, and sit with him sometimes for hours, talking in a strain that caused him to wonder; and sometimes when she did not feel as well as usual, lying upon the floor and fixing upon him her large bright eyes for almost as long a period. Lizzy never was so contented as when she was with her father; and he never worked so cheerfully as when she was near him.

Gradually, as month after month went by, Lizzy wasted away. Her cheeks became paler and paler, her eyes larger and brighter, and such a weakness fell upon her slender limbs that they could with difficulty sustain her weight. She was no longer able to clamber up the steep stairs into the garret or loft, where her father worked; yet she was there as often as before. Claire had made for her a little bed, raised a short space from the floor, and here she lay, talking to him or looking at him, as of old. He rarely went up or down the garret-stairs without having Lizzy in his arms. Usually her head was lying upon his shoulder.

And thus the time went on, Claire, for all the love he felt for his sick child—for all the regard he entertained for his family—indulging his beer and tobacco as usual, and thus consuming, weekly, a portion of their little income that would have brought to his children many a comfort. No one but himself had any luxuries. Not even for Lizzy's weak appetite were dainties procured. It was as much as the mother could do, out of the weekly pittance she received, to get enough coarse food for the table, and cover the nakedness of her family.

To supply the pipe and mug of Claire, from two to three shillings a week were required. This sum he usually retained out of his earnings, and gave the balance, whether large or small, to his frugal wife. No matter what his income happened to be, the amount necessary to obtain these articles was rigidly deducted, and as certainly expended. Without his beer, Claire really imagined that he would not have strength sufficient to go through with his weekly toil—how his wife managed to get along without even her regular cup of good tea, it had never occurred to him to ask—and not to have had a pipe to smoke in the evening, or after each meal, would have been a deprivation beyond his ability to endure. So, the two or three shillings went regularly in the old way. When the sixpences and pennies congregated in goodly numbers in the shoemaker's pocket, his visits to the ale-house were often repeated, and his extra pipe smoked more frequently. But, as his allowance for the week diminished, and it required some searching in the capacious pockets, where they hid themselves away to find the straggling coins, Claire found it necessary to put some check upon his appetite. And so it went on, week after week and month after month. The beer was drunk and the pipe smoked as usual, while the whole family bent under the weight of poverty that was laid upon them.

Weaker and weaker grew little Lizzy. From the coarse food that was daily set before her, her weak stomach turned, and she hardly took sufficient nourishment to keep life in her attenuated frame.

"Poor child!" said the mother one morning, "she cannot live if she doesn't eat. But coarse bread and potatoes and butter-milk go against her weak stomach. Ah me! If we only had a little that the rich waste."

"There is a curse in poverty!" replied Claire, with a bitterness that was unusual to him, as he turned his eyes upon his child, who had pushed away the food that had been placed before her, and was looking at him with an expression of disappointment on her wan face. "A curse in poverty!" he repeated. "Why should my child die for want of nourishing food, while the children of the rich have every luxury?"

In the mind of Claire, there was usually a dead calm. He plodded on, from day to day, eating his potatoes and butter-milk, or whatever came before him, and working steadily through the hours allotted to labour, his hopes or fears in life rarely exciting him to an expression of discontent. But he loved Lizzy better than any earthly thing, and to see her turn with loathing from her coarse food, the best he was able to procure for her, arose his sluggish nature into rebellion against his lot. But he saw no remedy.