

ing-House." The gin-palace was glare and glitter—a huge, red landlord, with an immensity of shirt-bosom and watch-chain; a bedizened landlady, saucy, be-ribboned girls, the counters and tables crowded with bold, bleached, haggard faces.

Within the Dragon and Tea-Kettle all was homely comfort. The old woman by the leaping fire gave a domestic look to the place. 'The faces at the tables were honest and satisfied, if rough. The waiter-girls were modest and plain; frugal good order prevailed. Miss Chip, from her wooden throne, saw and ruled all. Mr Goldspray and his friend played checkers under the red curtains. Rogers, the policeman, came near us. "An energetic woman," we said.

"She's a woman with a tremendous history," said Rogers.

CHAPTER II.—THE DRAGON AND THE TEA-KETTLE.

The next time we were at Miss Chip's establishment was at nine o'clock in the morning, an hour when London was hardly awake, and no well-to-do Londoner expected to be stirring. Some one else had risen early also. The unlucky Jane, in a huge canvas apron and a pair of pattens, was washing off the sidewalk before the well scrubbed step of the eating-house. The door stood open, and within one could see that the fire was just lighted; the floor was newly scrubbed and sanded, and every table was as clean as brush could make it. At a corner, two squares below, we had overtaken policeman Rogers, and asked him:

"Have you known Miss Chip long?"

"Aye, ma'am; since she opened yon place—four years.

"And what is its influence in the neighbourhood?"

"Nothing could be better. I often say it is as good in its way as a church. Many a one has turned aside from yon gin-palace, seeing a cheap, quiet place, where a meal can be had from a penny up. There's scores of young girls and men Miss Chip has rescued from the devil's clutches."

"And is she so supported that she will be able to keep it up?"

"She seems to be making money. Indeed she says so herself, and calls it business, and won't allow it's charity. But it's more than I can cipher how she can pay her way on the prices she asks, comparing with other places called cheap; and what she gives away is scarce to be guessed at. You'd be clean surprised at it. I can only make it out by the arithmetic of the Good Book. 'There is that giveth and yet increaseth.' 'He that giveth unto the poor lendeth to the Lord.' It's clear to me that Miss Chip has got the Lord Himself for business partner, and so there'll be no smash-up there. When I go in her door, I think of a word in the Good Book, 'He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.'"

Leaving Mr. Rogers, we came upon Jane finishing her scrubbing.

"What, Jane, are you housemaid?" we asked.