

BIG JIM'S LAST DRINK.

In a narrow court off a city street,
Where the sun had never thrown down a ray,
Where children had seldom enough to eat,
Though parents were toiling for bread all day,
Lived a man and his wife with their children three,
He was called Big Jim, and a blacksmith was he.

Big Jim was a drunkard, had been one for years,
And that's why they lived in this squalor-bound place,
Though once, as his wife would remark with tears,
They lived in a house that was no disgrace,
And were happy, and always had money to spend,
Till Jim took to drink, which is no man's friend.

Jim used to be fond of his wife, until drink
Had hardened his heart as it softened his brain,
And dragged down his mind to the very brink
Of madness; to leave it he tried in vain,
For drink is a devil of great control,
Ever seeking to gain both man's body and soul.

For his children Jim had not a father's heart,
He grudged them the little they cost him for food;
To teach them of love was the mother's part,
She taught them how to be truthful and good;
And they grew like fair flowers by God's good grace,
Through the darkness and sin of that shameful place.

Of would the mother her Bible take,
And read to her children those stories of old,
And out of her fancy sweet pictures make
Of the City of God with its streets of gold,
Then after singing some simple hymn,
Would kneel and pray for her husband Jim.

One night as the mother and children sat
Raising their voices to God above,
Singing so earnest and sweetly that
Of a truth it was written that God is love;
In the midst of their praise fell a heavy sound,
As Jim entered the room and glared around.

The blacksmith was drunk, as was usual at night,
His bloodshot eyes had a devil therein,
And they shone with a fierce and frenzied light,
That told of the presence of terrible sin;
The children were frightened, the mother was still,
And the man laughed aloud like a demon of ill.

"What! praying again!" he cried with an oath,
"I'll wager my life you were praying for me;
If I knew you were, I would strangle you both,
I could do it as easy as A B C.
But I haven't got time to stay here all night,
I've come for some money—you angel of light!

"Money! Ha! ha! No—I don't want that—
It's Drink that I want and mean to get.
You must pay for your liquor—says landlord Pat—
And he won't give me tick for another whet.
Yes! it's money I want, my psalm-singing wife,
And I'll have it, by heaven, or have your life."

The woman turned white with fear as she stood;
Her purse was empty; her last few cents
Had been spent that morn for some kindling wood;
And she wondered herself as it went, from whence
The money would come on the morrow to buy
Bread for the children, unless from on High.

So she said, in a voice that was firm with truth,
"I have no money to give you, Jim."
He answered, "As sure as your name is Ruth,
If I don't get the money, you've sung your last hymn.
Come, get it and give it—beg, borrow, or steal,
But have it I must, or I'll make you feel

The weight of my fist,"—and over her head
The blacksmith raised his heavy arm,
But Ruth, though she trembled, thus calmly said,
"My God will protect me from any harm;
Or if it shall please Him to let you kill,
It will be for some good to be born of the ill,"



A SPECIFIC.

MRS. BILLINGER (after preliminary greeting)—"And how is your husband, Mrs. Mallyprop?"

MRS. MALLYPROP—"He's very poorly, Mrs. Billinger. He's lost the use of his limbs."

MRS. B.—"Dear me! You ought to get some of this paralyzed milk for him. I believe it would do him good."

"Will you give me the money? Who wants you to preach?
Give me money, or else I will knock you down!
And I guess if I do, you'll be past the reach
Of the doctor," said Jim, with a terrible frown,
And a devilish laugh, as he seized her wrist,
And shook in her face his heavy fist.

But the woman replied, "Jim, as sure as I live,
I have spoken the truth. If I die to-night—
And I thank my God—I've no money to give."
She stopped, for she knew by a sudden light
The murderous thought in her husband's brain,
As his grip grew tight, and she cried for pain.

"Thank your God for that!" cried the man, as he struck
With his upraised hand his wife's fair face—
"Thank your God, my dear, for your jolly good luck."
She fell like a log. Jim left the place,
But took, ere he went, her ring, love's last link,
From her senseless body, to pawn for drink.

Big Jim got the money, and soon with a glass
And some drunken friends had forgotten his wife,
For the time in too riotous style did pass
To remember her, though her tender life
Was ebbing 'twixt this and the Kingdom of Heaven,
So deadly the blow of the blacksmith was given.

Big Jim had been talking of temperance folks,
And was laughing to scorn all their efforts of good,
His language was seasoned with blasphemous jokes,
As he said, "I should like to know who could
Make me give up my spirits or beer.
I should like much to see him, just now, right here."

Scarce had the words and the finishing oath
Left the lips of the smith than a little child
Appeared in the doorway, and stood as though loath
To enter that palace of sin, so defiled!
Big Jim heard his child with mute surprise,
As it spake amidst sobs and with streaming eyes.