

THE LITTLE FOLK.

Eventide.

Evening's shadows gather o'er us,
Once again we bend the knee;
Asking that the hours before us,
From all danger may be free.

Spent with labour, worn and weary,
Now we lay us down to rest;
Grant, Lord, thro' the night-time dreary,
We with slumber may be blest.

Many are our sins, O Father!
Yet, let not Thy judgment fall,
But for Jesus' Cross do rather
Pity and forgive them all.

Loved ones, we to Thee commend them,
Grant them blessed sleep to-night,
In all need do thou befriend them,
Send them every blessing bright.

All the sick and all the suffer'ing
Father comfort, soothe, and bless;
All the sinful, all the erring
Win them back to righteousness.

Guard all sailors on the billows,
Make for them the storm a calm
Stand beside the dying pillow
Breathing there Thy holy balm.

Father, grant our poor petitions;
Seal them with Thine answer bright;
Till we reach the Lamb-lit mansions,
Where there shall be "no more night!"

ETTY LOVELL.

The Death of Rags.

BY IZORA CHANDLER.

Rags belonged to a sawyer who one day got caught in the machinery of the sawmill, and met his death before any one could reach him. Rags saw the cruel teeth coming nearer and nearer, but could not drag his master away, though he tried with all his loving might.

These two had lived their simple lives together, and when the sawyer was laid under the churchyard daisies, Rags was left alone to wander back and forth between the low, quiet mound and the noisy old mill.

The next man at the mill did not care for dogs, but he never drove the gentle creature away, and if anything was left at lunch time, he seldom forgot to toss it to Rags. But he never thought to toss a pleasant word or a gay whistle along with it to cheer the dog's heart, as well as his stomach, and the hours often came to poor Rags when his heart was even hungrier than his stomach.

He tried to make friends with truant boys who lounged about the old pond. He guarded their clothes while they were swimming, fetched the sticks they tossed upon the water, and almost every time brought back the marked stones they had thrown as far as they could.

And this is the way they repaid such gentle behaviour.

One autumn day, when it was so cold that one could be comfortable only in the sunshine, the boys began throwing sticks into the water and sending Rags out after them. He plunged in once, twice, and came out shivering, but glad to be of interest to anyone. A nobody dog is quite conscious of the fact that he is nobody's dog. He may appear very gay sometimes, but it is only because his loving heart is trying to coax some one to come into it and make it happy. A third stick and a fourth were thrown. The chilled, reluctant creature brought them back. But at the fifth he whined and wagged his tail, and did his very dog's best to make them understand how hard a thing this was that they were asking of him.

But the sun shone warmly upon their own shoulders. They must have sport. The biggest bully of them all throw a stone with such perfect aim that poor Rags gave a sharp yelp of pain, and plunged again into the chilling water. He was long in reaching the floating stick. Even then he passed it once—for he appeared to be a little dazed—and when at last he was ready to swim ashore he seemed not to know in which direction it lay.

One of the loungers gave a careless laugh. Rags heard him, turned slowly, and swam towards them for a moment, then sank out of sight. "He is drowning!" cried a distressed voice; and the little daughter of the new mill-owner came springing from log to log until she reached the one nearest the shore. Then she leaned far forward to look for poor Rags.

The loungers scrambled to their feet. The head of Rags appeared again. The little girl cried out encouragement. One of

the aroused idlers gave a whistle to cheer him onward. But after a faint struggle he went down again with the cruel stick between his faithful teeth.

Then Turner Robbins throw off his coat and boots, and before the others realized what he was doing, he had brought the dog ashore, and was kneeling beside him upon the yellow sawdust, squeezing the water from his long, thick fur.

The little girl knelt too. She smoothed the poor, wet head and cried over a bruise that the heavy stone had made.

The words she murmured were so kind that Rags opened his eyes as wide as he could. He tried to prick up his ears that had grown so heavy; and when he saw the gentle face bending over him, he seem really to know that the tears were for him, and lifting one of his paws a little he tried to reach it toward her in a friendly greeting. One fluttering sigh escaped him, and the troubles of poor, gentle-hearted Rags were over.

Then the little daughter of the new mill-owner sprang to her feet.

"You are murderers?" she cried; every one of you!" And, as she turned her shining eyes upon them, they fell backward, one by one, and tried to get behind each other.

"Nothin' but a dog," said one of them surlily. "Th' ain't no sense in making such a fuss."

"God made dogs just as well as he made men," said the little accuser. "And I'd rather be a dog than to be such a man as you are going to be."

Turner Robbins looked up into her face. He was still kneeling beside poor Rags, and he was drenched and cold. He said something, he hardly knew what, but it meant that he was ashamed of his share in the bad business, and that he meant to be a different boy from that moment.

After that, one of them slipped away and found a broken shovel, and a grave was made on the sunny slope behind the old mill. But before the last bit of turf had been relaid, each boy, in his rough, honest fashion, had given the mill-owner's little daughter to understand that he was sorry and ashamed; and that, with the going out of the innocent life of poor Rags, there had entered into his own heart a new feeling of mercy and kindness for every creature that can suffer and die.—*Our Animal Friends.*

Praying for Papa.

A few night ago a well-known citizen, who has been walking for some time in the downward path, came out of his home and started down town for a night of carousal with some old companions he had promised to meet. His young wife had besought him with imploring eyes to spend the evening with her, and had reminded him of the past when evenings passed in her company were all too short. His little daughter had clung about his knees and coaxed in her pretty, willful way for "papa" to tell her some bed-time stories, but habit was stronger than love for wife and child, and he eluded their tender questioning, by the special sophistries, the father of evil advances at such times for his credit fund, and went his way. But when he was blocks distant from his home he found that in changing his coat he had forgotten to remove his wallet, and he could not go out on a drinking bout without money, even though he knew that his family needed it, and his wife was economizing every day more and more in order to make up his deficits, and he hurried back and crept softly past the windows of the little home, in order that he might steal in and obtain it without running the gauntlet of either questions or caresses. But something stayed his feet; there was a fire in the grate within—for the night was chill—and it lit up the little parlor and brought out in startling effects the pictures on the wall. But these were nothing to the pictures on the hearth. There, in the soft glow of the fire-light, knelt his little child at her mother's feet, her small hands clasped in prayer, her fair head bowed, and as her rosy lips whispered each word with childish distinctness, the father listened, spellbound to the spot.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Sweet petition! The man himself, who stood there with bearded lips shut tightly together, had said that prayer once at his mother's knee. Where was that mother now? The sunset gates had long ago unbarred to let her pass through. But the child had not finished; he heard her "God bless mamma, papa, and my own self," then there was a pause, and she lifted troubled blue eyes to her mother's face.

"God bless papa," prompted the mother, softly.

"God bless papa, lisped the little one."

"And—please send him home sober,"—he could not hear the mother as she said this, but the child followed in a clear, inspired tone.

"God—bless papa—and please—send him—home—sober, Amen." Mother and child sprang to their feet in alarm when the door opened so suddenly, but they were not afraid when they saw who it was, returned so soon; but that night, when little Mamie was being tucked up in bed, after such a romp with papa, she said in the sleepest and most contented of voices:

"Mamma, God answers most as quickly as the telephone, doesn't he?"