

Tales and Sketches.

LITTLE FEET.

In castle halls, or cottage homes,
Wherever guileless childhood roams,
O, there is nothing half so sweet
As busy tread of little feet.

When forth we go at early morn,
To meet the world and brave its scorn,
A down the garden walk so neat,
We see the prints of little feet.

At eve, when homeward we repair,
With aching limbs and brow of care,
The voices ring out clear and sweet—
Then comes the rush of little feet.

The knives are lost, the dishes stray,
The tools are spirited away,
And when we go the lost to seek,
We take the trail of little feet.

But when the angel death hath come
And called our darlings from their home,
Oppressive silence reigns complete;
We miss the sound of little feet.

Then tools are safe, no dishes stray,
No doors go slamming all the day;
But O, 'twould give us pleasure sweet,
To hear again those noisy feet.

Soft night hath come; all are asleep,
Yes, all but me; I vigil keep.
Hush! hush! my heart, and cease to beat.
Was that the step of little feet?

Yes, mother, 'tis the softened tread
Of him you miss and mourn as dead,
And often when your sleep is sweet,
You'll dream of hearing little feet.

And when this pilgrimage is o'er,
And you approach that blissful shore,
The first to run your soul to greet,
Will be your darling's little feet.

—Charles H. Doty, in *Alden's Juvenile Gems*.

A GLASS OF BEER.

"Mamma," said Bessie Ashton, "didn't you say that a glass of beer made a person feel good; and that it was healthy and harmless?"

"Why, yes Bessie, I think I did," answered Mrs. Ashton, slowly, somewhat puzzled at Bessie's question.

"Mrs. Thompson don't think so, mamma. The poor woman just cries nearly all the time."

"Cries?" interrogated Mrs. Ashton, in surprise, for she believed her neighbor to be one of the happiest of women.

"Yes, mamma, cries all the time," repeated Bessie, with emphasis. "Mr. Thompson's cheeks looked puffed away out, and his face is always so red. She says he is cross and scolds continually. But he didn't used to be that way. He only drank one glass of beer then. now he can drink six and eight, and he gets mad at everything. It don't seem to make him feel good or look healthy."

Mrs. Ashton's countenance assumed a serious change. She felt keenly the force of the rebuke, but answered:

"Mr. Thompson should not give way to his appetite for drink. I'm sure one glass can do no harm."

"That's just what he thought," spoke up Bessie. "But Mrs. Thompson says it had him down on his back before he was aware of it."

"Well, I don't know," answered her mother abstractedly. "I drink a glass occasionally; it don't seem to affect me."

"It don't puff your cheeks out, mamma; but it makes your face awfully red sometimes, and you can drink more than you used to."

Mrs. Ashton stopped to think. She could drink more than she used to. Bessie had told the truth.

When supper time came instead of beer, a glass of fresh, sweet milk stood near her own and her husband's plate. Mr. Ashton opened wide his eyes when he sat down to eat, and as his wife finished relating the conversation between herself and Bessie, he caught the child in his arms and

kissed her affectionately, remarking: "Not another drop of beer shall ever enter my home."

And he kept his word.—*Selected.*

YOUNG MEN.

A man in Hartford, Conn., came home drunk. His little boy, from three and a half to four years of age, ran forward to meet his father. Had that father been sober, the boy would have been nestling in his bosom; but *he was drunk*, and seizing the little fellow by the shoulder, he lifted him right over his head, and dashed him out of the second story window, through sash, glass and all; and on the pavement below they picked up the poor boy, with both his thighs broken. When a man is drunk he does not know what he is about; he has dethroned reason. And so, whether you laugh or cry at some of the follies of drunkenness—whether you hold your sides with merriment, or the marrow stands cold in your bones—yet remember that drunkenness is *debasing, blighting, blasting, mildewing, and damning* to everything that is bright, noble and beautiful.

Young men, let me say to you—what an awful risk you run! Did you ever wake up in the morning, and wonder how you got into your bed? Did you ever lie in the morning, unable to think for the life of you what you did last night? Down on your knees, down on your knees to-night, and thank God, that as you staggered forth, not knowing what you were doing, he did not take your guardian angel from you in that hour, and leave you to plunge into utter ruin.

Why, what is it to get drunk? Here is one case that I knew; and many of my friends were at the wedding,—a gorgeous wedding, a grand wedding. Fifteen hundred dollars was the price paid for the flowers, sent expressly from New York. The house had been enlarged for the dancing. A fast young man and a beautiful girl were united. It was a gorgeous wedding, very merry and jolly, plenty of wine; but the bridegroom got drunk, and with his clenched fist, two hours after they had been married, he struck his bride in the mouth. "Hush! hush! don't say anything about it; don't let it get abroad. Hush! hush! it is only known to those here. He was drunk, and did not know what he was doing; cover it up, cover it up." So they did. He went on his wedding excursion. Six weeks afterwards he got drunk again, and drew a pistol on the wife that loved him. She felt her life was not safe, and went back to her father's house. He came directly to Toronto, in Canada. He got drunk again, killed a policeman, was tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged, in less than ninety days after his wedding. Some friends interceded with the Government, and he is now in Kingston Penitentiary *for life*. Three drunks! Three times intoxicated! Oh, young men, if God has spared you, and you have ever been drunk in your lives, down on your knees, and, in the gratitude of your souls, declare that you will never again touch that which dethrones reason!

There are those of us who have come out of the fire, those of us who are scared and bruised, those who will never be what we might have been had it not been for the accursed drink. As year after year rolls on, and brings us nearer and nearer to the end, what would we not give, brethren, could we wipe out our record!

OH! THAT AWFUL RECORD, young man! You are writing your record new, every day. You begin in the morning with a clean page, perfectly clean, and at night it is smeared, and smudged, and blotted, when you hastily turn it over and think it is gone. No! You can never wipe out a word of your record. You never can blot out a stain nor erase one. No sir! You are making your record.

What a grand thing it is to be a young man, sent out with life all before you, to make of it what you choose, just as you choose—to mould it as you will—to make your life just what you please to make it!

How many of you, young men, are going wrong? And you know you are going wrong. I never knew a man going wrong who was not aware of it. Going wrong! You do not hear them defend it, never—but excuse it. "Oh, it will all come right in the end." What will? "Oh, young men must sow their wild oats." Yes, and they must reap too. "It will be all the same a hundred years hence." What will? Two diverging lines go on widening to all eternity. There is no cross-cut. If you begin wrong, young man, you never can get right till you come back with bleeding feet, and torn flesh, and streaming tears, and broken heart. And many a man has died in the effort to get back. Oh, the beginning! So many go into ruin with all of life before them.

You are like a switchman, as we call him, on the railway. Here comes the locomotive and the train of cars, freighted with human life, hopes, and happiness; and your hand is on the switch. You can turn that train on to the main track; you can turn it on to the siding, you can turn it down the bank; but when it has passed by, your control over it is gone forever. Never will you have another such opportunity, and opportunities are passing you day by day, day by day. By and by some will say as poor Churchill did on his death-bed, "All gone! every opportunity lost! What a fool I have been!"

Young man, is that to be the end of your life, with all its prospects and all its bright hopes?—*John B. Gough.*