

The Drinking-House Over the Way.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

The room was so cold, so cheerless and bare,
With its rickety table, and one broken
chair,
And its curtainless window with hardly a
pane
To keep out the snow, the wind, and the
rain.

A cradle stood empty, pushed up to the
wall,
And somehow that seemed the saddest of
all.
In the old rusty stove the fire was dead;
There was snow on the floor at the foot of the
bed.

And there all alone a pale woman was lying,
You need not look twice, to see she was
dying;
Dying of want—of hunger and cold,
Shall I tell you her story—the story she
told?

"No, ma'am, I'm no better, my cough is so
bad;
It's wearing me out though, and that makes
me glad,
For it's wearisome living when one's all
alone,
And heaven they tell me is just like a home.

"Yes, ma'am, I've a husband, he's some-
where about,
I hoped he'd come in 'fore the fire went out;
But I guess he has gone where he's likely to
stay,
I mean to the drinking-house over the way.

"It was not so always; I hope you won't
think
Too hard of him, lady—it's only the drink.
I know he's kind 'carted, for oh, how he
cried
For our poor little baby the morning it died!

"You see he took sudden, and grew very
bad,
And we had no doctor—my poor little lad!
For his father had gone, never meaning to
stay
I am sure—to the drinking-house over the
way.

"And when he came back 'twas far in the
night,
And I was so tired, and sick with the fright
Of staying so long with my baby alone,
And it cutting my heart with its pitiful
moan.

"He was cross with the drink, poor fellow,
I know
It was that, not his baby, that bothered him
so;
But he swore at the child, as panting it lay,
And went back to the drinking-house over
the way.

"I heard the gate slam and my heart seemed
to freeze—
Like ice in my bosom, and there on my
knees
By the side of the cradle, all shivering I
stayed;
I wanted my mother, I cried and I prayed.

"The clock it struck two 'fore my baby was
still,
And my thoughts they went back to the
home on the hill,
Where my happy girlhood had spent its
short day,
Far, far from that drinking-house over the
way.

"Could I be that girl?" I, the heart-broken
wife
Here watching alone, while that dear little
life
Was going so fast, that I had to bend low
to hear if he breathed, 'twas so faint and so
slow.

"Yes, it was easy his dying, he just grew
more white,
And his eyes opened wider to look for the
light
As his father came in, 'twas just break of
day,
I came in from the drinking-house over the
way.

"Yes, ma'am, he was sober, at least mostly,
I think,
He often stayed that way to wear off the
drink,
And I know he was sorry for what he had
done,
Or he set a great store by our first little

"And straight did he come to the cradle-bed
where
Our baby lay dead, so pretty and fair;
I wondered that I could have wished him to
stay
When there was a drinking-house over the
way.

"He stood quite awhile, did not understand,
You see, ma'am, till he touched the little
cold hand;
Oh, then came the tears, and he shook like
a leaf,
And said, 'twas the drinking had made all
the grief.'

"The neighbours were kind, and the minister
came,
And he talked of my seeing the baby again;
And of the bright angels—I wondered if
they
Could see into that drinking-house over the
way.

"And I thought when my baby was put in
the ground,
And the man with the spade was shaping the
mound,
If somebody only would help me to save
My husband, who stood by my side at the
grave.

"If only it were not so handy, the drink!
The men that make laws, ma'am, sure didn't
think
Of the hearts they would break, of the souls
they would slay
When they licensed that drinking-house over
the way.

"I've been sick ever since, it cannot be long;
Be pitiful, lady, to him when I'm gone;
He wants to fight, but you never would
think
How weak a man grows when he's fond of
the drink.

"And it's tempting him here, and it's
tempting him there;
Four places I've counted in this very square
Where men can get whiskey by night and by
day,
Not to reckon the drinking-house over the
way.

"There's a verse in the Bible the minister
read;
'No drunkard shall enter in Heaven,' it said;
And he is my husband, and I loved him so,
And where I am going, I want he should go.

"Our lady and I will both want him there;
Don't you think the dear Jesus will hear to
my prayer,
And please when I'm gone, ask some one to
pray
For him, at the drinking-house over the
way."

—Mrs. Nutting, in the Union Signal.

White Velvet and Gray Felt.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

A LITTLE girl, plainly and quite un-
fashionably dressed, entered a Sunday-
school in New York one crisp autumnal
afternoon. Everything about her was
very neat, and showed that she was
cared for by a mother whose tastes
were refined, though her means might
be small. Her cloak was of quilted
merino, and her hat, of the softest felt,
trimmed with a single band of gray
velvet.

An artist, entering the room, would
have been very much pleased with the
child, all in simple, modest gray, with
a delicate peach-bloom on her cheek,
the loveliest brown eyes, and golden
curls falling to her shoulders.

But the children who attended this
Sunday-school were not painters, and
I am sorry to say that some of the girls
were not ladies. Of course, you know
that a real lady never judges of persons
by the mere outside appearance, and
that she cares a great deal more about
qualities such as truthfulness, courage,
gentleness and unselfishness, than about
the way a flounce hangs, or the tint of
a feather. Anybody who has a little
money may buy and wear a costly
dress; but the dress does not matter,

if the wearer happens to be rude, dis-
dainful, or silly. And, after all, my
dear little Gertrude Fechter, was as
well dressed as the daughters of the
Prince of Wales, though that is a
puzzle to some of our dainty little
American girls.

Gertrude sat, her eyes full of quiet
confidence and pleasure, during the
opening exercises, in the place which
the superintendent had given her.
After they were finished, and he had
said "Teachers may take their classes,"
he came and seated himself beside her,
and asked her a few questions, and
finally led her to a semi-circle of girls
whose bent heads and murmuring
voices were proofs that they had a
good teacher, and that they were trying
to learn.

"Miss Maybin, will you make room,
please for this little girl, who is a new
scholar?" Miss Maybin did so very
pleasantly.

But Carry Fletcher nudged Rosa
Van Buskirk, and made a scornful
little face; and Lulu Price drew her
silk dress and plush jacket away as
though afraid of their touching the
quilted merino. It takes very little
to hurt the feelings of a sensitive
child; and Miss Maybin, when she
presently turned around again, was
surprised and sorry to see fears in the
dark eyes.

"What is the matter, dear?" she
asked.

The lips quivered, but Gertrude did
not reply. Elsie Pomeroy, however,
spoke low, but distinctly: "We don't
want a Dutch girl in our class, Miss
Maybin."

Poor little Gertrude sprang up, with
an impulse to run away anywhere,
home to mamma, anywhere, so that
she would be safe out of this dreadful
school-room, with the beautiful loving
mottos all around on the walls, and
such unkind, unloving faces among the
scholars. Miss Maybin gently detained
her.

"I am very sorry, and very, very
much ashamed, too, that any of my
little girls can speak as Elsie has. And
I know some One who is sorry and
wounded, too, more sorry than I am,
more wounded than this little Ger-
trude. It is the dear Lord Jesus, our
Master, who has been hurt—oh! so
much this afternoon."

A hush fell upon the class, and
Elsie's cheeks grew very red. Lulu
looked uncomfortable; and Carry and
Rose wished they had been kind, but
did not know how to express their
penitence.

A clear voice spoke. There was a
beautiful girl at the extreme corner of
the bench, and she had been so deeply
interested in the lesson that she had
hardly looked up when Gertrude was
presented by the superintendent. She
was all blue and white: blue and white
velvet, soft and shining, composed her
dress; a snowy ostrich plume wound
around her white velvet hat, with its
shirred facing of blue; and her eyes
were like flax-flowers, so large and so
lustrous. She was Marjorie Dana;
and being the best scholar and the most
amiable girl in the class, and the grand-
daughter of old Dr. Dana, who with
his white hair and his gold-headed
cane was so splendid-looking and so
venerable, everybody followed Mar-
jorie's lead. Even among children
there are leaders, to whom the rest
look up and pay attention.

"Miss Maybin," said Marjorie,
"please, let the new scholar sit by me!

I wish she would look over on my
book, and let me be her friend."

Brave little Marjorie! She slipped
an arm round Gertrude, gave her hand
the most charming squeeze, and when
school was over, walked all the way
home with her, and promised to call
for her next Sunday.

A few weeks later there came a
rainy day. The lady who played the
piano was absent, and the superintendent
inquired if somebody would not
volunteer to take her place at the in-
strument. There were a great many
young ladies in the school who could per-
form brilliant show-pieces on the piano,
a great many who had spent several
hours of every day for years in labo-
rious practice. But there were only
two or three who could play easy
hymn-tunes at sight, and they were
kept at home by the storm. Miss
Maybin was not musical.

The superintendent waited, and no
one offering, he asked again if there
was not some teacher or scholar who
could give this help?

Up went a small hand, and little
Gertrude, on being asked, said very
modestly she would try. Marjorie, not
in her white velvet to-day, but looking
just as sweet in her everyday one,
walked down the aisle with her, and
stood at her side, while Gertrude
Fechter, the little German girl, who
had been studying music since she
was four years old, and who had been
taught to be very accurate and thorough,
played every piece she saw precisely as
if she were reading from a printed
page. Her voice, a ringing contralto,
helped the leader ever so much; and
when school was over, and she went
home, he said, "That wonderfully
clever child is a rare genius."

And so she is, and better still, she
is a sweet Christian child; and her
playing and singing will "always and
only" be for her King Jesus.

One of these days, if I am not mis-
taken, some people will be very proud
to know Gertrude Fechter; but Ger-
trude will always hold very dear in her
memory one true friend, and she will
never forget the afternoon when white
velvet took gray felt under her protec-
tion.

At a public dinner given in honour
of Daniel Webster, some one asked
him what was the greatest thought
that ever occupied his mind. After a
moment's reflection the great states-
man replied, "that of my personal
responsibility to God." Most busy
people do not often stop to think on
the motives that impel them to action;
but when there is a disposition to flag
in our labour, and inspiration is needed
to urge us forward again, this will carry
with it great weight. The king in the
parable, who on going abroad delivered
to his servants talents to employ, is re-
presented as calling them all again to
account. Nor can we escape rendering
a like account of the use made of our
abilities and opportunities.

USE OF BEREAVEMENT. — "See,
father," said a lad, who was walking
with his father, "they are knocking
away the props from under the bridge;
what are they doing that for? Won't
the bridge fall?" "They are knock-
ing them away," said the father, "that
the timbers may rest more firmly
upon the stone piers, which are now
finished." God only takes away our
earthly props that we may rest firmly
upon Him.—E.