

DEAD BY THE WAYSIDE.

(From the Citizen.)

Dead by the wayside—dead,  
An old man weary and lone,—  
No place for the tired, aching head  
But the cold and flinty stone;  
None saw how the death-pang shook  
Those aged limbs last night;  
None met the sad, appealing look  
As the spirit took its flight!

Dead by the wayside—dead,  
A little fair-haired child,  
With the small, thin hand beneath the  
head,  
And the blue eyes glazed and wild.  
Her sire in a drunkard's tomb,  
Her mother—oh, worse than dead!  
In sight of many a princely home,  
She perished for want of bread!

Dead by the wayside—dead,  
A woman ragged and wan,  
With cold hands clasped and averted  
head,  
As if dreading the gaze of man.  
For, homeless, shelterless one,  
Whom nobody stooped to save,  
There's no one to blame for the wrong  
that is done,  
Bear her away to the grave!

Dead by the wayside—dead,  
A man—yet no, alas!  
With the light of his manhood quenched,  
instead  
It is on y the slave of the glass!  
Who made him thus—the man  
Once strong both to will and do?  
Who robbed him of happiness, hope, and  
heaven?  
And echo still answers—who?

Bear him away to the grave,  
There's no one at all to blame.  
It's nobody's fault, it's nobody's crime,  
It's nobody's guilt and shame!—  
Wife and little ones left  
Hopeless, famishing, lone,—  
It's nobody's fault they are thus bereft,  
Let the verdict be—"CAUSE UN-  
KNOWN!"

—P.S.V.V.

THE MESSAGE OF A NEW  
YEAR'S CARD.

(From the Sunday at Home.)

"How late the postman is," remarked Mrs. Neville to her husband on the morning of New Year's Day. "I suppose he has so many New Year's cards and letters to deliver that it takes him longer than usual to complete his round."

"Yes; Christmas cards and New Year's cards are so much the fashion that it makes a difference to the postman, even in this country village."

A moment later the little maid entered and passed a handful of letters and papers to her master.

"Two, four, six, eight in all, and pretty equally divided, too; four for you and four for me," remarked Mr. Neville, putting into his wife's hand some packets of various sizes.

Most of the letters that morning were from relatives or old friends, and some of them contained very pretty cards suited to the season; and it was no wonder our friends lingered some time over the kind words which accompanied them.

"This is from dear auntie," said Mrs. Neville, breaking the seal of a large-sized envelope, and drawing from it a beautiful card, with words which had evidently been chosen with special reference to her for whom it was intended, for Mrs. Neville had long been an invalid and this morning was the first for many a long month on which she had ventured downstairs to breakfast. For her husband's sake she had made a special effort in honour of the New Year's morning, and she was repaid by his evident delight at seeing her in her old place at the table. The flush of pleasure that lighted up her pale face now was too bright to tell of health and strength.

"See, Henry! isn't this lovely?" she

said, holding up her treasure. Just look at the shades of that moss, and the delicate tint of the azalea. It does not seem specially intended for the New Year, but I am almost sure dear auntie chose it because it is equally suited to all seasons—and because it is more than ever suited to us now," she added with a little sigh, and pointing to the text inscribed upon the card: "I will trust and not be afraid."

Henry Neville understood the sigh and the reason of it, for he knew that his wife was aware that her long illness had caused more expense, in many ways, than the income of a curate could well meet, and though he would fain have hidden the fact from her, it was beginning to be felt by both of them that they were not only poor, but in debt. The quarter's salary received at Christmas had already gone to pay for things which the invalid had been obliged to have, and to discharge sundry other small debts, and still the doctor's bill remained unpaid. For his wife's sake Mr. Neville had hitherto appeared to ignore the difficulty, but for some days he had been conscious that she was bearing the burden as truly as he, and that the anxiety was retarding her recovery, and he was not altogether sorry that the ice was now broken.

"Never mind about things, dear Helen; all will come right after a time, and you must not worry. Yes, this is indeed a pretty card, and shall we not take those words as our New Year's motto, and look up to God in faith and confidence, and say, 'I will trust, and not be afraid.'"

"I will try, dear Henry, and indeed I do hope I am grateful to God for all His goodness to us, and for returning health; but I cannot help wishing so very, very much that we could have begun the New Year free from debt. And but for me you would have done so; for it has never been like this before."

"There has never been the same reason, darling. It was no fault of yours, and there has not been one unnecessary outlay. Since you are spared to me I am more than thankful, and I am sure that He who has kept us so far will provide for our future wants."

"If only Dr. Hallimore's bill were paid, I would not mind."

"That has never reached us yet, so you must not meet trouble half-way. Dr. Hallimore will not ask us for the money until we are able to pay it; for you know how kind and considerate he always is. Besides, he knows our circumstances perfectly well. But, Nellie, we are reversing our positions: it is you who are generally my monitor and comforter, instead of requiring encouragement from me. Where is your faith and trust in God, dear?"

"Where, indeed?" murmured Mrs. Neville. Henry, I am ashamed of myself, and especially after God has sent this precious message from Himself," she added, taking up the card tenderly, and placing it with the other cards over the fire-place, in order that they might brighten up the room in honour of the day.

"We have been so busy talking that I have forgotten to open my last letter," remarked the clergyman smiling, and breaking open the envelope. "I dare say it is some business circular, or something of no consequence, for the handwriting is strange to me."

"Perhaps it is a five-pound note," suggested Helen. "I shall come and look," she said gaily, peeping over his shoulder.

A moment later Henry Neville regretted his imprudence, for the contents of that envelope he would have preferred to keep from his wife that day. Only a few lines were written on the sheet which he hastily refolded, but the

words which caught both pair of eyes at the same instant were these:

"To professional attendance and medicine," and just below some figures—  
"£10 10s."

For a moment both were silent; but it was from Henry Neville and not from his wife that the bitter cry came.

"Yes, it is a trial to be poor!"  
"I am so sorry it came to-day, dear Henry; but it must have come some time, and it is better we should know. Do you think the charge high?" asked Mrs. Neville, with strange calmness. Like a true woman, her courage and faith returned when most needed.

"No! not at all; it is very little considering all Dr. Hallimore's kindness and attention. He has favoured us. But that makes it all the more hard to ask him to wait. And he must wait, for I cannot pay it yet. It might as well have been fifty guineas as ten, for I am equally unable to pay either. Oh, it is hard to be poor!"

"Henry, do you think God has permitted this trial to come upon us to try our faith, and to see if we are as ready to trust Him as we professed to be?"

"The bill must be paid, nevertheless, and I have no money!" said the curate bitterly. He had depended very much on the kindness of the doctor, who had long been an intimate friend, and therefore was the more astonished at this apparent want of consideration on his part, that he should send on New Year's morning of all days in the year.

"Dear Henry, do not let us begin the New Year by distrusting our Lord. He has never failed us yet. Do not be vexed with me for saying so: I know I was full of distrust this morning, but that little card has taught me a lesson; and do not forget your own words just now, Henry, about looking up to God and saying to Him, 'I will trust, and not be afraid.'"

Mr. Neville smiled with fond approval, but made no reply. He was thinking what was best to be done. At length he said, "After all, it may not be so difficult to get the money. I really think we might speak to the rector, for once, and ask him to advance me ten guineas."

"I would not do that," said Helen; "it might not be convenient for him to advance the money, though he would not like to refuse, and it might make an unpleasant feeling. I do not like borrowing, especially from friends. Shall we not wait until we have spoken to our Heavenly Father about it, and ask Him to show us what to do, and to help us in His own way?"

"You are right again, Helen! Oh, when shall we become more childlike in our faith? It ought to have been our first thought."

Together they knelt down and poured out their tale of difficulty to Him whose gracious ear is ever open to His children's cry. They rose comforted and hopeful.

"Is this the language of your heart now, Helen?" asked Mr. Neville, pointing to the card over the fire-place.

"Yes," she answered; "I will trust, and not be afraid. And you, Henry?"

"After my late experience of my own weakness, I am almost afraid to say so: but this I can say, I am willing now to take whatever course God appoints, and to bear any necessary privations."

Dr. Hallimore was a prosperous man, and, with the magnanimity that distinguishes so many of his profession, not accustomed to measure his services by the means of his patients, but Mr. Neville, on his side, was not oblivious to the fact that medical men have claims as numerous as those of their fellows, and abhorred the too common practice which holds a "doctor's bill" the last of all bills to be settled.

"There is one thing I cannot understand," resumed the curate, after musing

awhile; "I cannot understand the handwriting on the envelope. I am sure it was not Dr. Hallimore's."

"That is singular; but don't let us think anything more about it in the way of explaining it, for it is mysterious all through, I think."

Two hours later the doctor's carriage was drawn up at the gate, and a minute after the old gentleman was ushered into the breakfast-room. He was at all times cheerful and pleasant, and the Nevilles were great favourites of his, but he came in now with special good-humour beaming on his countenance, and with a very unusual amount of bustle and hurry; it was evident he had not come professionally, for in a sick-room he was quiet and gentle as a woman.

"Good morning, Mr. Neville; good morning, Mrs. Neville, and a happy New Year to you both! Ah! you do not look a very creditable patient this morning, Mrs. Neville; but, as you've been up to breakfast, I suppose you feel pretty independent, and inclined to give the doctor the cold shoulder. No, thank you, I must not stay to sit down, I think, for I am in a hurry, but I wanted to wish you a happy New Year; and, besides," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "I have a word to say on a matter of business. I want to settle my account."

Mr. and Mrs. Neville exchanged hurried glances of astonishment, and then the former began with heightened colour: "Both Mrs. Neville and I are exceedingly sorry that it is impossible for us to settle the account at once, Dr. Hallimore; but I am sure that, knowing the circumstances, you will be good enough to wait a little. I assure you that, at the earliest opportunity—"

"My dear sir, what do you mean? You cannot mean to say that you thought I was speaking seriously, and that I actually intended to press you for money; and to-day, of all days!" interrupted the doctor.

"The account came this morning, and we thought—" faltered Mr. Neville, hesitating; but he was interrupted by the good doctor, who said he did not want to know his thoughts, but rather to tell his own. And then he explained how a mistake had been made, which he had come to rectify. "I never dreamt of charging a penny for my services, such as they were. The time for that sort of thing has long been past for us, since you know we are all your debtors," continued the old gentleman, with a certain huskiness in his voice which was always there when he referred to a beloved daughter, whose last long illness had been soothed and cheered by the visits of our curate and his wife.

"So I flattered myself that you would let me go in and out as a friend as often as I liked, and I only discovered accidentally a few days ago, that this was not understood by you. It occurred to me then, all of a sudden, to send you a receipted bill, instead of entering into all this explanation, and I thought it would be a sort of New Year's card if you got it this morning. I was writing a note to send with it, when I was suddenly called away to go to see a patient, and went off at once, hoping to return before post-time, but telling my assistant, in any case, to post some letters and papers lying on the table. On returning I found my unfinished note, but the account, unreceipted, had been posted. So, now, I can only say how sorry I am, and beg to be forgiven for causing all this disturbance. I am afraid my intended little joke has proved anything but that to you."

"Indeed, Dr. Hallimore, this is too much."

"Too much! I should think it was; a great deal too much fuss about such a trifling thing."

"Oh, not that, but the money, I mean."

"The money too much! So it is, a