

THE PAUPER'S PRAYER.

BY MARION HARLAND.

In due and decent order flowed
Prayer, cry and plaint, until
Whatever could of evil bode,
And every present ill—
The loss of friends and lack of wealth
Causeless curse and barbéd word,
The wane of faith and wane of health—
Were spread before the Lord.

Then spoke the pastor—eye on clock—
"This hour, to him who swims
Life's stormy sea, is like a rock,
On which his bruised limbs
He rests, safe from the blinding spray,
Deaf to the surges' roar,
And, gazing on heaven's blue, doth pray
For strength to win the shore.
'Tis good to dwell in hallowed place,
On angels' food to fare;
The hour of parting nears—but space
Remains for one brief prayer."

He ceased—a modest pause ensued,
Ere a form bent and gray
Up in a shadowy corner stood
And faltered, "Let us pray.
Dear Lord, in our prosperity
We sinners need Thee most;
Let not forgetfulness to Thee
Move us to prideful boast,
As if by our own power or will
Our heads are lift on high,
And corn and wine our baskets fill,
While others starve and die.
When frosts are sharp and tempests feroce,
And friends are false and few,
When poisoned darts our bosoms pierce,
Rosemary turns to rue—
What can we do but to Thee cling,
For earth is void and vain!
But when the joy-bells loudly ring
And sunshine comes again—
Help of the tempted, by Thy might,
O hold us closely then.
Strengthen our eyes to bear the light,
For thy Son's sake. Amen."

The stranger guest, without the door,
The pastor straight waylaid:
His glance, amazed, ran quickly o'er
The garments coarse and frayed.
"Your home, my friend?" he stammered forth,
"The poor-house, reverend sir,
Some chambers there look to the north,
While clumps of pine and fir
From others bar the blessed light
And make them damp and cold.
Across my floor a river bright,
In waves of molten gold,
Dances and laughs until high noon—
To aged and to poor
The sunshine is a priceless boon.
I merit it no more
Than others; hence, I beg you, pray
That God's dear grace to me
That failed not in the darkest day,
May bless prosperity."

The man of God, abashed, stood still,
With bowed and barbéd head,
While died upon the poor-house hill
The pauper's halting tread.
Warm, contrite drops bedewed his cheek;
Sighed he, "Prosperity!"
Father, I am the pupil meek,
The learned teacher he."

—Congregationalist.

A HOME OF YOUR OWN.

BY THE REV. J. P. HUTCHINSON.

It was the rent day and work had not been quite as brisk as usual when Mrs. Wilson reminded her husband that the rent was due and she hadn't the money to pay it. Mr. Wilson muttered something to the effect that the landlord would just have to wait for his rent till the money came in, and lighting his pipe he was about to go out.

"Papa," asked Jennie, his bonny, bright-eyed little daughter, "Papa, why do you pay rent?"

"Because I have to." He was about to add, "everybody has to," but he stopped short.

"You needn't have to unless you like," she replied; "Mr. Robinson doesn't pay any; his house is his own; and I'm sure you are as good a man as he is, for I have heard you say you can make as much money as he does. I don't see why you shouldn't give up paying rent and have a home of your own."

"A home of your own!"

He went out, but the words kept ringing in his ears, and echoed through his brain. On his way to the town a young woman was heard playing a piano, and the refrain seemed to be "a home of your own."

At all events the music appeared to keep step to these words. Even the milkman's bell, as the clapper struck the silvery sides seemed to ring out to him "a home of your own, a home of your own."

The words of his little daughter Jennie had set him thinking. They were good seed, these little words, and surely no soil should be more favorable than a loving father's heart. It was true, he made as much money as Robinson; he had as careful a wife—and he could not help thinking—one who was just as good looking—but he could not as yet see how Robinson could own a residence, while he, Steve Wilson, was but a tenant, and could hardly manage to pay the rent.

Robinson, Steve tried to persuade himself, was a lucky sort of individual. Some man have so much better luck than others. One man has a continual uphill fight with sickness and want of work, while his neighbor gets on splendidly and everything he undertakes seems to prosper. Men are like ships at sea; the same storm that wrecks one vessel only sends another the quicker to its harbor.

That night when Steve retired he had strange dreams. For his day thoughts took on peculiar forms in the realms of sleep. His little daughter was seated on his knee, so he dreamed, and he told her that he was going to have a home of his own. And yet it wouldn't be his, but theirs, her's and mamma's. And how beautiful it would be, for luck was coming his way. They would have carpets and pictures, and an organ or a piano, that she should learn to play and soothe them when they were sad or solace them when they were weary. Mamma was not to know anything about it until it was ready and complete. And the little one leaned her head upon her father's bosom as though it were a living golden seal to his vision and they were happy.

Then suddenly there came as from an inner chamber a sound of song; it was not his wife's voice; she had not, alas, sung for many a long day, but nevertheless, it was quite familiar. It was his mother's voice singing a favorite tune of hers, a tune he had often heard her hum in the sweet old days gone forevermore. But the words were new. They fitted in with sweet adaptability, however, to the old music. He will never forget the words

"A home of your own, a home of your own,
For living and loving, a home of your own."

He awoke. He remembered that his mother had been dead these many years.

A few days afterwards Robinson was standing at his door when Steve approached him. "I say neighbor, you've got a really nice looking house; it's your own too, while I can hardly pay the rent of the place I hire. I wish you would tell me how I could manage to own such a nice place."

Robinson seemed somewhat flattered by this testimony to his prudence and good taste and invited the other into his parlor.

Steve assented, and when seated in the cozy room took a hasty glance at the plainly but neatly furnished apartment. There were nice comfortable chairs, a sofa, a cabinet organ and a table in the centre on which was a family Bible and some evidently favorite volumes. The wall, clean and white, was relieved by a few engravings and one or two portraits, but Steve's eyes dwelt especially upon a motto neatly executed and suitably framed.

GOD BLESS OUR HOME.

Robinson took his seat opposite Steve and said, "I'll be glad, my friend, to let you know how I got my house and lot. In the first place I gave up my fire and smoke."

"Fire and smoke! what do you mean?"

"The fire that doesn't warm your family and the smoke that cures no bacon—whiskey and tobacco. Let us figure a little; how much do you spend on drink?"

Steve muttered something to the effect that he could not exactly tell.

"Well," said Robinson, "I feel almost ashamed myself to confess but I had my glass on an average three times a day, and then, sometimes I indulged in a dime's worth of something stronger. That made twenty-five cents a day with the extras on Saturday night. We have said nothing

about the supply for Sunday. I reckon I spent about six dollars a month on fire water—beer and whiskey. How is that with your experience?" he asked.

"I fear," replied Steve, thinking about how he treated and otherwise frittered away a considerable portion of his earnings; "I fear I spend more than that."

"Never mind, we'll just put it at that at present. Then for tobacco I spent at least a dime a day."

"That would hardly do in my case," said Steve, "my smoking and chewing would come to more than that. I'm getting rather hard on tobacco."

"Well," replied Robinson, "let us put three dollars a month for tobacco. There's nine dollars a month."

"But you haven't got this house and lot for nine dollars a month have you?"

"No," was the reply, "but I talked the matter over with my wife. She said she could manage to save something by extra care. I made her treasurer, and she's a good one. We have paid twelve dollars a month and are still paying that, until we get the amount cleared. Instead of paying the money for rent we are paying a little extra and paying it for a purchase."

"But I can't give up my drinks and tobacco," said Steve rising.

"Then you can't have your own home. You are likely to be always a renter. However, you asked me how I managed to get a house of my own and I have told you. And by the way, Steve, I'm a happier, healthier, and I trust, a better man, since I gave up these bad habits, and thank God there are enjoyments of a higher and better kind than we ever had before. Good day, Steve."

Steve went on his way. He passed the saloon without entering. By very force of habit he put a piece of tobacco in his mouth and then hurriedly spat it out again. But a struggle was going on. He was accustomed to his drinks; he had formed the tobacco habit and he knew now that in various ways he spent more money than would in a comparatively short time secure him and his family a comfortable home.

His little Jennie, too, had said that he was as good a man as Robinson. He would prove that she was right. Yes, his wife and daughter should, God helping him, have a home of their own.

One evening, Steve, his wife and Jennie, went together to take shares in the local building and loan society. Steve told the secretary his plans. In return that official gave them kind and cheering words. In parting he addressed Steve as Mr. Wilson, his wife as Mrs. Wilson and the daughter as Miss Jennie.

Steve was in luck. His wife improved in health, while he was happier and more cheerful.

Some months afterwards Steve bought a lot and built a convenient little house. He has been offered a high price for the property which has considerably risen in value, but he persistently clings to the house which he and his better half conjointly planned and which is being so rapidly paid for. And inside upon the parlor wall there is the usual motto, "God bless our home," but opposite to it there is another printed in plain, but well formed characters and which reads

A HOME OF OUR OWN,

—Union Signal.

JESSIE.

BY WILLIAM LUFF.

It was a cold, bleak, wintry outlook. Snow had been falling during Sunday night, and Monday morning saw the London streets in white apparel. A ragged-school teacher was passing along Bow-street, a leading thoroughfare out of the Strand, when she saw, shivering on the kerbstone, a nine-year-old scholar of the previous night.

Poor little mite! Her nose was blue with frost, while her toes were peeping up from holes in her old shoes, as if to sympathize with their more elevated brother.

"Why, Jessie, you half-starved looking little morsel, what are you doing out here in the snow?"

"I's waiting, teacher."

"Yes, I see you are; but what are you waiting for?"

"The black van, teacher," replied Jessie, with a troubled look.

What black van did she mean? The police-court was in Bow-street, the old court before it was removed to the new premises opposite, and to this place of trial prisoners were brought in the Queen's omnibus, free of charge. It was this police-van for which the shivering child was waiting.

"But who do you expect, Jessie?" inquired the friend sadly.

The child hung her head, as if ashamed, and then whispered—

"It's mother, teacher."

"Oh, my darling, I am so sorry! What makes you say so?"

"Last night, teacher, you know how you told us about that man who didn't die and have to be put in a black box. You said he went to heaven in a chariot of fire, like the Lord Mayor's carriage, only better; and I was so full, I ran home to tell mother all about it. I rushed upstairs (we live atop of the house) and was going head first into the room; but the door was locked. I knocked, and then I kicked; but no one answered. Then I knew mother had gone out to get drink. So I crouched down in the corner and waited. The clocks struck eleven, then twelve, and mother didn't come, then I knew she'd got locked up."

"And what did you do in your trouble?"

"I just told Jesus all about it."

"But what have you had for breakfast?"

"Ain't had no proper breakfast, teacher."

"Well, what have you had?"

"Soon as it was light, I came out and went round Covent Garden Market and picked up some orange peel and I ate that."

Who would not abhor the cursed drink that causes children to thus sleep coverless on the stairs and go supperless and breakfastless!

"I must get you some breakfast," said the lady, and entered a ham and beef shop at the corner, where she bought a pork pie, and then next door a loaf.

"Can you say 'Thank you' to Jesus for this?" she said, as the girl opened eyes, hands, and mouth.

"Yes, teacher, and thank you, too."

"It's a comin', teacher," she suddenly exclaimed; and sure enough the van appeared. Jessie pushed through the little crowd, and when she saw her mother she sprang forward.

"Here I am, mother!" But the police pushed her on one side and hurried the prisoner in.

Four years after, that teacher went to see Jessie in the infirmary, aged thirteen. Neglect and want had done their work.

"Your Jessie is dying, ma'am," said the nurse, as she entered.

"Hush! don't say it so loud; she will hear."

"All right, teacher," said Jessie, "I don't mind."

How beautiful.

"Come and sit down, teacher," she continued, and then told about the woman in the next bed.

"She do swear so."

"And what do you do for her, Jessie?"

"Why, I try to tell her about Jesus, teacher. Dear teacher, I don't fret 'cos I'm here. I'm going home to heaven soon, for all my sins are washed away in the blood of Jesus. You won't leave me?"

Then she dozed for a time. Presently she said—

"Tell Polly Bruce my favorite text for a keepsake. 'There remaineth—therefore—a rest—to—the people—of—God.'"

Again she dozed. She had no further property to dispose of. Suddenly she exclaimed—

"It's a comin', teacher!" Bow-street

and the police-court rose before the teacher's eye, but it was no black van that she saw; rather it was the chariot of light. Sweetly she explained—

"Jesus is a sendin' for his little Jessie. Here I am, Jesus!" and she reached up her thin hand.

Would she speak again? Teacher kissed her. The lips gave their last utterances on earth—

"Jesus wore a crown of thorns—and I—a crown of glory."

Nurse came and lit the gas, and they had to say of her who told Jesus, thanked Jesus, and worked for Jesus, that she went to Jesus.—The Christian.