



### Temperance Department.

#### GOODY'S CUP OF MILK.

BY E. M. DAUGLISH.

"You want to know how it was I became foreman of these works? Well, I'll tell you. It was all along of a cup of milk!"

There was a slight laugh among the men who sat round George Robson as he said these words, but they knew he was "fond of his joke," as they expressed it, so they waited to hear what was coming next.

He was a fine tall fellow, this foreman, and as he stood amid his men he over-topped most of them. His hair was grizzled, and his face marked with lines that told of an accomplished purpose and struggles overcome.

It was the dinner-hour, and as the men's homes were in many cases distant they gathered in a neighboring coffee tavern for their meal.

"Well, you may laugh," went on Robson, "but if it's true that the acorn is the beginning of the oak tree, so it is that Goody Brown's milk-jug was the first start I got on the road to a better life. Ah! she was a good old soul."

"Well, tell us the story," said one of the men.

"Well, but about Goody's milk-jug," went on the foreman. "It was a good many years ago, and I was a lad somewhere about sixteen, and as hardened a young villain as you would see anywhere. I had been a regular 'gutter-child.' I never knew my mother; my father turned me out at seven years of age to shift for myself. He drank himself to death, and I just lived on the streets. I often got in prison for stealing little things, but at last for a bigger offence I was put in a reformatory. After a year or two I managed to run away, and took to a roving life, often up to wild pranks that might have caused my ruin, only God in his mercy held out His hand to save me. After a time I got work as a navvy on a new railway they were making down in the country. Though so young, I was strong for my age, and willing enough to work. Arab as I was, I yet thought it was somehow better to earn my own living by honest labor than to get it by stealing. Conscience was not quite dead in me, and I knew well enough when I was doing wrong. The navvies I was with were a rough lot, but none worse than myself, and some a deal better. I lodged in some sheds near the cutting, and every day, as I went to work, I had to pass Goody Brown's cottage.

"She was a tall, old woman, and used to stand at her gate and watch us as we passed, never heeding the rude words some of us gave her. She had a pretty little garden with roses and southernwood in it, and a row of beehives in a corner. She had some chickens too, and I fear we thought it would be a jolly plan to make off with one or two for our supper some fine evening.

"There was a little public close to the railway cutting, where we used to go and drink, but I never took kindly to it. I had seen too much of it when my father was alive, so I really suffered when my mates tried to make me drink.

"Well, one morning, after a drunken bout overnight, I started off to my work before the others. I felt very good for nothing, and almost wished I could kill myself and get rid of life altogether. As I passed the little cottage I noticed the old woman at her gate, seemingly on the lookout for me. It was very early, hardly light, and I felt surprised to see her there. As I came up she called to me, 'Here! my lad!'

"I felt half inclined to go and take no notice, but her voice sounded uncommon pleasant after the rough ones I'd been accustomed to, so I just stopped in the middle of the road. She beckoned me to come nearer, and when I went she held out a large mug full of milk. 'Here, lad,' says she, 'drink this; you must feel thirsty this morning,' and she looked at me with a look that went through me, hard and wretched as I was. It was so full of pity that as I

drank the milk it was like to choke me. She said nothing more till I gave back the mug; then she said, 'Look here, lad, you're too young to take to drinking ways. Come in here for a sup of milk or coffee as you pass in the day. It will be better than the beer.'

"I was so surprised I could only say, 'Thank ye, missis,' and hurry off as fast as I could. You fellows can hardly understand the stunning effect of a bit of kindness, when you've never been used to it all your life. As I went to my work I felt as if Goody Brown had given me a blow on the head. I could not make out what she meant by caring to single me out and give me her milk. When I went home that night I was with a lot of others, and they carried me along with them, so I never stopped to see if the coffee was there, though I was thirsty. Next morning, however, it was just the same, there was Goody and her big mug. She watched me drink, with a smile on her face, and then said, 'Well, lad, is it good?'

"I should think it was," I said, 'too good for the likes of me.'

"'Nay, lad, nothing's too good for one of the Saviour's sheep.'

"What do you mean, missis?" said I, though a faint idea of what she meant began to come into my mind.

"Why, your Saviour cares for you. Don't you know that, my lad?" said Goody, putting her kind old hand on my shoulder, and looking earnestly in my face. 'Neglect him as much as you will, he cares for you; and so I am glad to give you a cupful for his sake.'

"I hardly understood a word of what she said, yet all day it kept running in my head, 'He cares for you;' and then because He cared old Goody did too—cared enough to stint herself for the sake of a young good-for-naught who had meant to rob her hen house! Day by day went on, and the milk never failed. She always said a word or two about the Saviour; not much, only one or two little things that I never forgot; and in the midst of my rough life and wicked heart, there arose a desire to be better, just for the sake of Goody and the Saviour she served.

"I made no change to speak of in my life; however, I did keep out of the public most times. Once I got drunk, and next day was too ashamed to go for my milk as usual, but slunk to my work another way. When I went again she never scolded me; she only said, 'Well, lad, you've had a fall, but the Lord upholdeth all that fall, so you won't do it again, most likely.'

"At last came a sort of crash that ended all this, and drove me away to another part of the country. One night some of my mates made up their minds to steal one of Goody's hens, and determined I should be the thief. They had hated my friendship with her, and some of the worst of the lot meant to put a stop to it. Being almost the youngest among them, they thought they could force me to do anything, but they were wrong. They got me into the little public, and with threats and oaths told me what was expected of me. I said little, but when I started off, as they thought, in the direction of Goody's cottage, I only went to have a last look at it in the moonlight, and then I took to my heels and ran as hard as I could till I was far away from my old comrades and could smell the sea air.

"I got on board a ship, and was taken out to Australia as captain's boy. He was a godly man, that captain, just the same sort as old Goody, and he finished the work her milk jug had begun."

"It was something more than her milk jug," remarked one of the more serious of George Robson's auditors. "That begun it, perhaps, but it didn't carry it on."

"You're right there, Joe, it was God's grace that saved me at last, but I owed the knowledge of it to old Goody, who first showed me what Christian kindness meant."

"I told all this story after a bit, to Captain Graves, and he advised me to go and see Mrs. Brown as soon as I returned, and tell her all I had told him. I often felt how bitterly she must think of me, after all her goodness—to go off without a word; and I wondered if she had been robbed after all.

"I was too shy to write to her, so the voyage came to an end; and about a year and a half after I had left England I stood once more at Goody Brown's gate.

"It was evening time and the door was shut, but no light shone in the little window.

I felt chilled to the heart. What if the old woman were dead? As I stood there, a train rushed by in the cutting below, and startled me into giving a good hard knock at the door.

"Come in," cried a cheerful voice, which made my heart beat with joy—for it was Goody's."

"I opened the door, and could just see her sitting in the dark all alone. 'Who is it?' she asked.

"Don't you know me, Mrs. Brown? It's me—George—the navvy boy you used to be so good to."

"So it is," she said, getting up, with a joyful smile, 'and a new man, too, I know, by the sound of your voice. Come in, come in. I can't see you, for I've been blind the last six months.'

"When I heard that I ran forward and took both of Goody's hands, and we kissed each other. She made me sit down by her and tell her all the story. How she wept, to be sure, poor old soul. It seems she had a son about my age who had died, and from the first she had taken an interest in me for his sake.

"But it was your cup of milk that first made me want to be better, Goody," I said; 'and now with God's help, I'll be a help to you for the rest of your days.'

"Well, George," said Goody, softly, 'you know a cup of cold water given for the sake of the Lord shall not lose its reward, and I'm sure mine far exceeds what I deserve. I never thought the Lord would let you be lost, but I did not feel sure he'd let me know all about it as he has.'

"I did not go back to sea again. I lodged with Goody and got work on the railway. She was glad to have me lead her about and be a comfort to her in her declining days. I gradually improved my position, and she took a delight in every fresh step I made, till she was called home a few years ago.

"That's the story, mates. It's a very simple one, but it is quite wonderful what a little act of kindness can do for one who is in need."

The great bell rang and called the men back to their work; but the hour had not been lost, for the foreman's story made its mark, even though the good seed did not immediately shoot up and bear fruit.—*Temperance Chronicle.*

#### JANIE'S SHOES.

"James," said Mrs. Townsend to her husband, "Janie won't be able to go out again till she has a new pair of shoes."

"Why! you don't mean to say that those I bought last are worn out?"

"Yes, they are; they have been patched and stitched until they are now quite beyond mending. Poor little thing, it is hard if she cannot run out, even in the garden, when it is the least damp, without getting wet-footed."

"Well, she can't have them this week, that is certain; I haven't a penny more than I shall want for railway fares and other things."

"What do you do with your money, James?" asked Mrs. Townsend, piteously. "I can't think where it all goes."

"No more can I," answered the husband; "it seems to me there must be great waste somewhere; how do you manage to get rid of it all?"

"I can show you an account of all I have spent," replied Mrs. Townsend. "Can you tell me what you spend?"

This was not said angrily, but, on the other hand, in a kindly, entreating tone.

"Well, you know, Kate, I hardly ever take any notice of the few pence I spend," answered her husband.

"But what becomes of the money? it must go somewhere, and I am sure I do not spend it extravagantly, James."

"Let me look at your book, Kate, and then I can judge for myself."

The account-book was brought, and Townsend looked it carefully through; column after column he added up, but could find no error; and he scratched his head in his perplexity, as though he thought that by doing so he could solve the mystery as to where his money had gone.

"I can't make it out," he said; "but if Janie wants a pair of shoes, of course she must have them. I lent John King fifteen shillings a little time ago, and I will go and ask him to return it; certainly I have had a little beer there since, but that will only come to a shilling or two."

King kept a beer-house not far from Townsend's home, and sometimes the latter had obliged the former by advancing him a few shillings when the collector had been coming and King was short of money.

"I wish you did not have so much to do with King," said Mrs. Townsend. "He will do you no good."

"Nor harm either, Kate. I must have a glass of ale now and then, and King's house is handiest for me; besides, I have known him from a child, and he is a very good sort of fellow."

So saying, Townsend took his hat and walked out. In a few minutes he was at "The Six Bells."

"Oh! Mrs. King," he said, "will it be convenient to you to return the money I lent your husband a few days ago?"

"Certainly, Mr. Townsend," answered the landlady. "Shall I deduct your beer score?"

"Yes, you may as well. I shan't have it to pay another time, if I do it now, that's one good thing," returned James.

"Let me see," said Mrs. King, looking at a book in which James' score was entered. "Let me see; I don't think there is much difference between us, is there?"

"Not much difference!" cried Townsend; "yes, I should think there is; it was fifteen shillings I lent King."

"Yes, and your score comes to fourteen and elevenpence."

"What!" said Townsend, "You must have made a mistake."

"No, here it is, you see; tenpence on Monday last week, a shilling on Tuesday—but there, you can see for yourself." So saying, she handed the book to her customer.

James scratched his head again, this time a little harder than before, but could not see that there was any error in the account.

"Fourteen and elevenpence!" he said at length; "I didn't think it was half that."

"Well, you know you have had a little extra lately, and then I sent in more on Saturday night to serve you for Sunday."

"Yes," said James, "I know you did; but fourteen and elevenpence; I can't make it out."

But it was no good for James Townsend to puzzle his brains or scratch his head; there was the amount, and he could dispute none of the items.

"Well, have a pint of beer and we will cry quits," said the landlady; "and I am sure we are much obliged to you for the loan."

"So I should think," thought James Townsend; "and I am very glad I did lend the money to you; if I had not done so I should have paid for my beer as I had it, a penny or twopence at a time, and then I should never have known how much I did spend on it. Let me see," he continued, as he walked slowly home, "fourteen shillings and elevenpence in a fortnight; why, that is more than a shilling a day. I couldn't have believed it; a shilling a day is eighteen pounds five a year, and say I only spend sixpence a day in the ordinary way, that's nine pounds two and six a year. I'll throw it up altogether. I won't buy a drop more, that I won't."

And he kept his word, and the next week Janie had a good pair of shoes, and now there are no complaints about being short of money, nor any wondering where it goes.

If every one who is in the habit of "dropping into" a public-house for a pint or half a pint several times a day, would take the trouble to reckon up what he spends weekly, we feel sure that many would be as much astonished to find what their beer costs them as was James Townsend on this occasion.—*British Workman.*

ALL RAILWAY and other large corporations are becoming great total abstinence societies. When an applicant comes for a position he is asked if he is a drinking man; if he takes a drink now and then; if so, they do not want him. This is not because the road superintendent cares more for one man than others, but because he must look out for the trains in his care, and must have men he knows are reliable and can always be depended on. And you can't depend on the man who drinks. Why, the other day I heard of a distiller that declined to hire an engineer because he admitted that he took a drop now and then. They wanted a sober and reliable man. Insurance companies won't insure men who drink heavily because of their great mortality.—*Mrs. J. Ellen Foster.*