

THE TWO LITTLE GIRLS.

In a small town at the top of one of the houses in a poor court in London sat a little girl about ten years old. It was summer-time, and the sun was shining bright without; but within the room little comfort was to be seen. The walls and ceiling were black with dirt and smoke, little light could come through the dingy window-pains, and for furniture there was nothing but a table and two broken chairs, and a heap or two of straw in the corners of the room to sleep on.

The little girl was pale and thin. No rosy cheeks were there, such as one looks to see at her age. Her face looked too old for her body, and seemed grave and sad beyond her years. She was at work with her needle. But she did not get on fast; for at every sound on the stairs the little fingers would stop, and she would sit with an anxious face as if watching who would come. It was plain that she was expecting some one, and some one of whom she was afraid. Fear was written on those wan little features, and every step on the stairs made it more plain to read.

Who was coming? Her father, her own father, her only parent, for her mother was dead long ago. She had no brothers or sisters,—that poor lone little girl; she lived all alone with her father, and he was—do you guess what he was?—a drunkard. He was not unkind to her when he was sober, for he had a sort of love for his little motherless child; but when he was in drink—as he was more often than not—then she had a hard time of it. Oh! how happy she was when, once now and then he would home quite sober. Then she had no fear. She would sit on his knee and prattle freely to him, and then bustle about getting his supper ready, and the little pale face would brighten up and look quite cheerful. And then the father's heart would be softened, and he would speak kindly to his little girl, and would seem even to be pleased with an evening spent so. Alas! such evenings came but seldom. She knew by his step as he came upstairs whether he was sober or not, and every tread made her tremble, as he came slowly and heavily up.

Thus passed the time of this poor little girl. She never went far from the court where they lived. Most of her days were spent in that one room. Such was her daily life. And her chief feeling was fear—fear of her father. Not that she did not love him. She did love him dearly. But, when he came home as he mostly did, she could do nothing but fear. How

it creeps him, and how not to provoke him, was all her thought then. Poor little girl!

One summer's evening another little girl, of about the same age as the first, stood leaning over the gate of a cottage garden. She was a bright and happy looking child; and now there was plainly something that made her more happy than usual. She looked first up the lane and then down it, then went outside the gate for a few steps and back again, then leant and looked again. At last she cried out, in a joyful tone, "There he is! there he is!" and ran down the lane as fast as her legs would carry her. And now see her coming back. She is clinging to the arm of a labouring man, who looks almost as happy as she does. He has had a hard day's work, but the sight of his little girl has freshened him up, for it is her father. You would think by her joy that such a thing had never happened before; but it does happen almost every day. Every day, as soon as the little girl has come from school, she takes her stand at the gate to watch for "Father;" every day, at about the same time, "Father" comes home from work; and every day there is the same happy meeting. For he is a good father, and loves his little girl; and she loves him. He is no drunkard. Home is the place for him, when work is done—not the public house. And a happy home it is. There is no fear there; but love, and peace, and comfort. The best peace of all is there—the peace of GOD. For the father is a God-fearing man, a true Christian; and he has taught his child to love Jesus, and does his best every day to lead her on in the right way. And so they live. Happy father! Happy child! Happy home!

Fathers, see what you can do for evil or for good. See how happy you can make others, or how miserable. See how it rests in vain with you, under God, whether your own little ones should love you or fear you; whether your presence should be a joyful thing or a dreadful thing to them. O drink, drink! How many homes hast thou made wretched! How many hearts hast thou broken! How many souls hast thou ruined! Fathers, beware of drink. Seek your pleasures and comforts in your homes, not at the beer-shop. Consider how much you have to answer for as fathers; how much the welfare of those nearest to you depends on you. It was not the poor, dark London room that made the one little girl so sad. It was not the cheerful country home that made the other so happy. It was the father that made the chief difference. A good father would

have brightened up that dark room, and made the tread on the stairs a loved and happy sound. A drinking father might have turned that cheerful cottage into a home of misery and fear. God might have been known and loved and worshipped in the poor dark room quite as well as in the cottage home. Yes! The difference to those two little girls was not in the place, but in the father. The one child had an ungaily, drinking father, and led a life of sadness and fear; the other was blest with a sober father, who loved God, and she was cheerful and happy. O fathers, think of this.

SENSIBLE MAXIMS

Never speak of your father as the old man.

Never reply to the epithet of a drunkard, a fool, or a fellow.

Never speak contemptuously of woman-kind.

Never abuse one who was once your bosom friend, however bitter now.

TO OUR CITY SUBSCRIBERS.

1. When you change your residence please send us word.

2. When you do not receive your numbers regularly please let us know

TO OUR COUNTRY SUBSCRIBERS

To parties who will act as our Agents we will allow a commission of one sixth on the original price, that is to say we will supply copies at TWELVE AND A HALF CENTS PER QUARTER. We also send to clubs

5 copies (per quarter)	for \$1 00
10 do do	2 00
20 do do	3 50

Each extra copy over 20, 12½ cents.

☆ All communications must be *per post*.

SUBSCRIBE

FOR

VOLUME IV.

OF THE

'WEEKLY VISITOR.'