

THE MECHANIC'S HOME.

One evening in the early part of the winter, the door bell rang with energy, and the servant announced a man who wished to see me. A 'man' is one thing with a servant, a 'gentleman' another, and a 'person' something different from either. The man stood in the hall, but I wondered why he had not been called a gentleman. I was puzzled where to place him myself. His dress was very neat, but plain, and rather coarse. His linen, that badge of refinement, was white, in perfect order, and almost elegant. Every thing about him seemed substantial; but nothing gave a clue to his position in life. In all outward seeming, he was simply a man. When he spoke to me, his sadness was simple, clear, direct, and with a certain air of self-reliance, the furthest possible from a vulgar blusterer.

"Doctor," said he, "I wish you to come and see my child. We fear he is threatened with croup."

I put on my hat and prepared to accompany him; for if the case was as he supposed, there was no time to lose. In this disease a single hour may make a life's difference.

In a moment we were in the street and walking briskly up one of our avenues. The child, he said had been playing out of doors, had eaten heartily at supper, gone to sleep, and waked up a short time since very hoarse, with a croaking cough. The case was a pretty clear one, and I hurried my walk still more, and in a few moments we were at the door. We went up, up, up, to the fourth story. The last flight of stairs was carpeted, and a small lamp at the top lighted us up. An excellent and very durable kind of mat lay at the door. You will see, in time, why I give these little particulars.

I entered the opened door, and was welcomed by a rather pretty and remarkably tidy woman, who could have been nobody in the world but the wife of the man who had summoned me.

"I am glad you have come so soon," she said in a soft, pure accent. "Little William seems so distressed that he can hardly breathe," and the next moment, as we passed through a narrow passage where he lay, I heard the unmistakably croupy sound, that justly carries such terrors to the parent's heart.

"Is it the croup, Doctor?" asked the father, with a voice of emotion, as I bent over the child—a fine boy, three years of age.

"It is certainly the croup," I said, "and a pretty violent attack. How long is it since you thought him sick?"

"Not above an hour," was the calm reply. It was made calm by firm self-control. I looked at the mother. She was very pale, but did not trust herself to speak.

"Then there is probably but little danger," I said; "but we have something to do. Have you the water here?"

The husband went to what seemed a closet, opened two doors, and disclosed a neat pine bathing-tub, supplied with the Croton. This was beyond my hopes, but I had no time to wonder. The little fellow was in a high fever, and laboring for every breath. Taking him from his little crib, where he lay upon a nice hair mattress, fit for a prince to sleep on, I took off his clean night-clothes, stood him in the wash-tub, and made his father pour full upon his neck and chest three pails of cold water, while I rubbed him briskly with my hand. He was then wiped dry, and rubbed until his whole body was glowing like a flame. Then I wrung a large towel out of cold water and put it round his throat, and then wrapped him up in blankets. The brave little fellow had borne it all without a complaint, as if he understood that under his father's eye no harm could come to him. In fifteen minutes after he was wrapped in the blankets he was in a profuse perspiration, in a sound slumber, and breathing freely. The danger was over—so rapid is this disease, and so easily cured.

Happiness had shed a serene light upon the countenance of the father, and thrown over the mother's face a glow of beauty. I looked upon them, and was more than ever puzzled where to place them. There was no mark of high birth—not a shadow of decayed gentility about them. It was rather the reverse, as if they were working up from a low rank of life to a higher.

I looked around the room. It was the bedroom. Every thing in it was perfectly neat and orderly. The bed, like the crib, was excellent, but not costly. The white counterpane did not cost more than ten shillings—yet how beautiful it looked. The white window curtains were shilling muslin; but their folds hung as richly as if they were damask—and how very appropriate they seemed. The bath, with its snug folding doors, I knew, had not cost, plumber's bill and all, more than ten dollars. The toilet-table, of an elegant form, and completely covered, I had no doubt was white pine, and cost half a dollar. The pictures on the wall were beautifully tinted lithographs—better, far better, than oil paintings I have seen in the houses of millionaires, yet they can be bought at Goupil's, or Williams & Stevens' for three to five shilling, and a dollar a-piece had framed them. The floor had a carpet that seemed to match everything, with its small, neat figure, and a light chamber color. It was a jewel of a room, in as perfect keeping in all its parts as an artist had designed it.

Leaving the little boy to his untroubled sleep, and giving directions for his bath, on his waking, we went into the other room, which was differently, but just as neatly arranged. It might have answered for a parlor, only it had a cooking-stove, or an artist's studio, or a dining room. It was hung with pictures—heads, historical pictures, and landscapes; all such as a man of

taste could select, and buy cheap, but which, like good books, are invaluable. And, speaking of books, there was a hanging library on one side of the chimney, which a single glance assured me contained the very choicest of the English tongue.

The man went to a bureau, opened a drawer and took out some money.

"What is your fee, Doctor?" he asked, holding the bills so as to select one to pay me.

Now, I had made up my mind, before I had got half way up stairs, that I might have to wait for my pay—perhaps never get it; but all this had changed. I could not, as I often do, inquire into the circumstances of the man, and graduate my price accordingly. There he stood, ready to pay me, with money enough; yet it was evident that he was a working man, and far from wealthy. I had nothing left but to name the lowest fee.

"One dollar does not seem enough," said he. "You have saved my child's life, and have been at more trouble than to merely write a prescription."

"Do you work for a living?" I asked, hoping to solve the mystery. "You are a mechanic?" I said, willing to know more of him.

"Take that," said he, placing a two dollar note in my hand, with a not-to-be-refused air, "and I will gratify your curiosity, for there is no use in pretending that you are not a little curious."

There was a hearty, respectful freedom about this that was irresistible. I put the note in my pocket, and the man, going to a door, opened it into a closet of moderate size, and displayed the bench and tools of a shoemaker.

"You must be an extraordinary workman," said I, looking around the room, which seemed almost luxurious, but when I looked at each item I found that it cost very little.

"No, nothing extra. I barely manage to earn a little over a dollar a day. Mary helps me some. With the house work to do, and our boy to look after, she earns enough to make our wages average eight dollars a week. We began with nothing—we live as you see."

All this comfort, this respectability, this almost luxury, for eight dollars a week. I expressed my surprise.

"I should be very sorry if we spent so much," said he. "We have not only managed to live on that, but we have some thing laid up in the savings' bank."

"Will you have the goodness," said I, "just to explain to me how you do it?" for I was really anxious to know how a shoemaker and his wife, earning but eight dollars a week, could live in comfort and elegance, and lay up money.

"With pleasure," he replied; "for you may persuade others, no better off than I am, to make the best of their situation."

I took a chair which he handed to me. We were seated, and his wife, after going to listen a moment to the soft measured breathings of little Willie, set down to her sewing.

"My name," he said, "is William Carter. My father died when I was young and I was bound as an apprentice to a shoemaker, with the usual provision of schooling. I did as well as boys do generally at school; and I was very fond of reading, I made the most of my spare time and the advantages of the Apprentices' Library. Probably the books that helped me most were the sensible writings of William Cobbett. Following his example, I determined to give myself a useful education, and I have to some extent succeeded. But a man's education is a life-long process, and the more I learn, the more I see before me."

"I was hardly out of my time when I fell in love with my Mary there, whom some people think very pretty, but whom I know to be very good."

Mary looked up with such a bright, loving smile as to fully justify some people in their notion.

"When I had been one year a journeyman, and had laid up a few dollars (for I had a strong motive to be saving) we were married. I boarded at her father's, and she bound shoes for the shop where I worked. We lived a few weeks at her home, but it was not our home—the home we wanted—so we determined to set up house-keeping. It was rather a small set up, but we made it answer. I spent a week in house hunting. Some were too dear, some too shabby. At last I found this place. It was new and clean, high and airy, and I thought it would do. I got it for fifty dollars a year, and though the rents all round have advanced, our landlord is satisfied with that, or takes it in preference to risking a worse tenant. The place was naked enough, and we had little to put in it save ourselves; but we went cheerfully to work, earned all we could, saved all we could—and you see the result."

"I see; but I confess I do not understand it," said I, willing to hear him explain the economy of this modest and beautiful home.

"Well it is simple enough. When Mary and I moved ourselves here and took possession, with a table, two chairs, a cooking stove, a saucepan or two, and a cot-bed with a straw mattress, the first thing we did was to hold a council of war. 'Now, Mary, my love,' said I, 'here we are. We have next to nothing, and we have every thing to get, and nobody but ourselves to help ourselves.'"

"We found that we could earn, on an average, eight dollars a week. We determined to live as cheaply as possible, save all we could and make ourselves a home. Our rent was a dollar a week—our fuel, light, water rent, and some little matters a dollar more. We have allowed the same amount for our clothing, and by buy-

ing the best things, and keeping them carefully, we dress well enough for that.—Even my wife is satisfied with her wardrobe, and finds that raw silk at six shillings a yard is cheaper in the long run, than calico at one shilling. That makes three dollars a week, and we had still our living to pay for. That costs us, with three in our family, just on dollar a week more."

"One dollar a piece?"

"No—one dollar for all. You seem surprised; but we have reckoned it over and over. It cost more at first, but now we have learned to live both better and cheaper—so that we have a clear surplus of four dollars a week, after paying all expense of rent, fire, light, water, clothing, and food. I do not count our luxuries, such as an evening at the theatre, a concert, or a little treat to our friends when we give a party."

I knew a smile came over my face, for he continued—

"Yes, give a party; and we have some pleasant ones, I assure you. Sometimes we have a dozen guests, which is quite enough for comfort, and our treat of chocolate, cakes, blanch-mange, etc. costs as much as two dollars; but this is not very often. Out of our surplus which comes, you see to two hundred dollars a year—we have bought all you see, and have money in bank."

"I see it all," said I, "all but the living. Many a mechanic spends more than that for cigars, to say nothing of liquor. Pray tell me precisely how you live."

"With pleasure. First of all, then, I smoke no cigars; and chew no tobacco, and Mary takes no snuff."

Here the pleasant smile came in, but there was no interruption; for Mary seemed to think her husband knew what he was about, and could talk very well without her aid.

I have not drank a glass of liquor since the day I was married, except a glass of wine about four times a year, on Christmas, New Year's, Fourth of July, and Willie's birthday. The last is our special holiday. I had read enough physiology to make up my mind that tea and coffee contained no nutriment, and are poisonous beside; and I tried a vegetable diet long enough to like it better than a mixed one, and to find that it agreed with me better; and as we have read and experimented together—of course, Mary thinks as I do."

"But what do you eat and drink?" I asked, curious to see how far this self-taught philosopher had progressed in the laws of health.

"Come this way, and I will show you," he said, taking the light and leading the way into a capacious store-room. "Here first of all, is a mill, which cost me twelve shillings. It grinds all my grain, gives me the freshest and most beautiful meal, and saves toils and profits. This is a barrel of wheat. I buy the best and am sure that it is clean and good. It costs less than three cents a pound, and a pound of wheat a day, you know, is food enough for any man. We make it into bread, mush, pies, and cakes. Here is a barrel of potatoes. This is hominy—"

Here are some beans, a box of rice, tapioca, macaroni. Here is a barrel of apples, the best I can find in Fulton market. Here is a box of sugar, and this is our butter jar."

We take a quart of country milk a day; I buy the rest down town, by the box or barrel, where I can get it best and cheapest. Making wheat—eaten as mush or bread, and all made coarse without bolting—and potatoes, or hominy, as rice, the staple, you can easily see that a dollar a week for provisions is not only ample, but allows of a healthy and even luxurious variety. For the rest, we eat greens, vegetables, fruits, and berries in their season. In the summer we have strawberries, and peaches, as soon as they are ripe and good. Mary will get up a dinner from these materials at a cost of a shilling, better than the whole bill of fare at the Astor."

I was satisfied. Here was comfort, intelligence, taste, and modest luxury, all enjoyed by a humble mechanic, who knew how to live at the cost I have mentioned. How much useless complaining might be saved, how much genuine happiness enjoyed—how much evil and suffering might be prevented, if all the working men in New York were as wise as William Carter."

I never shook a man or woman by the hand with more hearty respect than when I said "Good night" to this happy couple, who in this expensive city, are living in luxury and growing rich on eight dollars a week, and making the bench of a shoemaker a chair of practical philosophy."

Reader, if you are inclined to profit by this little narrative, I need not write out any other moral, than the injunction of Scripture, "Go and do likewise."—[New York Sunday Times.]

[From the Country Gentleman.]

Small Potatoes for Seed.

Mr. C. T. Alvord, of Wilmington, Vermont, says:

"Some eight years since, at the time of planting my potatoes, I came short of seed to plant. Previous to this time I had used large whole potatoes, or the seed-ends cut off, for seed, and supposed that no others would answer. I resolved to try the experiment of planting small potatoes; the largest being about the size of common plums, but the most of them being smaller. I carried several bushels of these little things to the field, and commenced planting them, putting from two to four in a hill."

The potatoes in the different parts of the field came up at the same time, but the vines from the small potatoes were not as large and as thrifty as those from the large ones. At the first hoeing, there was some difference in the tops, but after that the tops from the small potatoes looked as well as any of the field, and continued to

through the season. When I came to dig them, I found the potatoes, where the small seed was planted, to be as good, in every respect, as those where the large potatoes were planted; There were as many in a hill, and the potatoes were as large, and with as few small ones, as those from the large seed."

Many of the farmers in this vicinity, after seeing the experiment fairly tried, are using small potatoes for seed. This winter I have had several applications from potato dealers for small potatoes for seed, who inform me that the farmers whom they purchase from are generally adopting the way of using small potatoes for seed."

A NEW BULLET-EXTRACTOR.—The frightful list of wounded at the hard-fought battles of Alma and Inkerman suggested to Mr. Izra Miles (of Stoke Hammond) the idea of constructing an instrument for extracting bullets from the wounds with comparative ease, rapidity, and safety. The contrivance is very simple, consisting of a small air-pump and cylinder, to which a tap is affixed. To this tap is attached a suitable length of flexible tubing, about a quarter of an inch in diameter, lined inside with silver wire to prevent its collapsing. At the other end of this tube there is a small globe, from which a tube sufficiently minute to pass into a bullet wound is fixed, the end terminating with an india-rubber collar. On the top of the globe there is a small tap in order to admit a probe to pass down the tube to sound when on the bullet.—The mode of operation is this:

A vacuum is created in the cylinder, the tube before alluded to is passed into the wound, and when it is ascertained to be on the ball the tap in the cylinder is opened, when the bullet becomes fixed to the tube by the vacuum thus created and is thus withdrawn. The great merit of this invention consists in its obviating the necessity for the painful and dangerous operation of cutting out bullets, and by its means a medical man, with the aid of an assistant to work the air-pump, would be able to accomplish the work which now occupies many surgeons.—When the cylinder is once exhausted, it would extract several bullets without the necessity of again working the air-pump. The Medical Board has given directions to an eminent instrument maker to fit up the apparatus.—[English paper.]

REMEDY FOR THE BLACK KNOT.—In conversing with a friend a few days since, he informed me that he had been successful in removing the black excrescences that have proved so injurious to plum trees as follows:

Saturate the knot with spirits of turpentine, and in time it will dry up and heal over. He thinks the disease is caused by an insect, which the spirits of turpentine destroys, and thereby remedies the evil. He had recommended it to his neighbors and in all cases it had proved alike beneficial. In looking over some of the back volumes of the "Cultivator," I find the general remedy recommended is excision, and knowing that this sometime proves injurious to the tree, I thought I would send you this remedy—so simple and yet so beneficial—for publication, not doubting but that I should get some ideas in return from your correspondents.

I see the cherry is affected, in some sections of the country, with the black knot, and I presume the above remedy will prove alike beneficial to them.—[Country Gent'n.]

PEACH CUTTINGS.—The "Farmer" says that in the garden of Capt. Welsh, at Benicia, there are peach trees three feet high in bloom, raised last year from slips. His process was to take the slips off in January or February, and making a narrow trench of twelve inches deep, put in about four inches of sand. Into this, place the cuttings of about fifteen inches long, inserting the cutting into the sand and pressing it about the foot, fill up the trench—the sand absorbing the moisture without clogging or rotting the cutting; it soon sends out its fibrous shoots, takes root and grows freely.

A GREY SNOW.—The Pittsburg Gazette says that a letter to a gentleman in that city, from East Hickory, Venango county, states that on the 7th of Feb'y, about a foot of snow fell in that region, on about six inches which had fallen previously. After the storm was over, the people were surprised to find that the snow was a grey color, near the tint of buckwheat flour, and, in depressed places, the color of wood ashes. This appearance extended all through that region for miles in extent, in both cleared and wood lands.

NO MORE RANCID BUTTER.—Wild recommends that the butter should be kneaded with fresh milk, and then with pure water. He states that by this treatment, the butter is rendered as fresh and pure in flavor as when recently made. He ascribes this result to the fact, that butyric acid, to which the rancid odor and taste are owing, is readily soluble in fresh milk, and is then removed.—Journal of Industrial Progress.

TO MAKE BLACKBOARDS.—An appliance for blackboards can be made by boiling 1 lb. log wood in water enough to cover it, and adding half-an-ounce of green vitriol. This is superior to paint, as it stains the wood, and will not wear off, dries in a few minutes, and bears no gloss.

POPULATION OF ST. LOUIS.—The population of St. Louis, according to a census just taken, is 97,512, including 2956 colored persons, which is an increase of about 12,000 since the census of 1853. The population of the city and suburbs will reach nearly 120,000.