

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## The British Magazines.

From the Working Man's Friend.

## THE PYE-STREET BOY.

Across the South Foreland, and from the open sea, a rough and wintry wind blew hoarsely, and lashing the turbid waters of the great river into lengthened waves, swept keenly with the intermingled rain and sleet which fell through the arches of the city bridges.

Had the fury of this wintry blast been wholly expended on wood or stone, it might have mattered little; but beneath one of the arches through which it keenly swept—more keenly as it seemed to be than through the rest—was huddled what was human: what could see, and hear, and speak; feel hunger, cold, and pain—a group of ragged, homeless children.

There were five or six of these in all; but only one moved restlessly to and fro, as the wind swept in, or the sleet was drifted to where he lay; for the rest huddled together on the more sheltered side of the arch, and, protected by the few old shavings they had drawn around them, slept, or at least seemed to sleep, for the huddled mass was as motionless as the granite roof which sheltered it.

But he, the youngest of these wretched children, was roused by a keener enemy than wind or rain; for he had not tasted food for many hours; so that when his head seemed nestled once again beneath the breast of the tattered, soddened man's coat he wore, or his hands tucked up within the greasy, tattered cuffs, or his naked feet drawn up still higher, for the sake of warmth, in a moment his whole attitude was changed, and his pinched, half-vacant childish face, was turned again towards wind and rain and sleet, as if there, in the dark vacuity of the surging waters, he sought for the sympathy he had never known, or for the human charity and aid he had sought in vain elsewhere; as if there, untaught as were his lips, unbent his knee, the nature pregnant in the souls of all of us, made him half-conscious, as it were, that there, within that darkness, and that storm, ruled a sacred will and power, who, open-eyed to sin and ignorance and suffering, is most omnipotent to save!

Rising at last from off the ground, after one of those long gazes of keen and pitiful despair, he brushed the lingering sleet from off his face, and, dragging up the collar of the soddened coat still higher round his neck, went out at once into the storm, and ascended from the river bank to one of the least-frequented streets which lay within this district. There was some strong motive for the courage and resolution with which this small, frail, half-clad child encountered the rough night storm—so rough, at times, as to sweep round the corners of the streets like a gale far out at sea. Though even the very dogs which prowled about such sordid streets were housed, he yet kept on without once lingering, except for a minute, around such small hucksters' or bakers' shops as were yet open, to see if he could steal a morsel of the food he so ravenously craved; but their doors were mostly closed against the storm, or their keepers too vigilant for even the cunning of hunger in extremity. At last, in a small street leading directly from the most aristocratic district of Westminster, he went on more slowly, till he reached a very little shop-window, which, yet unshuttered, and, dimly lighted by a candle in the rear, displayed a few such articles as caps bedizened by tawdry-coloured ribbons and flowers, some second-hand bonnets, and here and there an article or so of more modest shape and kind, as if showing that a better class of customers stepped sometimes from the grandeur of the neighboring streets to make a purchase. It was to this window, and the poor room which belonged to it, that the child had unerringly traced his way through wind and rain: for here it was, at four years, that he had made his first public, yet undiscovered, theft, of one of these tawdry, dangling caps, and for which his mother, who had watched outside, had applaudingly treated him with a penny-worth of gin in the next dram-shop. That lesson had been well remembered, and well learned; and now just free from prison, and driven forth from the place he mis-called 'home,' and the creature he misnamed by the name of 'mother,' he came through the storm to this place to thief again; though this time not for gin, but merest bread. After watching awhile, he raised the latch with a dexterous and practiced hand, opened the door, entered, and closed it again, wholly unperceived by a woman who sat intently reading beside a small fire-place, at the rear of a narrow strip of counter, just as she had sat six years before, on a wintry evening, by the same place and with the same book. The unchanged character of every thing around half-startled one so accustomed to habits of restless vagrancy, for though the interval had been to him a period of crime and physical suffering, every circumstance of this first theft was recollected with minute fidelity. After glancing quickly around with an acuteness of observation peculiar to this class of children, he crept stealthily towards the narrow counter, for on it lay, spread on a paper, some article, which to his savage and untutored taste appeared to be most worthy of theft, because of its bright and gaudy colour; but as his hands reached over, in the act of grasping it, there in that attitude they remained, as if turned in the instant to stone; for, glancing forward to see if he were unobserved, the benign and heavenly expression upon the poor, pale, drooping face which read

was so akin to that sovereign, yet invisible, power of sympathy and mercy he had sought so blindly in the bleak waste of rain; that, for the first time in his life, he could not steal; but, changing this act of sin into the act of supplication, he said pitifully, as he drew back his hands on to the edge of the narrow counter:

'If you please, mum, give us a piece of bread.'

The needlewoman, for such she was, raised her face, which had still the same sublime and merciful expression on it, as well it might, for she was no Pharisee, and, reading thus, its spirit had entered, as it had oftentimes before, into her soul:

'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.'

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' And,

'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.'

When she had glanced at the boy, still with this sweet and fervid expression of womanly humanity and pity in her face, she rose, and, coming to the counter, said gently, 'You beg, but you came to steal, eh?'

The boy dropped his eyes before her searching gaze, but said honestly, 'I blunty, 'Well, mum, I've did, for I've did my first job o' priggish here; but you looked so good a set'n there as wouldn't let me do it nohow. So, as I arn't priggish and be hungry, will yer giv us a bit o' bread?'

She made no answer for the instant, but stepping quickly round the counter, took his soddened, frozen hands within her own, and led him to the fire; and as she did so, as she chafed his hands within her own, she said gently: 'It was not so much me, or that which is of me, you saw in my face and call kindness, as the spirit of Divine words of a Divine Master, set down in a Divine book; and which all who rightly read must show some sign of in the face, and which if you could read and understand you would not have come here to steal to-night—but I forgive you.'

'But what's a lad to do, mum,' spoke the boy, with a sort of honest indignation curious to observe for its genuineness; he aint taught no'then, and can't do no'then, and ain't long enough in quod to learn what's handy, and so when he gets turned out, what's he to do for a mite o' vittels, but prig?'

'Well, we will talk of this presently,' spoke the poor cap-maker; 'but you're wet and ill, and must have food.' So saying, she made the hoarse and wretched child sit down upon a little cushioned stool before the fire, and, rousing it up, morsel as it was, she searched the neighboring closet for such food as she had to give. It was not much; but he who poured oil and balm into the stranger's wounds could not have bestowed it more nobly; for setting aside what coffee was already in a small coffee-pot upon the hob for her own use on the morrow, she took what stood in a canister in a closet, and made fresh; warmed up a sort of hash or stew—evidently set by for her dinner next day—and put it forth on a clean plate, with salt and a large share of bread; and when she had set these on his knee, she poured forth the steaming coffee into a fair-sized mug. But whether it was the extremity of cold and pain and hunger, so long endured, and now relieved as by the goodness of an angel—whether it was the untaught heart of ignorance and sin found here some virtual shadow of the Mighty Presence it had sought for so blindly in the wintry storm—whether it was that the pure and Christian goodness in this poor pale face touched what was hard and obdurate within him, like some heavenly sun a frozen and barren plain for ages, I scarcely know; but true it was, this hardened childish pariah of the lowest haunts of sin, the foulest city streets, this little human heart—so hardened and so impenetrable—was softened and subdued; and grasping her wasted, work-worn hands, he bent his head, and raining out his truthful tears upon her knee, was as plastic to good, as heretofore to evil.

Margaret—for such was her name—allowed these contrite tears to flow unchecked; but when lessened, she made him eat his meal, and come still closer to the cheerful fire. She then said, gently:

'And now, for the sake of the meal I have been able to give you, where do you come from, and where do you live?'

'I've come close here mum, out o' Old Pye street, where the old woman lives, and my name's Johnny; don't know a t'other, though mother may.'

'As you have a mother, then,' said Margaret, 'why don't you stop at home, instead of prowling about the streets on a night like this? Nothing but some sinful purpose could bring you forth?'

'Home!—mother!' repeated the wretched child, with that rude eloquence so often a characteristic of the lower depths of social life—'what's them—ain't I bin driven out o' one like a mad cat, 'cause I ain't sharp at passing the old woman's flash money, and got in quod twice; and ain't the t'other always drunk, and beat'n me like a nigger? No, what's she ever done for me, but taught me to prig, and drink gin, and thumped me when I wouldn't. So I've won't bear it any more—but try and be the wickitish chap going. That's it—for I hate her, and the old 'un too, that's mother's mother I mean.'

'The book I was reading when you came in to steal,' said Margaret, 'tells us we must

hate no one; but is there no one you love, Johnny?'

'Well, mum, there's little Kitty—that's my sister—I've like her; but then mother's teaching her to be as wickit as she can, and then on course I shall hate her; wickit folks git sich cruel hearts—they never once look like you did ven I came in to prig.'

'But you may look so, and perhaps make your little sister look so,' continued Margaret; 'but to do this you must learn to read out of the book I do, and to work instead of steal, and to speak the truth instead of lie; and these things you may learn to do by going to school, where those who care for children such as you think no care or pains too great to teach the way of duty unto God and unto man.'

'Oh, mum, you mean sich places as be in ar street, where lads patch coats, and cobbles shoes, and learn out o' sich a book as thins'; but mother say, and the old woman say, as how sich places be gammon, and no boy be fit for a prig as bin there.'

'But you musn't steal again,' added the poor cap-maker, 'but work. All true and honest money in the world is got by work; do you understand?'

'Summat, mum. But mother says as how the rich git all their fine things for no'then, and how as it's right for the poor to steal.'

'No, Johnny, this is wrong. There is little which the rich have which you, or any other child like you, may not have by labor, and honest dealing, and love to God; and you, and such as you, may, through means like these, live to build schools and churches, instead of dying by the hangman, or spending your time in gaol. So you must try to do this, and, working, have means to grow an honest man, and save your little sister from sin. Should you like to work?'

'Vy, mum, I've don't think I've should like to sit cobblling all day, 'cept it might be to make Kitty a prime little pair o' shoes. She had a pair once; I've bought 'em with a wind fall; but mother spouted 'em afore they was put on, and we've cried terribly, both Kitty and I. But I've should like to saw and to hammer nails; for vonce, ven I've was on the tramp, I saw a man making chairs and tables in a little village-shop, and I thought if I could do as thins's I'd never prig again. But there's nothing o' th' sort can be learnt by sich as me.'

'But you can learn to labour in some way,' said Margaret; 'and the beginning often opens a clear road. So you must go to school, and you will find what is taught there is not the sort of thing your mother says.'

'But what's I to do for vittels mum. Mother swore yesterday she'd never giv me another bit.'

'If I go and state your case,' replied the cap-maker, 'these good and noble people who conduct these schools will teach and feed you, and be your parent's; you'll only have to go home at night.'

'Home?' and the pariah looked up with astonishment. Why, they half-murder me! Lor! mum, you've don't know mother and her wickitness.'

'I can guess,' replied Margaret gravely; 'but you must attempt to go home for the sake of your little sister—you must; and for the matter of bearing hardship, we have all of us to bear some one sorrow or another. But now listen, and tell me one thing. Do you know who God is?'

'I've heard our folks laugh at that name!' and he said this with a stolid indifference, which betrayed at once his depth of ignorance.

'He is,' added Margaret, leaning down, so as to fully gaze into the child's dull and unimpassioned face (impassioned only in some act of sin), so that he might see the earnestness with which she spoke, 'mighty and merciful and good, and reigning in the heavens above us, is glorified in seeing children, such as you, strive to unlearn the sin you've learnt; and, more than all, is glorified by those who in the least strive, by act, or deed, or word, to teach you, save you, help you, and bring you to the heaven he dwells in. And now kneel with me, for he who seeks Him finds Him.' And, as she said so, Margaret made this human thing of ignorance and sin and suffering bend his knees, for the first time in his childish life, to the God whose mercy he had sought so blindly, yet so intuitively, in the storm. She prayed, and asked His goodness and His mercy to children such as these; she prayed that mothers of gentle heart, that honest fathers, willing to bring blessings to their own children's home, that the rich and powerful, and others only rich in charity and human love, might, one and all, serve in this humane, charitable, Christian service,—so holy that no age has known its like, no country, saving this, a cause of larger benefit. Tho' put in humbler words, it meant all this; and praying, as she ended, for this child, rose up and found him weeping.

Whilst thus he sat, his face still buried in his hands, Margaret went to a sort of closet she had, for the rain still poured down in a ceaseless torrent, and there spread some bits of carpet on its floor, fetched a bolster from her own bed, placed in one corner of this poor room, though decently concealed by a curtain, and thus made the child a sort of bed, and, going back to where he was still crouched, knelt down:—

'You will not harm me or rob me, Johnny,' she said, 'if I give you a resting-place, instead of driving you forth into the storm?'

He rose up and stood before her, with an earnestness in his face which was new and strange, whilst he spoke out with that same sort of naive eloquence the woman had noticed before: 'I've won't, mum, 'cause your words is just as good as vus your look; and if you'll try me I'll go to school and learn, and

won't mind their thumps at night, though I've cotch every one. You'll try me, eh, mum?'

The kindly woman's assent was given; and, pointing to the little bed she had made, she closed her shop, and put aside her scattered needlework for the night; and by this time the child, warm beneath the rug, had sunk into a heavy sleep. Shading the candle as she stood above him, so that its strongest light fell for the instant on his face, and showed what ruin, misery, cruelty, and sin had wrought and stamped thereon, she thought, in her poor way, how like a great prayer, ever stealing to the heavens in all service in the cause of saving souls like this—all out-cast children such as this one!

[To be concluded.]

From the Mother's Monthly Journal.

## A DOMESTIC SCENE.

Child—Mother, I want a piece of cake.

Mother—I haven't got any; it's all gone.

C.—I know there's some in the cupboard; I saw it when you opened the door.

M.—Well, you don't need any now; cake hurts children.

C.—No it don't; (whining) I do want a piece; mother, mayn't I have a piece?

M.—Be still, I can't get up now, I'm busy.

C. (crying aloud)—I want a piece of cake, I want a piece of cake.

M.—Be still, I say; I shan't give you a bit if you don't leave off crying.

C. (still crying)—I want a piece of cake, I want a piece of cake.

M. (rising hastily, and reaching a piece)—There take that and hold your tongue. Eat it up quick, I hear Ben coming. Now, don't tell him you have had any.

(Ben enters) C.—I have had a piece of cake; you can't have any.

Ben—Yes, I will; mother give me a piece.

M.—There, take that; it seems as if I never could get a bit of anything in the house. You see, sir, (to the child,) if you get anything another time!

(Another room) C.—I've had a piece of cake.

Younger Sister—Oh, I want some too.

C.—Well, you bawl, and mother 'll give you a piece. I did.

Let us see how many errors were committed by the mother during this short conversation. In the first place she tells a downright lie, and the child detects her in it: 'I haven't any cake.' 'You have, I saw it in the cupboard.' Secondly, she gives a false reason, 'cake hurts children,' for not gratifying the child's wishes,—at least her next reply would lead him to suppose so. Thirdly, she encourages the child to cry for what he desires, by offering, as a reward for leaving off, the gratification which he could not obtain by continued good humour. Fourthly, she breaks her promise, and rewards the child for crying and disobeying her. Fifthly, she fosters a spirit of selfish greediness, the lowest and most debasing of all passions, 'eat it quick, and don't tell Ben.' Sixthly, she utters a threat she has no intention of acting upon, 'see if you get any next time.' We must mention, also, the spirit by which her conduct through the whole is marked, and which makes the child feel that she has at last yielded to his wishes, not because she loves him, but to save herself the vexation of being teased any longer. The practical commentary which he made in his advice to his sister, shows that he fully understands the springs of her domestic machinery.

Yet this is probably a mother who loves her offspring, who is toiling early and late for their comfort and respectability; but who will, perhaps, have to complain that her old age is embittered by the neglect and unkindness of her children. They are not wholly in the fault. A mother may sacrifice her health, and even life itself, for her family, and yet not make her happy; they will not value her. A child cannot comprehend the value of that affection which keeps his mother busy from morning till night, when her industry is continually crossing the track of his enjoyment; when it is made an apology for petulance, injustice, and neglect of those little things which make up the happiness of childhood. Nothing but a constant hourly flow of kindness, prompt in gratifying, gentle in refusing, a kindness which knows no ebb, untroubled by passion, unpolluted by selfishness—can gain the entire confidence of a child. I ought also to add, that a mother who has made herself an object of contempt to her children, cannot justly claim their deference and respect; and such she surely will be, if, in her management of them, she stoop to the meanness, deceit and falsehood. The pure ennobling sentiment of filial piety can spring up only in an atmosphere of truth and love. In its nature it is akin to that which is exercised toward the beneficent Father of all, and requires for its full expansion the same influences, gratitude and goodness.

By Harriet Martineau.

## THE WILL IN CHILDREN.

This power of the will is the greatest force on earth, the most important to the individual, and the most influential over the whole race. A strong will turned to evil lets hell loose upon the world. A strong will wholly occupied with good, might do more than we can tell to bring down heaven into the midst of us. If among all the homes of our land, there be one infant in whom this force is discerned working strongly, and if that infant be under such guardianship as to have its will brought to bear on things that are pure, holy, and lovely, to that being we may look as to a regenerator of his race. He may be anywhere where there are children. Are there any pa-