

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

## THE ANVIL.

I dreamt I stood by a roaring fire,  
Near the Blacksmith grimy and grim,  
And watched the blaze rise higher and higher,  
As it lit up each brawny limb.  
Bang, bang, his hammer rang,  
And drove out many a spark;  
They seemed the devil's own fire-flies,  
As they darted through the dark.

The smith struck high—the smith struck low,  
As over his work he bent;  
And if every blow had been on a foe,  
A battle had soon been spent.  
Clang, clang, the steel doth ring,  
In flaming crimson dressed;  
Of all the callings that I know,  
I love the blacksmith's best.

King Slegfried of old was a blacksmith,  
And well on the iron could pound,  
With his very first blow, he drove, I'm told,  
The anvil into the ground;  
Round, round, into the ground,  
And beat his hammer flat;  
No man alive but a blacksmith stout,  
Could strike you a blow like that.

And Slegfried became a monarch of might,  
And so you may clearly see,  
If a man would rise in power and height,  
A blacksmith he must be;  
Smack! smack! with many a crack,  
As he hammers the spade and plough;  
For so did Tubal-Cain of old,  
And he must do so now.

From Chambers's Journal for November.

## LIFE'S UNDERCURRENT.

## IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CONCLUSION.

My next residence was with a young couple, who had only one child. They had come together both equally poor, but by means of economy and industry, had furnished their little home, and were still adding to the stock. I was here quite happy for several months; for it was the abode of peace and love, until the domestic hearth was darkened by intemperance. The husband, who, for love of his wife, had forsaken his old associates, soon after I became their lodger, gradually began to resume his evil habits; at times coming home late and intoxicated.

At first, the wife used tears and gentle remonstrance. He listened to her complainings mildly, and promised amendment; but his former habits overcame his faint resolution, and then his deserted wife could only weep in secret, and watch with an aching heart for his return. Often in the cold winter-evenings she would watch for hours, while her baby slept.

At length poor Helen's complainings were met by vituperation; and then followed strife. She became melancholy and dejected; her former tidy habits gradually faded away, for poverty began to pinch with his iron grasp. In the same tenement, there were several females in poor Helen's situation; and these came to console with her, and talk over their sorrows.—Drink was resorted to as a consolation and solace; and the unfortunate Helen soon became its victim, and more its slave than her husband. My home for some time had become very uncomfortable from their squabbles; yet I was loath, on the poor baby's account, to leave the house, for what I paid for my board and lodging was the only money Helen could depend upon when Saturday came round. Article after article had been pledged; even her own and her husband's dress. At length it became altogether unbearable; blows were exchanged by the wretched pair, and I left the house.—Soon after James enlisted in the army, and left his children to the care of a drunken and degraded mother, made such by his own misconduct.

Month after month passed on, and I was happy and content. As my earnings increased, so did my wants and expenditure. At the end of each week, I was never much richer or poorer than I was at the commencement of the month. I had no desire to change my situation in life; I looked upon labor merely as the means of supplying my wants, for ambition had not yet entered my breast, nor a thought of change. The present hour was all I cared for, until one afternoon I met a young man in a warehouse for which I wrought; and although much changed I at once recognized him as one of the old inmates of the garret when I lived with Annie.—He was the son of a basket-maker, and at that time assisted her by selling matches. The recognition was mutual, although I was in my working-clothes, and he dressed like a gentleman, and transacting business with the firm.—Our meeting was cordial, and an appointment was made to visit him at his hotel in the evening after business hours.

We met, and talked over what had happened to us since the days of our wants and privations. He had, when his mother died, been sent to the charity work-house; from thence to the Larnack cotton spinning mills, where he learned to be a spinner, and was, with the other children, sent to school at over-hours. Being of

quick parts, he attracted the notice of his superiors, and, by patient good conduct, was promoted step by step, and his salary increased.—He was now a confidential agent, by economy had saved several hundred pounds, and was at this time in treaty with a company who were about to commence business, in which he was to be the acting partner. On hearing all this, I could not help feeling as if fortune had dealt unkindly by me, compared with him. The night following was a sleepless one, for I turned over and over in my thoughts project after project to better my circumstances; but all alike appeared hopeless except one. At length my mind was made up, and I slept soundly.

The whole of the next day, as I sat at my loom, I thought of my last night's resolve; and the more I thought, the more I was pleased, and the easier it appeared of accomplishment. I had often heard that there was no way of acquiring money but by saving; and my plan was to spend no more of my wages than what was absolutely necessary, and to avoid company in public-houses, where a great part of my earnings had hitherto been consumed. I commenced with good will; wages were fair, and trade brisk. My aim appeared distant, but reason told me it was sure; and at the end of a few weeks I was surprised at the progress I was making, and regretted the sums I had needlessly spent. At length I reached the first stage. On Saturday evening I made up the sum of ten pounds, the lowest the banks would receive as a first deposit; and with a feeling of pride I went on Monday to the office, and felt I was already a man of some importance as I read my receipt.

None of my acquaintances knew what I was doing with my money, and often bantered me for not joining in their revels as I was wont. The only indulgence I allowed myself was the purchase of a book at one or other of the stands, for I felt lonely in my room after being used to company; and so I soon acquired a taste for reading and amusing information. I at first thought I might, like Roy, turn a miser; but mine was not the lust of money for its own sake, but as a means to attain an end; my object was to accumulate a small capital, and become a masterlike Edwards, my old associate the spunk boy. It was emulation that urged me on; it was a race of life, and he had got the start; but the field was open, and my heart beat high with hope as, month after month, the chances of success became more and more apparent.

I was residing with a respectable widow in the Gallowgate, where I had been for several months, when a new lodger came to take up his abode with her. I was struck with his appearance on the Sunday when I first saw him. He had evidently been in better circumstances, for his clothes were made in the extreme of fashion, although now threadbare; his manners and address were above those of a mechanic; and he had a look of bygone dissipation, with a fixed melancholy in his expression. During the two weeks he had been in the house, his hours had been most regular, and he was always strictly sober when he came home to his lodgings.

It was the third week before any intercourse took place between us. The landlady had told me that the poor lad, as she called him, appeared broken-hearted, and this made me feel a certain interest in him. She had lent him one of my books during my absence in the day, and replaced it on my table before my return. One evening I had come home rather sooner than usual, and was sitting at the window, when she came and requested the loan of one of my books for Mr Kennedy. I told the good woman to inform him that he was welcome to any of them, and I should be happy to have his company on any evening, either in his own room or mine. From this time, a night seldom passed without our meeting, I felt happy in his company, and learned much from him, for he had been well educated, and possessed a soundness of judgment quite new to me.

One evening, he came home more depressed than usual. I knew he was out of a situation; but this evening there was a wildness in his manner and fierceness in his eyes that almost alarmed me for his safety. I inquired what was the matter; he made me no answer for some time, but paced the room. Having said all I could to soothe him he came and stood by the fire, his elbows resting on the mantel piece, and his face covered by the palm of his hands.

'Graham,' said he at length, 'I feel and thank you for your kindness; but I am a ruined man; nothing can redeem the past. I am now drinking the dregs of my cup of folly, and their bitterness I can no longer endure. I have placed a gulf between me and my future prospects I see no mode of overleaping; my fellow men have put a ban upon me. I have been after two situations to-day, both of them far below my former standing, and have been rejected: on one application, I was rejected rudely; on the other with taunts and insult—and I am here alive to tell it! I feel that my bad fame follows me, yet I have long renounced my folly for months I have not tasted anything stronger than water, and I am resolved never again to put within my lips the insidious destroyer of my once bright prospects. Graham, I that had hundreds at my command, and at this moment have not five shillings in the world. I am un-

fit for laborious outdoor work; I have no trade. I am useful only in a situation of trust, where steadiness alone is required. Dishonesty was never laid to my charge, yet I am a ruined man: and were it not my early education, I would put a period to my misery this very night.'

I looked at him with pity and surprise; for his feelings of repentance and remorse I could not comprehend—they were strangers to my breast. I could look back upon my past life with thankfulness; it had been of continued progress and increasing comfort; I said all I could to soothe him and inspire hope; but my words I could perceive, fell cold on his ear. When we parted for the night, he took my hand in his, and thanked me for my kind endeavours.

The following evening I found him in my room, if possible more depressed than he was the one before. Anxious to know something of his former history, I turned the discourse to the ups and downs of life; and, in hope of his being equally communicative, I told him my own story. He for some time seemed to wave the subject, but at length spoke out:

'My father,' said he, 'was a merchant, not wealthy, but far above want, with a thriving business, created by his own care and industry. I was the youngest of three, a brother and sister; our parents were most kind and indulgent but my father was strict in enforcing all religious observances, for he was an elder in the church. Well do I remember, that the Sabbath was a day of privation and suffering to us; and I am now ashamed to think how often, with my brother and sister, I mourned its return. How quick are children to observe and reflect! I was often, when very young, in my father's shop, and at time saw him praising goods to a customer I had heard him tell my mother were not what they ought to be; and young as I was, my mind whispered—can my father tell lies?—Once, a poor widow, whose husband had lately died, was pleading with him for a little forbearance, until she was unable to pay a small sum she was indebted to him; he spoke very harshly to her, yet he had read the evening before the twenty-second chapter of Exodus, where, in the twenty-second verse, it says: 'Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.' I would not mention such things, were it not for the baneful effects they had on my young mind at the time, and the blight their impression cast on my riper years.'

'As I grew up my tasks lessened, but the same restraint continued; my brother and sister died young, and my mother, when I was nineteen years of age. Even after my father had made me a partner in his business, he still looked upon me as a child: from his austerity, he had never gained my love; and I obeyed him only as a soldier does his commander. To the world, I appeared as religious an attendant of the church as he was; but, alas! my heart was not there; I was almost, if not wholly, a sceptic, for I was not the least under the influence of religion.'

'At my father's death I was left my own master, and dreams of coming enjoyment floated before me. I was now sole owner of a thriving business, with a few hundreds in the bank; and I did not all at once throw off the mask, for the restraint I had been reared under acted for a check for some time, so that it was not without many severe struggles I fell away altogether. But fall I did. Gradually my Sunday relaxations, as my companions and I called them, began to encroach on my week-days; I employed others to do for me what I ought to have done for myself; my business began to decline; and my income was unable to support my extravagance. The money my father left was all spent; bills came upon me I could not meet; my place of business was shut up by my extravagance and carelessness. My creditors found it was more through my own mismanagement than any necessity that my affairs were so involved; but I was sequestered, and a trustee appointed, who, after winding up my affairs, paid my creditors in full, and handed me a small sum. Upon this by dint of economy, I have subsisted ever since; but all is now gone, and I am plunged in want and degradation.'

When Kennedy and I parted for the night, I began to turn over in my mind how I could be of service to him, for he had introduced me to arithmetic, and I was now doing questions in Practice under his teaching. The next morning, I wrote to my friend Edwards in Kennedy's behalf, giving an outline of his history, and saying all I could in his favor, and on the following evening, when I came home, I received an answer, stating that he would give him a trial, if his appearance pleased him, as the firm at that time required a clerk. His appearance! there was the rub, for it was shabby genteel; and I actually hesitated as to whether I should tell him what I had done. For my own credit after what I had said, he must at least appear respectable, and I saw no other way of his doing so but by advancing him money to buy clothes.

To break upon my hoard was to me a matter of serious consideration; it was like upsetting my own aims. I thought over all the instances I had ever heard of money lent and never repaid; and an old rhyme ran strong in my mind—

I once had money and a friend,  
By both I set great store;  
I lent my money to my friend,  
He was my friend no more.

If I had my money and my friend,  
As I had once before;  
I'd keep my money to myself,  
And lose my friend no more.

I had almost hardened my heart, and was humming the misanthropic words when Kennedy came into my room; but his melancholy, heart-broken look dissolved at once my prudent resolves. I handed him the letter; and as he read it the tears started into his eyes; he took my hand and actually kissed it; but soon the glow of hope gradually faded from his face, and his eyes wandered over his threadbare dress, and his almost japped hat, which he had laid upon my table.

'Do not be cast down, Kennedy,' said I, 'I did not recommend you without being able to carry you through; and as to your appearance, I will lend you as much as will make that respectable; I know you will repay me as soon as you can.' He uttered no word—he made no promise—but I felt a warm tear drop upon my hand, which he still held in his; the pleasure I felt was worth all I had in the bank. How strange are the turns of fortune! Charles Graham, the poor gatherer, lending money to a rich merchant's son. Next day, I got him equipped, and he set off in the stage, coach to present himself to Edwards, the old poor-house orphan. I had the pleasure to hear, in a day or two, that he was engaged; and in a few months after, I received a letter from Edwards, thanking me for having recommended Kennedy to him, who before this time had repaid me the money I had advanced.

From the period Mr Ross had taken me under his charge, I had been prosperous and happy. I was now in my twenty-fifth year, and by steadily adhering to my rule of economy, I was gradually nearing the aim of my ambition—to have one hundred pounds in the bank, and all my own. While comfortably situated, I never changed my lodgings, and I still wrought in Mr Ross's shop. But the cares of riches were beginning to assail me. How could I quicken the increase of my store—how turn my wealth to the best advantage? I sometimes lost an hour or two of sleep in ruminating on this subject.

One of my fellow lodgers was from the country, steady, sober, and saving like myself, without being penurious; he was clerk in a warehouse for which I had long wrought, and the partners of which were reported to be very wealthy. One evening I spoke to him on the subject which occupied my thoughts, considering him well qualified to give me advice. When I mentioned the amount of my fortune, he told me: 'It is far too small a sum to commence with on a scale to pay well, and you shall be plunged into all the miseries of a poor master without capital. I myself,' he continued, 'have saved a greater sum than you, and I get better interest, for I receive five per cent.' I inquired where. He told me his employers gave that for money on loan, and that all his was in their hands; and he had no doubt they would give me the same for mine. The temptation was great, and I thought not of the risk, for they were reputed wealthy. (One or two banks had stopped payment about this time, and those who had money in others were very uneasy, and many withdrawing it.) Next forenoon, I went and offered what I had in the bank to the company on loan, at five per cent.; it was accepted and I endorsed my bank receipt to them, and got their bill at a short date. I went to my trunk, and placed it in safe deposit, pleased with my morning's work.

Happy and content, on I worked, and added to my store. I felt the desire to increase it; come stronger and stronger upon me, and I regretted when I had to purchase any necessary I required, even clothes and shoes: I was becoming a miser. I had mastered one hundred pounds, and all my anxiety was to make that two. I was the first and last in the workshop, and the most industrious; for my only pleasure was adding to my store. Guthrie, my friend, was still my fellow lodger; but he seemed to me to keep the even tenor of his way, careful but void of any extreme desire to increase his wealth. Another of those fluctuations in trade came upon us, and several of the houses in town had become bankrupt. I felt very uneasy, but was not actually afraid, until one evening Guthrie came home very much depressed. I saw there was something wrong with him, and inquired what had happened.

'Graham,' he replied, 'I hope all will end well; I hope it will.'

'What do you mean?' I inquired in great alarm, for the safety of my money flashed upon my mind. I rose and strode through the room, my eyes fixed upon him: I feared to receive his answer.

'Our house,' said he at length, 'has this day received orders of the failure of two firms in New York, with whom we have had transactions to a very large amount for some years back. I know that in the the spring we sent off large consignments, for which we have had no remittance. My employers are very uneasy, and I am sure the balance is heavy against us; but I am in hopes we can meet our engagements.'