

## THE GRIND OF WHEELS.

By SARSON C. J. INGHAM.

HIS face was swallowed by the moonless night;  
 The form was barred, that held hers, weak and trembling,  
 In the strained clasp which tells of kiss and sight  
 Indulged ere both keep Lent; for no dissembling  
 Can lovers bear when shadows cross their light.

"This little heart is full up to the brim  
 With love I tried to hide;"—cold in her seeming  
 A girl will be, to wile new vows from him  
 Who is the secret hope of all her dreaming—  
 A smile may cheat when unraised eyes are dim.

All mysteries were cleared, and faults confessed,  
 And the fair penitent, annealed and shriven,  
 Knew from the lips that called her Sweetest, Best,  
 Her pretty coquetries were all forgiven.  
 Ah, that the hour that made must mar such rest!

Through every nerve she felt the grinding wheels;  
 Her inmost sense was crushed beneath their motion;  
 Pain only to her wakening soul reveals  
 The price Love puts on man's supreme devotion;  
 Closes with melting wax the bond he seals.

She murmured of the wheels beneath her breath,  
 Pillowed upon the bosom of her mother,  
 Who knew they brought the bitterness of Death  
 When their hoarse voices swallowed every other—  
 "Yet nearing wheels make merry hearts!" she saith.

"For while 'times go by turns,' to waiting loves,  
 Even from the dust they sing a joyful measure;  
 Swift and more sure than white-winged carrier doves,  
 Mute words shall pass from each, a written treasure  
 To bind the heart with spells while Fancy roves.

"All life moves with the turning of the wheels,  
 So when they bring the loved one back, no grinding  
 Has harsh effect; not even the grating keels  
 Of ships that graze the shore. The last lane winding  
 Wheels, on the ear, break soft as music steals."



## THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.

A TRUE STORY.

By EMILY MACIRONE. Found in her desk and copied by C. A. MACIRONE.

"More things are wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of."

*Tennyson.*

A LONG, dreary workhouse infirmary, with its rows of beds on either side, each filled with its suffering patient. The quiet monotony of the scene is only broken by the gliding here and there of the nurses, or the doctors, as they gather round the invalids. As the twilight is closing in, a lady is seen passing from one bed to another. She is not a nurse but a visitor, and as she goes she gives a flower to one, a book to another, and kind words to each and to all. At last she comes to one of the patients where she seems about to make a longer stay, for she bends over the poor sick woman and with kind, soothing words and gentle touch begins a long, long conversation. One can hear the broken-hearted tone—weak from great illness—of the patient, and the sweet, consoling voice of the lady. You cannot hear the words of either, they are too hushed to break upon the ear, but their music, sad and sweet, tells a tale of hopeless sorrow on one part and kindly sympathy on the other.

What are they talking about, those women? so different in outward circumstances—one a lady with many loving friends, the other, a poor, friendless woman, a widow, dying in the workhouse infirmary; so differently situated these two, yet bound together by the

strong chord of womanly sympathy and Christian love.

Let us draw nearer and learn.

They are talking about a little child—the child of the widow, soon to be an orphan.

"Oh, who will take care of my little one when I am gone?" said that mother in despairing accents.

"You must have some friends surely," said the lady, "who would take charge of her; such a delicate little creature would never be left absolutely homeless."

"No," said the mother in melancholy accents, "there is no one, no one whatever to cherish my darling when I am gone. You see, lady, when I married I lost all my friends; none of them, not even my own flesh and blood would see me. Then sickness and poverty fell on us. Stephen, my husband, lost his work, and before our child was a year old he died and I was left to struggle alone. His friends were all too poor to help. So I parted with the few treasures that were left to keep the wolf from the door, one after another, living in the greatest economy and only dreading that our child should be contaminated by her sordid surroundings. To see my darling, my love, my life, mix with the rough, dirty children in the gutter and learn their ways and words. No! that I could not bear. When the day was fine, and the sun shining we would go out together to the nearest garden, and hand in hand we would walk by the flowers, and I could watch her

delight at the song of the birds. The London flowers and London birds were her playthings, and I rejoiced in her pleasure, but those days came to an end. I became hopelessly ill, and what was I to do with my little four-year-old Mary?"

"Yes, there is one thing," said the lady after a long pause, "why, you could pray for her."

"Pray for her, pray for her," said the mother almost fiercely. "Have I done anything else but pray for her? is not my life one long prayer for my child? It is prayer that keeps me alive, and I feel that I cannot die while my child is still unprovided for. Oh, for my child, my sweet, sweet child to be left to the mercy of the cruel world all alone, it is too dreadful. I cannot die and leave her thus, it is the thought of her that keeps me alive. May heaven forgive me, but I sometimes wish that her sweet life could end, and both mother and child appear together before the merciful Father of all."

And the poor creature sank back, exhausted with her unwonted effort, while the lady, alarmed, beckoned to the nearest nurse for some restoratives. On her recovery the lady sought by kind and loving words to bring some comfort to her anxious heart.

The nurse said to the lady—

"I have been telling this poor woman that she ought to be thinking of making her peace with heaven, instead of which she can do nothing but talk of her child."



"I can do nothing but think of her and pray for her, all my life is one long prayer for my Mary."

"Well then," said the lady, "don't be anxious, we will see what can be done. I will take care of your little one. I promise you, I will make it my business to see after her; there are so many charitable homes, so many orphanages, that I have great hope I may succeed in finding a home for her." And so saying she left the sorrowing mother, but not before she had brought a smile to her wan features and given a few creature comforts allowed for her restoration. The sunshine of her presence had not died away before the mother said to her nurse, "I can go home now, I can go to Jesus my Master, for my child will be cared for."

"I have great hopes I may succeed," said the lady to herself, on her way home. "Such words, to a woman in such a position, amount to a promise. Under heaven, all her hope is in the success of my endeavours. What is to be done?"

There is an old saying, "You may bring a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink." Similarly, you may bring any number of interesting orphans to asylums, homes and other refuges, provided for them by a charitable public, but you can't create an empty space in a house full to overflowing. The lady went from house to house—from one refuge to another, never out of heart; she felt in honour bound to persist in finding some home for the little stray bantling, sure that in the storehouse of God's providence there must be in some corner of the earth a home reserved for her.

But no! all doors were closed; it seemed there was an endless army of orphans to be provided for, whose names were first on the list, before there was a chance for her charge.

"While the grass grows, the silly horse he starves," says a not unknown author, and as all these researches took a long time, there was the little girl, the object of so much thought, to be provided for with a temporary home, apart from the sad atmosphere of the workhouse.

Another visit does the dear lady pay to the workhouse and sees the mother again.

"I have come to fetch your Mary," said she. "I have not succeeded in finding a permanent home for her anywhere as yet, but don't be anxious, she shall have a home, and a good one, that I promise you; so the best plan will be to take her home with me, where I will take care

of her, and it shall be my business to see her well provided for. You can trust her to me."

"Trust you!" said she in faltering accents, "I can't thank you—God will love and reward you, as He only can, for your sweet mercy," and then she added in an undertone, so faint and tender: "Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. Yes, now I can die, for my prayer, I know, will be answered."

The room was very hushed, dark, and quiet, while the lady laid the little girl in her mother's arms for a last embrace.

Wondering and awestruck, the child laid her soft young face against her mother's care-worn cheek, and kissed her pale lips; unconscious that as her mother was passing away to the better land, a gracious heaven had sent an answer to her passionate prayer for her child.

It only remains now to add that the lady kept her word—of course she did.

The little Mary came to her home, and it would be difficult to describe her delight at the order and comfort of the beautiful home, now her resting-place till another was found. But another was not found, and could not be found.

In the meanwhile the dear little child made sad havoc in the hearts of the lady and her husband, who had no children; her artless ways, her exquisite delight and wonder, made her a new joy in the house.

One day—Mary, it must be remembered had never heard any music—the lady, who played beautifully, struck a chord on the piano. "Oh," said the child, in an ecstasy of delight, "do it again, and again, and again."

It was a grand event when the box of new clothes, the fair white underlinen and pretty neat frocks, came to replace the poor rags the child had worn, and to see her gratefully embrace her second mother, and how deeply she felt the change in her condition; the regular meals, the quiet, well-ordered house, the gentle wisdom and loving words of her new home, the graceful artistic beauty by which she was surrounded. It was to her credit and to theirs that the child was not spoiled. They were too wise and loving to do that, and her gentle nature would accept all the peace and comfort of her new home without injury to her simplicity. But in order to be quite certain that there was no home of her own kith and kin to which she belonged, proper inquiries were made, and a female relation was found, and asked what she would do with the child if she took her to her own home.

"Oh," said the woman bridling up, "I would make her know her place, that's all!"

After so very untempting an invitation they decided to adopt the dear child for good and all as their own child. Then the curious circumstance appeared that it became necessary for this dear lady to produce a voucher of the highest respectability. Lady D—, who was present, remembered witnessing to the fact, and to the declaration that the child was not taken away for illegal purposes. Interesting, possibly as showing the care with which the State safeguards the helpless and the orphan.

Therefore the proper legal protection both for her safe position and for the future probable inheritance of her foster-parents' property were taken, and it was a tremendous day when the matter was settled, and Mary's joy complete.

And as the child grew up, the joy of their home—the most sweet and tender daughter—paying back in love and gratitude from her full young heart all their love and care. Indeed, it would be difficult to say which was the debtor to the other; for if they gave her the shelter of their home, the guidance of their wisdom, the protecting love of their noble natures; did not she, in return, add to their lives the grace of her youth, her innocence, her ever new delight with the world of art, literature and religion opened to her young mind? making old pleasures new in the light of her youth and beauty; charming away many a grave sad hour with her smiles.

Abroad and at home she was their delight, never forgetting her early days, but loving them all the more for that reason.

Could the despairing mother, dying in a workhouse, in her wildest dreams for her child have imagined such a future as this?

But not according to our deserts, but to His infinite glory, does our Heavenly Father answer the cry of His children; and surely all who are faint-hearted, may take comfort in thinking of the blessed answer to

"The Mother's Prayer."

NOTE.—The above is a perfectly true story. The child so saved became a dear friend of the writer and of her sister. She lived a happy and holy life, and died blessing her foster-parents who had prolonged her stay with them by travelling to the south, where her delight in the beauties of art and nature gave them a new and a deeper pleasure than they had known in earlier days. The publication of this little sketch has been delayed till time had removed objections to it.

C. A. M.

## VARIETIES.

### TALKING OF CHILDREN.

The mountaineers in the Apennines have a very pretty way of calling dead children angels. You never hear them speak of a child being *morta*. They say, "Adele's or Gigia's angel is to be carried away to-day." If you ask after a lost infant they will say, "*Ah, buon anima*, good little soul, he was made an angel on such a day."

THE happiness of heaven is to see God; the happiness of earth is to be seen by God.

POETRY, PIETY AND POLITENESS.—The following epitaph used to be quoted by Lord Ashburnham as a curious example of poetry, piety and politeness. He had met with it in a country churchyard:—

"You who stand around my grave  
And say 'His life is gone;'  
You are mistaken—pardon me—  
My life is but begun."

### THE SHREWD FARMER.

A sheep-farmer in Perthshire, the owner of a splendid collie dog, was visited by a gentleman who took a fancy for the animal. He offered fifty pounds for the dog, which was accepted.

After the collie had changed hands, the gentleman asked the farmer if it would not be more profitable to breed dogs instead of sheep?

"Na, no," pawkily returned the farmer, "I can aye get merchants to buy my sheep, but I canna aye get fools to buy my dogs."

NOT AT ALL NECESSARY.—One of the lessons of life, which many of us never learn, is that it is not necessary to make a goose of oneself, merely because one has a magnificent opportunity.

HOW TO HAVE AN EASY TIME.—If some girls would save all the time they lose by hurrying, they would have plenty of leisure.

### A DIFFERENCE.

Five-year-old Florrie had been battling with her mother all day.

"There, child," said the mother on putting Florrie to bed, "sleep well and don't be cross when you wake up."

"I notice," said little Florrie, "that when it's me you say 'cross'; when it's you, you say 'nervous.'"

GIRLS, BE WISE.—A wife once made the following confession to Dean Hole:—"I married not because I loved the man, but because he proposed to me just when I had discovered that he whom I did love cared not for me. I sowed the wind and have reaped the whirlwind."

CASTLES IN THE AIR.—"If you have built castles in the air your work need not be lost; that is where they should be: only see that foundations are under them."