

Original.

JOE LOWELL.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

BY MRS. SEBA SMITH.

I HAVE always been taught, and firmly to believe, that "money is the root of all evil;" I say *money*, without the qualification of the *love* of it; for the having of the one always implies the other. I thus believe; but I never saw the truth of the thing so thoroughly illustrated as lately, in the case of poor Joseph Lowell, or more familiarly, Joe Lowell. And here let me pause a moment over my story, by way of moral, just to remark how much better and more considerate Fortune is, than we, ourselves, are apt to be, in these matters. Those to whom money is denied, are apt to fret, and fume, and regard themselves as extremely ill-used, when, in fact, she has treated them with the greatest possible kindness, just as the good parent withholds the sugar-plum, that might produce worms, nausea, and all sorts of derangement. For myself, I feel a pride in regarding myself as a particular favorite in this respect, and am full of compassion for my poor neighbors, who are so vulgarly blest with the goods of this world, thereby losing much of the dignity of virtue, its superiority to circumstance, and its philosophic spirit of endurance.

But to my story. Joe had, formerly, been a footman in a rich family in New-York; with high wages, and little to do, except to open the carriage door for the ladies, and ring the bells at the princely dwellings of those upon whom they chose to call, and then ride up and down Broadway, swaying back and forth with the motion of the carriage, and smiling and bowing to the pretty chambermaids that put their heads out of the windows to attract his observation; all the time holding lightly by the back of the carriage, and standing very straight, thus to exhibit his handsome form to the best advantage, with his laced hat and coat, and shapely leg, and smart-looking shoes. At home, his labors were more onerous, consisting of heavy charges upon the larder, and plunging to the bottom of glasses and wine-bottles, for his master was a "whole-souled man," and scorned the meanness of looking after these things, especially as he could always dismiss a servant, when his visage was becoming too rubicund to be a credit to his establishment.

Joe, in the course of events, was, of course, presented with his walking ticket; but not until he had united his destiny with that of Jane Gould, a pretty eastern girl, who had been nurse in the family.

Jane was well aware of the faults of Joe; but when does a woman calculate in matters of the heart? She loved him, and believed that love would work wonders in the way of reformation. And so it did for a while. Joe overcame his disinclination to labor, so far as to purchase a horse and cart, intending to live by carrying goods from one part of the city to the other. Jane, who was modest and active, had saved her wages, so that now she could hire three rooms on the second floor of a house, pay the quarter's rent in advance, and furnish it

neatly, and even tastefully, for she had an air of natural gentility about her, and had learned the best of every thing in the families in which she had lived; leaving what was doubtful or evil—just as the wild bee extracts honey from herbs in themselves deadly in their poison—a simile, which I trust my readers are prepared to appreciate, as well for its beauty as originality.

After the lapse of a year or two, Joe's old habits returned, and his cart was oftener seen standing at the door of a porter-house, than backed up to a ware-house; then he began to complain of the dullness of the times, and that he should have to change his business. Jane gently remonstrated, urged him to persevere, softly, with a trembling voice, and tears in her eyes, hinted at the probable cause; held her baby to his lips, and implored him to be all that a father should be to the poor innocent. Joe grew sulky, swore, and pushed her one side; and the next day, sold his horse and cart at half price, just, as he said, to show he wouldn't be dictated to. Poor Jane saw the proceeds go, day after day; in foolish expenditure, while her husband spent his time in idleness and drinking, and returned, at night, a sot and a brute, to tyrannize over herself and child.

Love is not the result of excellencies in the object, made up of admiration of the good and noble of those we love; if so, it were an ephemeral growth, dying with the sunlight; but it is an instinct, springing from the depths of a woman's heart, and clinging to its object long after all that should foster its growth has gone to decay; it lives there, it may be, in the memory of former happiness, and the agony of sorrow but drives the roots of its affection deeper into the heart. Thus it was with Jane; diligently did she labor, and husband her little store, for she saw the black cloud gathering, that must wreck her all of life and hope. Joe had ceased to provide for the necessities of his family, and now all devolved upon herself; and when he returned at night, there was always the tea at the fire, and some delicacy reserved for himself, and the patient smile of his wife to make the best of every thing.

It was the first day of May, when all the New York world is expected to move. Jane had engaged this year rooms in a basement, for she was too feeble to climb to the attic and could not afford the rent of the medium floors. She was busy packing their little furniture, and Joe stood at the corner with both his hands in his pockets, a cigar in his mouth, and his back against the lamp post, watching the tumult in the street, the passing and repassing of loads, the smashing of glass and china, the dislocation of chairs and the wreck of tables. A smart gig drove along, and the gentleman reined up where Joe was standing. It was his old master; and a sudden consciousness of his "loafer"-like, (we must use the word, it is so expressive for the meridian of our story,) appearance made Joe feel so sheepish, that he was on the point of dodging the corner; but the gentleman without comment, asked him if he was out of employ and would like a job. Joe assented.

"Well," said the other, "we are about moving into our new house and if you'll take hold, I'll pay you five

dollars for your day's work. You may go round soon as you choose."

Joe sauntered home and told Jane. Now she had so abandoned all hope of any help from Joe, that the bare mention of his earning five dollars was too much for her, and she burst into tears. He was sober that morning, for he had no money of his own, and he had still retained so much of manliness as to make him ashamed to take the earnings of his wife to indulge his own vile appetites; so when Jane wept he understood the cause, and made a lazy resolution to do better in future. He went to earn his five dollars, and Jane, with the help of a girl whom she had befriended in teaching her to sew, and do other nice work, by which she could earn a good living, commenced moving herself, only hiring one load removed, carrying the rest in their arms, and in baskets.

I met her once on her way—the sun was very powerful, and a rapid shower had just passed over, leaving the air motionless, the warm exhalations going up from the gutters with an almost suffocating heat, and loaded with impurity, and everybody looked old, care-worn, and dispirited, and there was poor Jane, and her young friend bending under their burdens, each with a load in one hand, and carrying a huge basket between them; and the little girl, terrified at the sights and sounds, clinging to the gown of her mother, now on one side, and now on the other, which ever way passengers came, impeding her steps, and increasing her fatigue and perplexity; added to this Jane's motion, reminded one of the "pretty swaying" walk of the mother of Cerdita, but the crowd went by unnoticing, for who would think of sentiment, or Shakspeare, in the case of a pale woman, bending under two burdens.

Just as I passed, the child had come right in front of her mother clinging hold with both hands, and begging to be taken up. Jane sat down her load, and I heard her say in a low voice, as she wiped the face of her child, "Oh, God, I shall die!" I was sorry to hear even that, and yet it seemed wrung out by illness and fatigue.

That night before eight o'clock, her little room was looking neat and quiet, and she had expended her last cent in providing a bit of meat for Joe after his day of labor, unmindful of herself who had toiled the hardest of the two.

In the meanwhile Joe went through the work of the day with something of his former gaiety, and the sight of comfort and luxuries only to be secured by temperance and labor, helped on his good resolves. At night he received his cash and turned for home, thinking of Jane, of her delicate health and hard exertions; and then came up the image of her as he had once known her, and his heart smote him for his own cruelty. Then came plans as to what he should purchase with his money. He would procure any necessities for Jane's approaching illness—he would buy himself a pair of shoes, and a hat—he would buy a load of wood, Jane a bonnet, or the child some clothing. The more he planned, the more their necessities pressed upon him, and the thought that where he had but five, they needed a hundred.—His mind had just reached this conclusion, when he stood by the porter house where he had been supporting

the lamp post in the morning. Joe thought, "had I more I might do something, but five dollars is nothing," so he went in and called for a glass of, I don't know what; but it drowned his reason—he called for more, and grew boisterous and quarrelsome. The owner of the shop attempted to put him out—Joe resisted—broke the tumblers, and a regular fight commenced, in which he was knocked upon the pavement, bleeding and senseless. In this situation he was carried home. The night was waxing late, and Jane was prepared for the worst. She did not shriek or faint, but quietly employed the means for his recovery. But his skull was fractured and he died the next day.

This is my point established. I say nothing about porter-houses, temperance, or idleness, for I am not preaching a homily; but had not Joe obtained the *money* the root of all evil, he could not have gone to the porter-house, he would not have broken the tumblers and made a row, and of course his own head would not have been broken; and, he might have been to this day holding up the lamp post, and living upon his wife's labor.

Original.

THE DEAD BOY!

"For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

"It must be sweet in childhood to give back
The spirit to its Maker."—*Anon.*

Why will ye weep! Your lovely babe has found
A brighter realm, with richer beauties crowned;
On scenes divine he feasts his ravished sight,
And bathes his spirit in celestial light.

'Neath purer skies, than arch this 'vale of woe,'
He gaily roves, where fruits ambrosial grow;
And green parterres, of rich, perennial hue,
Sparkle with drops of fresh and pearly dew.

There crystal streams, with waters cool and bright,
Regale the taste with exquisite delight;
There balmy zephyrs fan the blissful shore,
And storms, that wreck this wintry world, are o'er.

Why will ye weep! When in that cherub band,
Whose soft, sweet strains, enchant th' Elysian land;
Your beauteous boy, from "care's wild deluge" free,
Swells his clear notes of holy ecstasy.

Life's varied ills in Heaven, are *all* unknown,
Its emerald gates admit no earthly groan;
But joys abound, which mortals may not share,
Then cease to weep! Your darling son is there.

A few brief moments over, and the tomb
Will shroud *you* in its deep and voiceless gloom;
May its dark portals ope' to that bright shore,
Where parted friends will meet to *part no more!*

WILLIAM G. HOWARD.

Chillicothe, Ohio, 1840.