NEAVE'S FOOD perfectly safe Food for the youngest and most delicate child.
Sample Tin and "Hints about Baby," free.
JOSIAH R. NEAVE & CO., Fordingbridge, Hants.

MOTHER'S LAST WORDS

BY

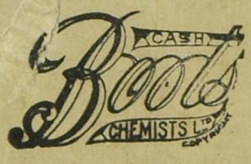
MRS. SEWELL.

The proof of the Starch is the result of the ironing.

Colman's Starch is a Starch that makes good ironing.

See that Colman's Name and the Bull's Head are on the Box.

COLMAN'S STARCH



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Richest in Cream

For all purposes of Fresh Milk.

Delicious in Tea.

Improves Coffee, Cocoa and Chocolate.

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DR. JACOB TOWNSEND'S SARSAPARILLA

(THE "ORIGINAL" AND ONLY GENUINE).

Established over 100 Years.

Prices 1/1½, 2/6, 4/6, 7/6 and 11/-,

of all Chemists and Stores in the world, or carriage free, same price, from Old Dr. Jacob Townsend's Sarsaparilla Depôt, Nottingham.

This well-known and safe remedy acts directly upon the blood, which it enriches and purifies, quickly restores the health, cures Pimples, Boils, Sores, Blotches, Eruptions, Itchings of the Skin, and other blood and skin diseases. Invaluable as a spring medicine. Being entirely a botanic preparation, its properties are tonic, alterative, and curative. Highly recommended by medical men as the best medicine to cleanse the Blood, Liver, Stomach, Kidneys, and Skin. See testimonials and pamphlet with each bottle.

CAUTION.—See the old Doctor's head in centre of red and blue wrapper.

CALIFORNIA SYRUP OF FIGS

"NATURE'S PLEASANT LAXATIVE"

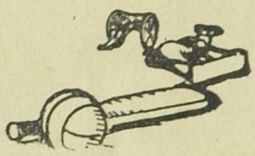
overcomes constipation gently and naturally. It cleanses the system, corrects torpidity, promotes regular functional activity, and perceptibly strengthens the organs at fault. Children like it immensely because its taste is so delicious.

A Wise Mother

knowing the grave risks that inevitably follow unchecked constipation, never neglects it in herself or her family, but instantly relies upon the corrective influence of California Syrup of Figs. She prefers California Syrup of Figs because it is the remedy that can always be depended upon to act promptly and beneficially, yet without exercising that drastic weakening effect so injurious in violent purgatives.

Insist on having "California" Syrup of Figs, and look for this trade mark in blue, which appears only on the genuine "California" package.

Of Chemists, 1/1½ & 1/9



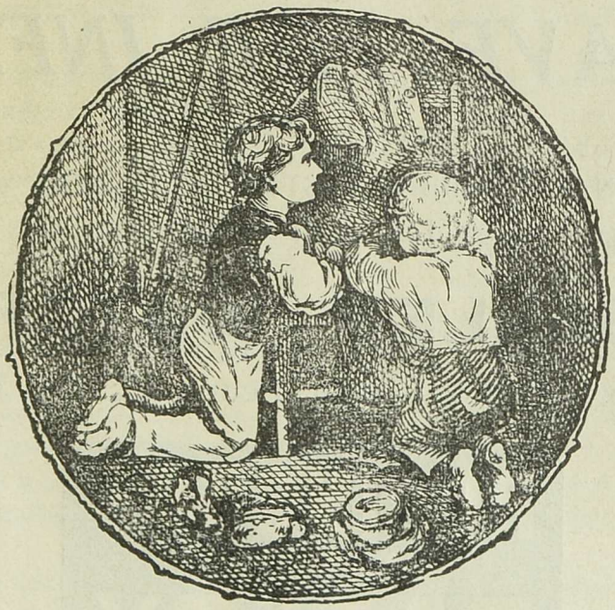
"Nothing conduces more to a Happy Home than Healthy Children."

Mother's Last Words.

BY

MRS. SEWELL.

Author of "Our Father's Care,"
"The Lost Child," "Patience Hart's First Experience in Service," &c.



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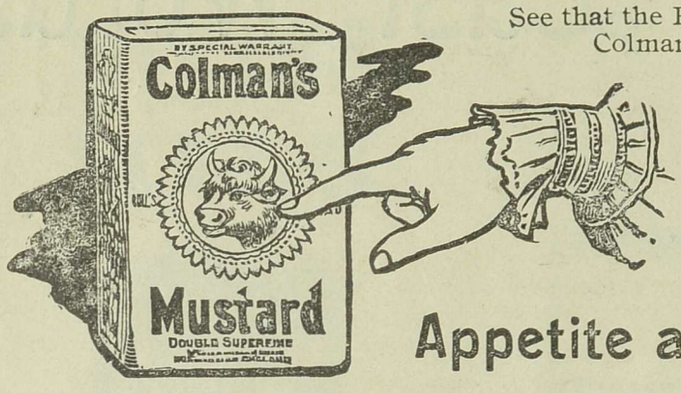

See that the Bull's Head and the name Colman's are on each tin.

Good Mustard helps both Appetite and Digestion

and is just as good with all kinds of hot and cold meats, game, poultry, and cheese as it is with roast beef. But *all* Mustards are not good. The *one* acknowledged indispensable all over the world--in every clime—and under all circumstances is—

Colman's Mustard

Regd.

TO SAVE THE INFANTS.

THE PENARTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL advises:—
"If breast milk is not available, the child should be brought up on Cow's Milk and Barley Water."

BARLEY WATER

Can be More Quickly and Economically Made from

ROBINSON'S "PATENT" BARLEY "IN POWDER FORM"

than from Pearl Barley. It is Safer and Cleaner, and has received the recommendation of Doctors and Nurses for the last 84 years.

KEEN, ROBINSON & CO., Ltd., LONDON.

Mother's Last Words.

THIS charming story of the "Two Little Crossing Sweepers" was written "Years Ago." Thousands of present-day readers will remember how, in earlier years, they were touched by the sorrows and trials of "John and Little Chris." Millions have been circulated in this and other lands, and many a stout heart has been melted by its tender pathos, and moved to pity—perchance to tears—by its true pictures of humble and struggling life.

These pictures are as true to nature to-day as when the thrilling story first appeared, and still the precept and the promise holds—

"Trust in the Lord and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed."

FIRST PART.

THE yellow fog lay thick and dim
O'er London city, far and wide;
It filled the spacious parks and squares,
Where noble lords and ladies ride.

It filled the streets, the shops were dark,
The gas was burning through the day;
The monument was blotted out,
And lost in gloom the river lay.

But thicker still, and darker far,
The noisome smoke-cloud grimly fell
Amongst the narrow courts and lanes,
Where toiling people poorly dwell.

No sun above, no lofty sky,
No breezy breath of living air,
The heavy, stagnant, stifling fog,
Crept here and there, and everywhere.

Down seven steep and broken stairs,
Its chill unwelcome way it found,
And darkened with a deeper gloom,
A low, damp chamber, underground.

A glimmering light was burning there,
Beside a woman on a bed;
A worn-out woman ghastly pale,
Departing to the peaceful dead.

Two little boys in threadbare clothes,
Stood white and trembling by her side,
And listening to his mother's words,
The youngest of them sadly cried.

The elder boy shed not a tear,
Nor stirred a moment from his place,
But with a corner of the sheet,
He wiped his mother's cold damp face.

"Ah, John!" she said, "my own dear boy,
You'll soon be in this world alone;
But you must do the best you can,
And be good children when I'm gone.

"And listen, John, before 'tis night,
My weary spirit will be free;
Then go, and tell the overseer,
For he must see to bury me.

"You'll walk behind my coffin, dears,
There's little more I have to crave,
But I should like to have my boys
Just drop a tear beside my grave.

"And then you'll have to leave this room,
Because the rent is not all paid,
Since I've been ill, I've let it run;
You know, I've barely earned your bread.

"I don't owe much, I've minded that,
And paid it up, though hardly pressed,
The man must take the little things,
And sell the bed to pay the rest.

"I've mended up your bits of clothes,
It is not much you've left to wear,
But keep as decent as you can,
And don't neglect the house of prayer.

"I can't speak of your father, John,
You know that he has been my death;
If he comes back—you'll say, 'his wife
Forgave him with her dying breath.'

"But oh, my children! when I'm gone,
Do mind your mother's warning well,
And shun all drinking, swearing ways,
As you would shun the pit of hell.

Two little boys in threadbare clothes,
Stood white and trembling by her side.

"Im going to a happy place,
So beautiful and dazzling bright,
'Twas in a vision or a dream,
It passed before me in the night.

"I felt my spirit caught away,
From all the crowd of toiling folk,
Above the cross upon St. Paul's,
And far above the fog and smoke.

"And higher, higher, up I went,
Until I reached a golden gate,
Where all about in shining rows,
I saw the holy angels wait.

"At once, they bid me welcome there,
And all at once began to sing,
'Come in thou blessed of the Lord,
For thou art welcome to the King.'

"Then one stepped forth and took my hand,
And spake like music passing sweet,
'We have been watching for thee long,
To bring thee to our Master's feet.'

"Then hand in hand we floated on,
Through glowing fields of lovely flowers,
And saw ten thousand happy souls
At rest among the shining bowers.

"Our Saviour walked among them, John,
Most beautiful He was to see,
And such a heavenly smile He gave,
When first He saw poor worthless me.

"And oh! the gracious things He spoke,
I hardly could believe the word;
'Come in, thou faithful one,' He said,
'And rest thee now beside thy Lord.'

"Then all around, I heard the sound
Of joyous voices, singing praise,
And I stood there, and joined the song,
And looked upon His blessed face.

"And as I looked, my heart grew strong,
And then I fell before His feet;
'Dear Lord,' I said, 'I pray Thee send
An Angel to our wicked street.

"'I've left two little boys behind,
To get through this bad world alone,
And much, I fear, they'll miss their way,
And never reach Thy glorious throne.'

"'I will,' He said, and then He called
A beauteous Angel by his name,
And swifter than an arrow flies,
That beauteous Angel to Him came.

"And as I knelt before His feet,
I heard the order plainly given,
That He should guard my little boys
And bring them safe to me in heaven.

"I saw the Angel bow his head,
And cast on me a look of love,
Then spread his snowy wings to leave
His blissful seat in heaven above.

So do not fret about my death,
I know you'll not be left alone,
For God will send the Angel down,
To care for you, when I am gone.

"I'm sure you will have daily bread
For *that* the King gave strict command,
And all the wealth of London town,
Is in the power of His hand.

"Good-bye—good-bye, my children dear,
My happy soul is caught away;
I hear, I hear, my Saviour call,
He calls me up, I cannot stay."

Then soared her soul from that dark room,
Above the crowd of toiling folk,
Above the cross upon St. Paul's,
Above the fog, above the smoke.

And higher, higher, up she went,
Until she saw the golden gate,
Where night and day, in shining bands,
The holy angels watch and wait.

And she went in and saw the King,
And heard the gracious words He spoke
To her, who in this sinful world,
Had meekly borne her daily yoke.

But little thought those orphan boys,
When to their wretched bed they crept,
That all the night, an Angel bright,
Would watch beside them, as they slept.

"So never join with wicked lads
To steal, and swear, and drink, and lie;
For though you are but orphans here,
You'll have a Father in the sky.

"I can't see plain what you should do,
But God, I think, will make your way,
So don't go to the workhouse, dears,
But try for work, and always pray."

The woman ceased, and closed her eyes,
And long she lay, as if at rest,
Then opened wide her feeble arms,
And clasped her children to her breast.

And then aloft her hands she raised, [eyes,
And heavenward gazed with beaming
"I see, I see, the Angel come,
I see him coming from the skies.

But sadly sobbed the little boys,
As from the bed of death they crept;
Upon the floor they sat them down,
And long and piteously they wept.

The dreary walls around them closed,
No father came to share their grief,
No friendly neighbour heard their cry,
None came with pity or relief.

They cried, until their tears were spent,
And darker still the chamber grew;
And then said little Christopher,
"Now, mother's dead, what shall we do?"

Then John rose up, and with his sleeve
He wiped away the last sad tear,
"Well, we must go, as mother said,
And tell the parish overseer."

"But won't the Angel come to us?"
"I cannot tell you," John replied;
"I think he will," said Christopher,
"My mother saw him, when she died."

They stumbled up the broken stairs,
And pushed their way along the street,
Whilst out of sight, an Angel bright,
Walked close behind, with shining feet.

He stood beside them at the door,
And heard the growling overseer,
Then touched his heart with sudden smart,
And brought an unexpected tear.

"Here, lads," he said, "divide this bread,
You both look hungry, any way;
We'll see about the body, child,
And bury it on Wednesday."

The hungry children ate the loaf,
And then the younger brother said,
"Our mother told us right, you see,
That was all true about the bread."

"It does seem so," was John's reply:
"I say, Chris, shan't you be afraid
To go and sleep at home to-night,
All in the dark there with the dead?"

"Why should we, John? dead folks don't hurt,
She would not hurt us, if she could;
And as she laid upon the bed,
She looked so happy and so good."

"Well, come down, then—I'm not afraid."
They entered in, and shut the door,
And made a bed, as best they could,
And laid them down upon the floor.

And soundly slept those little boys,
And dreamt about a far-off land,
With shining bowers, and lovely flowers,
And Angels flying at command.

They'd never been beyond the town
To see the beauteous works of God,
Not even seen the daisies spring
By thousands on the level sod.

They had not seen a robin's nest,
Nor plucked a violet in the shade,
Nor stood beside a running brook,
And heard the pleasant sound it made.

They had not seen young lambs at play,
Nor gleaned among the autumn sheaves,
Nor listened to the pattering sound
Of falling rain upon the leaves.

The cuckoo's note was strange to them,
They'd never heard a wild bird sing,
Nor seen the yellow cowslips grow
About the meadows, in the spring.

Nor had they run with rosy boys,
At early morning to the school,
Nor spent the pleasant holidays
In catching minnows in the pool.

Ah, no! and yet they were not left there,
With nought but death and darkness
A minister of love was sent,
In answer to their mother's prayer.

But little thought those orphan boys,
When to their wretched bed they crept,
That all the night, an Angel bright,
Would watch beside them, as they slept.

When dimly dawned the light, they rose,
Chris looked round with chattering teeth;
The sheet was spread from foot to head,
He knew his mother lay beneath.

"Let's go out to the pump and wash,
As *she* would always have us do;
We'd better mind about her words, you?"
I think," said John; "Chris, what say

"Let's go," said Chris, "beside, you know,
We've got our breakfast now to find."
They went out in the narrow street,
The shining Angel went behind.

A woman at a chandler's shop,
Who knew the children of the dead,
Was touched with pity, as they passed,
And gave them each a slice of bread.

"'Tis true," said little Christopher,
"You may be sure the Angel's come,
She never gave us bread before,
No, not the value of a crumb."

The next day, and the next to that,
The promise of the King was kept,
And every night that Angel bright,
Stood by to guard them as they slept.

On Wednesday the people came,
And took the woman's corpse away;
Two little mourners walked behind,
And saw the grave wherein it lay.

Fast fell the tears upon their cheeks,
When little Christy raised his eyes,
And said, "Oh, mother! how I wish
I was with you above the skies."

Dr. J. Collis Browne's CHLORODYNE,

The most Valuable Remedy ever Discovered.

The Best Remedy known for **COUGHS, COLDS, ASTHMA, BRONCHITIS.** Effectually cuts short all attacks of SPASMS.

Acts like a charm in Diarrhœa, Dysentery, and Cholera. The only Palliative in **Neuralgia, Gout, RHEUMATISM, TOOTHACHE.**

CHLORODYNE is taken in drops, graduated according to the malady. The doses are small, so that a bottle is not soon exhausted, but remains ready to meet emergencies. No more reliable and generally useful medicine can be kept at hand. It is agreeable to take, pleasant in action, and has no bad after effects.

To Avoid disappointment,
Insist on having Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S,

THE ORIGINAL & ONLY GENUINE.

Convincing Medical Testimony with each bottle.
Of all Chemists at **1/1½, 2/9, and 4/6.**

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ONLY GENUINE.

Reliable Footwear.

JACKSONS LTD.,

The 10/6 Boot Specialists,

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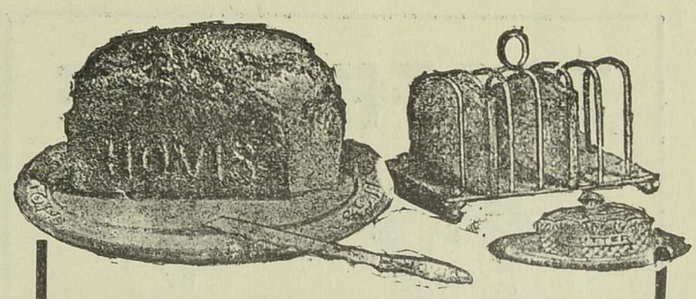

Thrift of Scotland, Ireland's Wit,
Pith of Wales and English Grit;
Virtues nourished (truly said)
By the 'world-famed Hovis Bread.'

Hovis

(Trade Mark)

Contains three times more : nourishment than is to be had in ordinary bread.

In "Fresh Air Treatment of Consumption," Dr. Gordon Stables has said:—

"The bread I use is Hovis,
I am enthusiastic on it."

When ordering it, do so as "Hovis" and not Brown, or you may not get what you want.

Try it toasted, and you will find it delicious.

Samples and Illustrated Booklet can be had on request from Hovis-Bread Flour Co., Ltd., Macclesfield.

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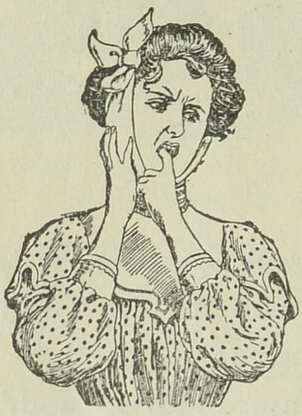

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CURED INSTANTLY BY

Bunter's Nervine.

Of all Chemists and Stores at 1/1½, and Depot, 13, St. George's St., Norwich.

KAYE'S

Worsdell's Pills are the best Family Medicine. For over **100 years** they have been used continuously in the homes of the people. They are mild but certain in action, are a positive cure for **Indigestion, Headache, Constipation, Liver Complaint,** &c. Of all Chemists, 1/1½, 2/9, 4/6. or post free from 13, St. George's, Norwich.

PILLS.

Winter Eczema

and the worst **Skin Ailments** are completely annihilated by

SULPHOLINE LOTION,

which directly attacks all forms of Eczema, Eruptions, Pimples, Acne, Spots, Blackheads, or Disfiguring Rashes, leaving the skin in the soft clear, supple, attractive condition designed by Nature.

Bottles everywhere, **1/- & 2/9**

A FREE TRIAL.	We will send a bottle to all readers of this paper enclosing this Coupon with 2d. to pay postage.	COUPON No. 20.

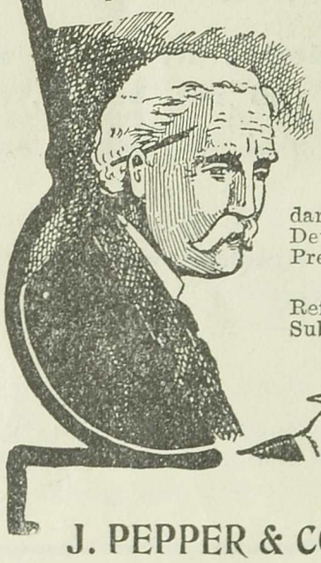
J. PEPPER & Co., Ltd., Bedford Laboratory, London, S.E.

For 35 years the Paramount Skin Remedy has been

Sulpholine

WHICH WILL YOU BE?

Worth Pounds or Shillings to your Employer.



TO LOOK OLD is fatal to your chance of success.

This is pre-eminently the age of young men, and those who are no longer young MUST retain their youthful appearance as long as possible.

LOCKYER'S HAIR RESTORER

darkens grey hairs to a perfectly natural shade. Detection IMPOSSIBLE, but success CERTAIN. Preserves the appearance, improves the hair but does not stain the skin. Insist on

Refuse Substitutes. **LOCKYER'S.**

Large low-priced Bottles on sale — everywhere —

1/6,

or post free from

J. PEPPER & CO., LTD., Bedford Laboratory, LONDON, S.E.

'Twas but the thought passed through
his mind,
When soft a whisper seemed to come—
"Be patient, little Christopher,
You are not very far from home."

The Minister said, "Dust to dust;"
And then the poor boys left the place—
Two friendless boys in London town;
Oh! was not theirs a hapless case?

They found the landlord at his house,
And said, "Please, sir, our mother's
dead;
She could not pay up all the rent,
And we have got to earn our bread.

"But please, sir, we have brought the key,
And left some things upon the shelf,
And there's the blanket and the bed,
My mother thought you'd pay yourself."

"Of course, I'll take the things, my boy,
For right is right, and so I must;
But there's a sixpence for you both,
You'll find it hard to earn your crust."

They wandered up and down the streets,
And then went home to sleep once
more,
And in the morning left the room,
And took the key and locked the door.

"And so she's gone!" the landlord
said,
"And you are left to face the strife:
Well, I will say, I never knew
A better woman in my life.

"Of course. I'll take the things, my boy,
For right is right, and so I must;
But there's a sixpence for you both:
You'll find it hard to earn your crust."

They thanked the man, and left the house,
"I'll tell you what we'll do," said John,
"This sixpence here will buy a broom,
We'll sweep a crossing of our own.

Away they went, with anxious hopes,
And long they hunted here and there,
Until they found a dirty place,
Not very far from Leicester Square.

And here at once they took their stand,
And swept a pathway broad and neat,
Where ladies, in their silken gowns,
Might cross and hardly soil their feet.

"Oh, yes; we'll work like honest boys,
And if our Mother should look down,
She'd like to see us with a broom,
And with a crossing of our own.'

"We won't go to the workhouse, Chris,
But act like men and do our best;
Our mother said, 'A crust well-earned,
Was sweeter than a pauper's feast.'"

"Oh, yes; we'll work like honest boys,
And if our mother should look down,
She'd like to see us with a broom,
And with a crossing of our own."

The people hurried to and fro,
And 'midst the jostle, jar, and noise,
And thinking of their own affairs
They hardly saw the little boys.

Not so with all, some caught a sight
Of little Christy's anxious eyes,
And put a penny in his cap;
And every penny was a prize.

"Poor little boy!" said Geraldine.

At last the streets began to clear,
And people dropped off one by one;
"Let's go," said little Christopher,
"My pocket is quite heavy, John."

They counted up their pence with glee,
And went away to buy some bread,
And had a little left to pay,
For lodging in a decent bed.

Next day John kept his crossing clean,
Swept off the mud, and left it dry,
And little Christy held his cap,
But did not tease the passers-by.

And many a one a penny gave,
Who marked the pale child's modest way,
And thus they'd sixpence left in hand
When they went home on Saturday.

The woman at the chandler's shop.
In kind remembrance of the dead,
Had found the boys a lodging place,
Where they could have a decent bed.

"Let's go to church," said Christopher,
"*She'd* be so glad to see us there;
You recollect she often said,
'Boys, don't neglect the house of prayer.'"

"We're very shabby," John replied,
"And hardly fit for such a place;
But I will do the best I can
To polish up my hands and face."

Clear rung the bells that Sabbath morn,
As they went briskly up the street;
And out of sight, the Angel bright,
Walked close behind with shining feet.

Some idle boys, who played about,
Threw stones and mocked, as they went in.
"Aye, let them mock away," said John,
"We need not care for them a pin."

A lady watched them, as they sat,
And when the service was all done,
Said, "Do you go to Sunday school?"
"No, ma'am, but we should like," said John.

She told them both the place and time;
They went that afternoon to school;
The boys were playing in the street,
And said to John, "You are a fool

"To go to that old stupid place;
We know a trick worth two of that."
Said John, "I mean to be a man,
And that's the trick I'm aming at."

SECOND PART.

THE second week was bleak and cold,
A drizzling rain fell day by day,
And with their wet umbrellas up.
The people hurried on their way.

And no one thought about the boys,
Who patiently stood sweeping there;
And sometimes over Christy's face,
There fell a shade of blank despair.

Discouraged, wet, and weary oft,
Cold, shivering, to their bed they crept;
But still all night, that Angel bright,
Stood by, to guard them, as they slept.

And these poor boys would sleep as well
As rich men on their beds of down,
And wake up with a lighter heart,
Than many a king who wears a crown.

But winter time came on apace,
And colder still the weather grew,
And when they left the street at night.
Their clothes were often wetted through.

Their coats were almost worn to rags,
Their bare feet went upon the stones;
But still they always went to church,
And to the school on afternoons,

And never joined with wicked boys,
And never stopped away to play,
But tried to do their very best,
And swept the crossing every day.

One day a boy came up and said,
"I know a dodge worth two of that;
Just take to picking pockets, lad,
And don't hold out that ragged hat."

"What, thieve!" said little Christopher,
"Our dodge is twice as good as that.
We earn our bread like honest folks;"
And so he answered, tit for tat.

"Well, that's your own look-out, of course;
For my part, I don't see the fun
Of starving at this crossing here,
When money is so easily won."

"How do you manage that?" said John,
"Oh! come with us, we'll have you taught,
You've but a trick or two to learn,
To grip the things, and not be caught."

"But if you should be caught?" said John,
"The end of that would spoil your fun."
"Oh! we know how to manage that;
Come on, I'll show you how 'tis done."

"What do you get to eat?" said John,
Who pondered on these boasting words.
"What get to eat!—Just what we choose—
We eat and drink away like lords.

"Now, what d'ye say?—make up your mind;
I'm waited for, and must be gone,
We've pretty work to-day, on hand."
"Well, I shan't help to-day," said John.

"The more fool you," replied the boy,
And went off whistling down the street;
And black as night, a wicked Sprite,
Went after him with rapid feet.

John went back slowly to his place,
And grumbling to himself, he said,
"I half repent, I didn't go,
It is so hard to earn one's bread.

"I dare say he gets in a day
As much as we earn in a week;
I wish I'd gone." John muttered this;
To Christopher he did not speak.

At night as he went sauntering home,
He loitered round a pastry cook's,
Till Christy called, "John, come along,
You'll eat the cakes up with your looks!"

"Well, Chris, I say 'tis very hard,
We never have good things to eat;
I'm tired of nothing else than bread,
I long for something nice and sweet."

"They do look nice," said little Chris,
And lingered near with hankering eyes;
"Which would you have, John, if you could?
"I'd have these jolly Christmas pies."

John answered in a grumbling tone,
"Oh! I don't know, so let 'em be;
Some boys do get nice things to eat;
Not *honest* boys, like you and me."

"Well, never mind," said little Chris,
"You're out of sorts this evening, John;
We'll both be rich maybe some day,
And then we'll eat 'em up like fun."

"No chance of that, for us," said John,
"Our feet are now upon the stones;
We can't earn food and clothing too,
And you are only skin and bones."

"'Tis hard to work and not to eat:
But, John, you would not do what's bad."
"No; I don't mean to thieve—not I;
But when thieves feast, it makes one mad."

And so John grumbled day by day,
And longed for something good to eat,
And sometimes looked out for the boy
Who went off whistling down the street.

And oh! indeed, 'twas very hard,
When tired, hungry, cold, and wet,
To pass by all the eating-shops,
That looked so tempting in the street.

To see the people going in,
To buy the sausage-rolls and pies,
Whilst they could only stand outside,
And look at them with longing eyes.

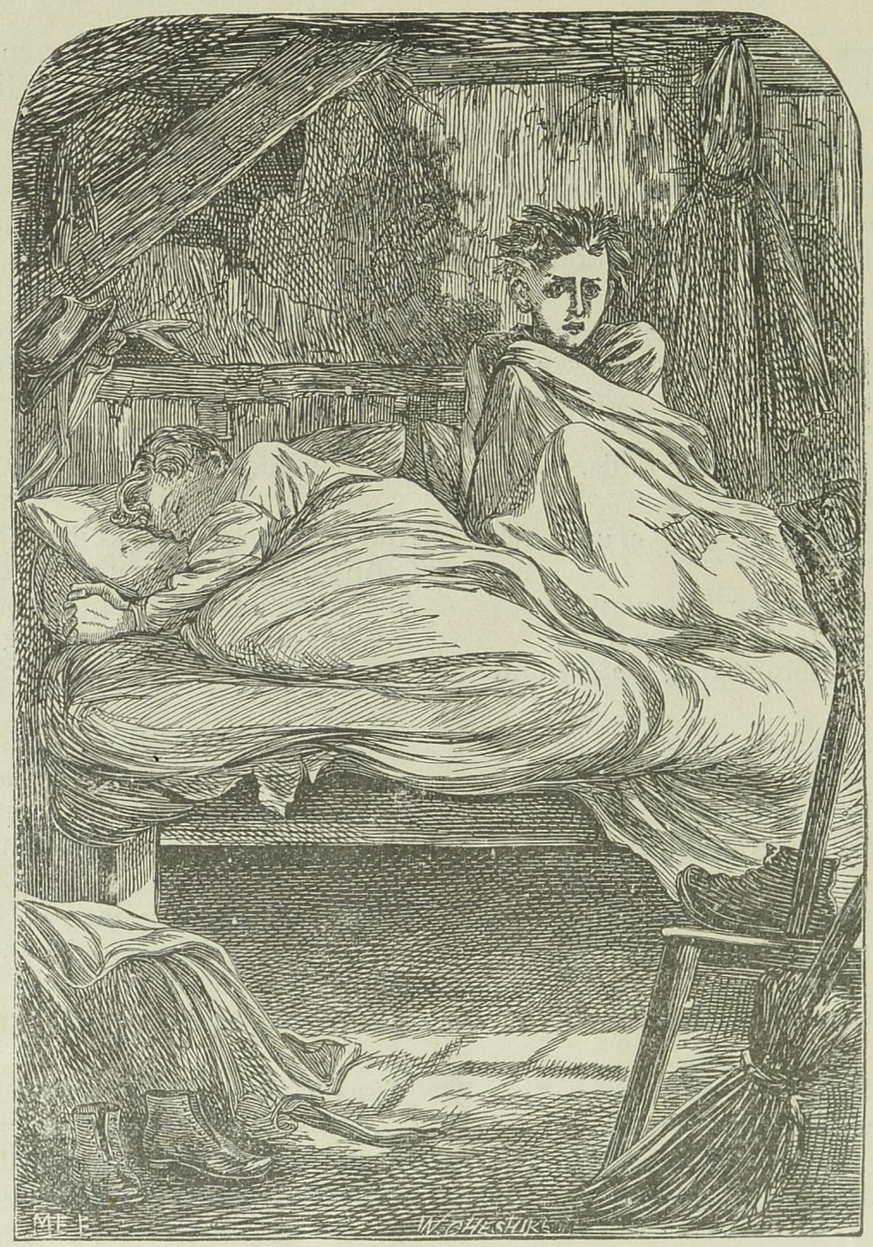
'Twas hard to see the smoking meat,
And smell the vapours floating round
Of roasting joints, and savoury steaks,
From steaming kitchens under-ground.

And sometimes little Christy cried,
When limping on with chilblained toes,
He saw fine windows full of boots,
And children's shoes in shining rows.

But still he never would complain,
And sometimes said, if John was sad,
"We got on bravely yesterday,
Why should you take to moping, lad?

"But, John, I think if you and I
Were rich, as these great people are,
We'd just look out for orphan boys,
And give them nice warm clothes to wear."

"Just so," said John, "and we would give
Poor little sweepers in the street
A famous lot of halfpennies,
To buy them something good to eat.



He strained his ears to catch the sound
Of footsteps in the silent night,

And when they came close by the door,
His air almost rose up with fright.

"They'd never miss the little things,
That would make kings of you and me;
I wish that we were rich men, Chris, [do."
We'd show 'em what rich men should

One night between the dark and light,
As they were going down a lane,
And Christopher with bleeding feet,
Was slowly hobbling on with pain;

John saw some shoes, outside a door—
"They'll just keep my poor Christy warm!"
And quick as thought, he snatched them up,
And tucked them underneath his arm.

Then pale as ashes grew his face,
And sudden fears rushed on his mind,
He hurried on with quicker pace,
Lest some one should be close behind.

"Do stop a bit," his brother cried,
"Don't be in such a hurry, John."
John darted round a frightened look,
And from a walk began to run.

He thought he heard the cry of "Thief,"
And swifter down the street he fled;
And black as night, a wicked Sprite,
With rapid feet, behind him sped.

The cry of "Thief" was in his ears,
Through all the bustle and the din;
And when he reached the lodging house,
The wicked spirit followed in.

He sat down pale, and out of breath,
And locked the door into the street,
And trembled when he only heard
The sound of little Christy's feet.

"There, Christy, boy, there's shoes for you,
And now you'll cut away like fun;
Come, let us see, how well they fit—
Just give a tug and they'll be on."

Then Christopher did laugh outright,
"Hurra! hurra!—now I am shod;
But, John, where did you get the shoes?"
John put him off, and gave a nod.

The little boy was tired out,
And quickly to his bed he crept,
And knew not that a wicked Sprite
Scowled on his brother as he slept.

John could not rest; the faintest noise
Made all the flesh upon him creep;
He turned, and turned, and turned again,
But could not get a wink of sleep.

He strained his ears to catch the sound
Of footsteps in the silent night,
And when they came close by the door,
His hair almost rose up with fright.

At last his fear became so great,
That in a cold damp sweat he lay,
And then the thought came in his mind,
That he had better try and pray,

"They tell us at the Sunday School,
That we must beg to be forgiven;
My mother used to say the same,
Before she went away to heaven.

"I wish I'd let the shoes alone;
I wonder what I'd better do!—
If I should take them back again,
Poor Christy would not have a shoe.

"Though I don't think he'd care for that,
For he's a better boy than I,
And he would sooner starve to death
Than steal a thing, or tell a lie.

"Are you asleep, Chris? Can't you wake?
I want to tell you something bad;
I've counted all the hours to-night;
I say, Chris, can't you wake up, lad?"

Just then the child screamed in his sleep,
And started upright in his bed;—
"Are you there, John? Who's in the room?
Oh, John! I dreamt that you were dead.

"I'm glad enough that I woke up,
I'm glad you're all alive and well;
I'd such an ugly dream—I saw
The devil taking you to hell."

"And so he will, if I don't mind,
As far as that, your dream is right;
And as to going off to hell,
I think I've been in hell all night."

"What have you done?"—"Why, stole some shoes,
That very pair I gave to you;
But I can't rest about it, Chris,
I want to know what we shall do."

"Why, take them back, of course," said Chris,
"And put them were they were before;
Let's go at once."—"No, stop," said John,
"The clock has only just struck four.

"There's no one stirring in the street,
The shops will not be open yet,
And we should have to wait about
For hours in the cold and wet.

"And now that I've made up my mind,
I don't feel half so much afraid."
Then took to flight that evil sprite,
And John lay down his weary head.

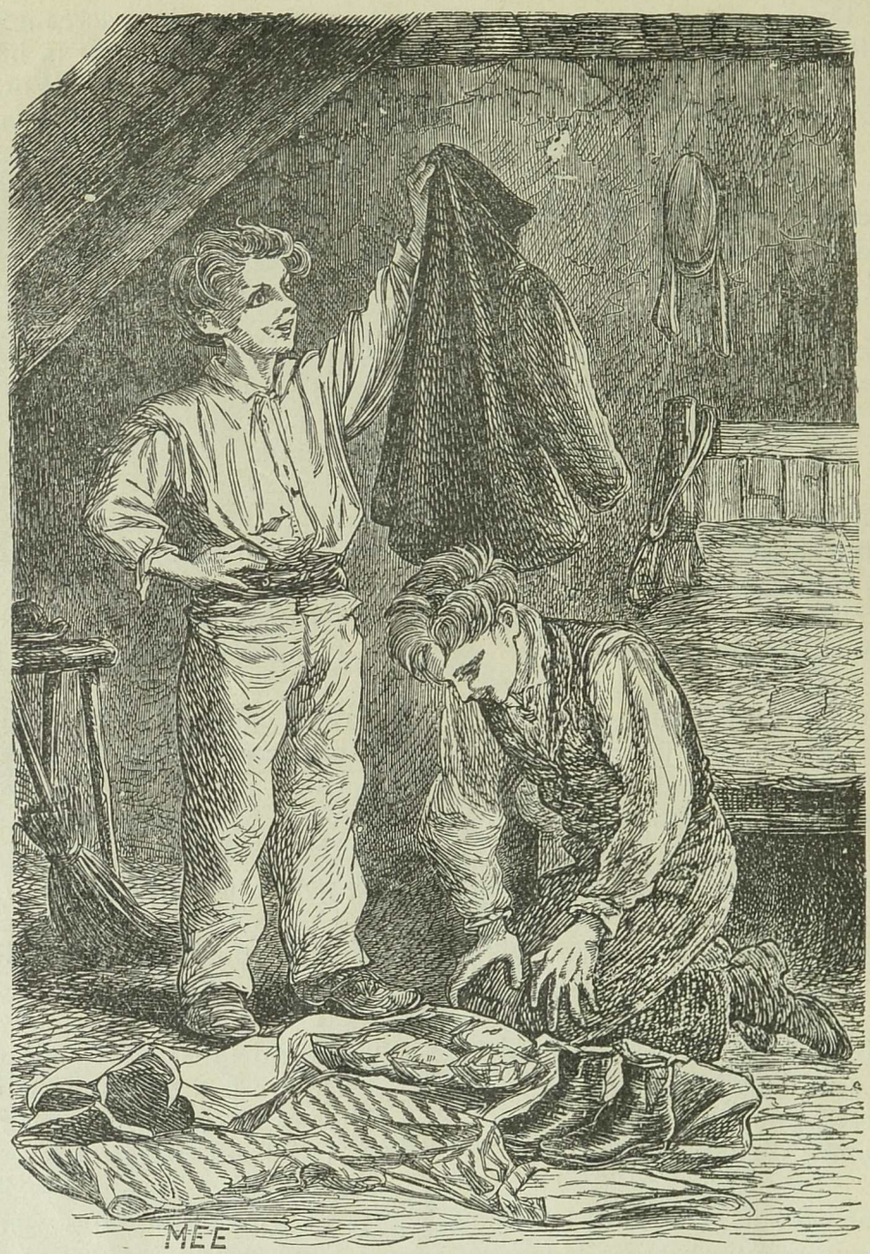
At six o'clock the boys went out,
The snow was falling in the street,
And through the bitter morning air,
They ran along with naked feet.

They watched the busy town wake up,
Undoing shutter, bolt, and bar;
But full two hours they stopped about,
Before *that* door was set ajar.

John quickly slipped the shoes inside,
And then as quickly walked away,
And with a lighter heart he went
To face the labours of the day.

Fast fell the feathery floating snow,
In whirling currents driven round,
Or fluttered down in silent showers
Of fleecy flakes upon the ground.

With broom in hand, and shivering limbs,
The little sweepers bravely stood,
And faced the cutting north-east wind,
That seemed to chill their very blood.



'But now for these fine Christmas pies."
He said, and smacked his lips with glee,

They're just the things you wanted, Chris,
There's two for you, and two for me."

A lady, in a house close by,
Who often watched the little boys,
Heard many times, that stormy day,
A deep cough mingling with the noise.

She rose up from her blazing fire,
And from the window looked about,
And hard at work amongst the snow,
She spied the ragged sweepers out.

"Do, Geraldine, look here," she said,
"How thin that youngest boy has grown;
Poor little wretch!—how cold he looks,
He's little more than skin and bone."

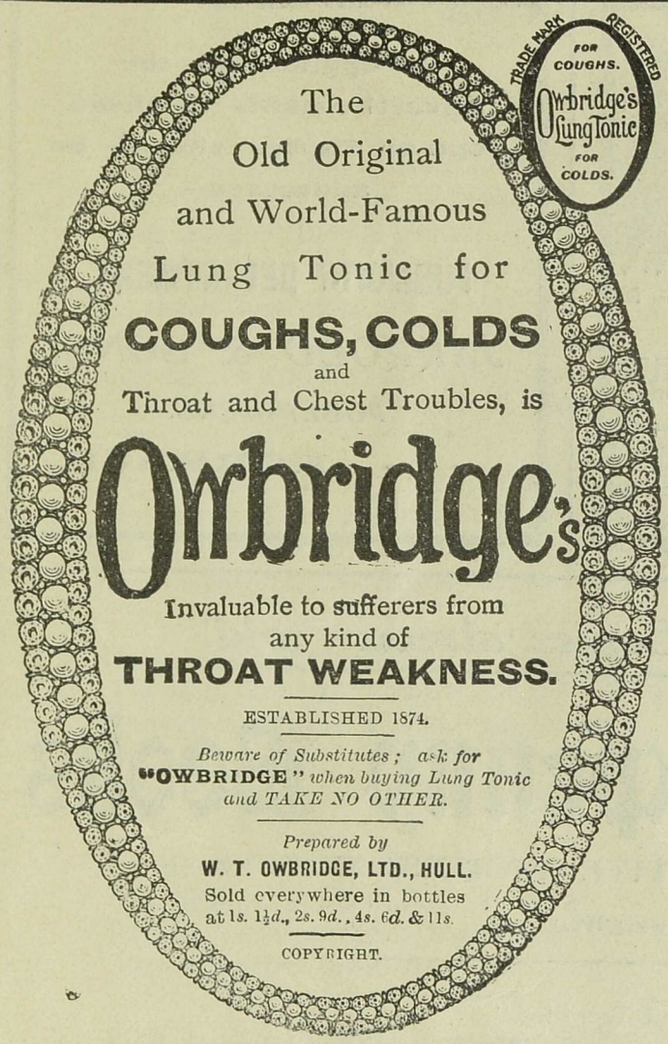
"Poor little boy!" said Geraldine,
"I never saw a whiter face;
I think they must be honest boys,
To keep so constant to their place.

"There's Frank and Freddy's worn-out shoes,
I think, mamma, would fit them well."
"Perhaps they would, I'll have them got,
My dear, if you will ring the bell.

"And there's your brothers' old great coats,
They'll never put them on again;
But they will keep these children warm,
In many a storm of wind and rain."

"And give them something nice to eat;
I don't mean dry old crusts of bread,
But good mince-pies," said Geraldine,
"You know we've such a number made."

"Well, do so, if you like, my dear." [pies."
"Oh! thank you; they shall have some
Poor John, and little Christopher,
They hardly could believe their eyes.



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They took the clothes, and nice mince-pies,
They bowed and thanked, and bowed again,
Then scampered down the splashy streets,
And reached their own dull dirty lane.

And there they fitted on the coats,
And turned the pockets inside out,
Stuck up the collars round their ears,
Put on the shoes, and marched about.

They rubbed their hands and laughed amain,
And twisted one another round,
And then John turned a somerset,
And cleared the bedstead with a bound.

"But now for these fine Christmas pies,"
He said, and smacked his lips with glee,
"They're just the things you wanted, Chris,
There's two for you, and two for me.

"We never had such luck before,
We never dreamt of such a thing."
"I think 'twas mother's angel, John,
Who had that order from the King."

"You don't mean that in earnest, Chris?"
"Why not?" said Chris, "I'm sure I do.
I say, John, if we died to night,
Should we both go to heaven too?"

"Well, Christopher, last night, I thought
I should be sure to go to hell;
What sort of place that's like to be,
I've now a notion I could tell.

"I'm pretty sure, if I had died
Last night, without my sins forgiven,
I'd not a single chance to go,
To be with mother up in heaven.

"I wish I'd never touched the shoes;
To steal is such a shameful sin,
And though they're taken back again,
I don't feel yet all right within.

"It was so bad to go and steal!
Four months to-day you know *she* died;
And though we've fared quite hard enough,
Our wants have mostly been supplied.

"Some boys, we know, have had no bed,
A deal worse off than you and I,
For we have always had some bread,
And just a place where we could lie.

"And now, we've got some clothes to wear,
And days will soon be getting long,
And then, old boy, we'll shortly see
You picking up, and getting strong."

"I don't know, John—I fancy not,
I sometimes think I'm going to die;
I dream so much about the place
Where mother went—I don't know why.

"Except, maybe, I'm going too:
I saw one one night, John, in a doze,
That Angel, that my mother saw,
With snowy wings and shining clothes.

"He looked at me, and then he smiled,
And said, 'Your time will soon be come;
Be patient, little Christopher,
You're going to a better home.'

"You know, last Sunday, at the school,
The lady told us how to pray,
And said, 'that Jesus Christ had come
To die, and take our sins away.'

"And so I begged He'd take all mine,
And, Johnny, I believe He will;
And now I shouldn't mind to die,
If we could be together still."

"Oh! Christy, boy, you must not die;
What should I do without you here?
Oh! do get well—you must get well,"
And John brushed off a starting tear.

The winter passed, and spring-time came,
And summer days grew warm and long;
But little Christy weaker grew,
And soon could hardly creep along.

And then he stopped all day at home,
And soon he hardly left his bed,
And John was forced to leave him there,
To earn for both their daily bread.

Sometimes the lady at the house,
Gave John some little jobs to do,
And when she found he did them well,
She sent him on her errands, too.

And now, when Christopher was ill,
And John was leaving for the night,
She gave them little dainty things,
To please his brother's appetite.

The woman at the chandler's shop,
Had always been a faithful friend,
And often came to see the child,
And stayed awhile to wash and mend.

The lady at the Sunday School,
Found out the little orphans' home,
And she would come and read to Chris,
And he was glad to see her come.

She talked about the heavenly King,
And she would kneel and softly pray:
And thus he lingered on awhile,
Still getting weaker day by day.

'Twas on a sultry summer's night,
When heavy lay the stifling air,
As John was dropping off to sleep,
He heard a softly whispered prayer.

He knew 'twas Chris, and did not stir,
And then he heard a gentle sigh;
It was the dear boy's happy soul,
Escaping to its home on high.

He left behind his wasted form,
He rose above the toiling folk,
Above the cross upon St. Paul's,
Above the fog, above the smoke.

And higher, higher, up he went,
Until he reached the golden gate,
Where night and day, in shining bands,
The holy angels watch and wait.

And he went in, and saw the King,
The Saviour, who for him had died,
And found once more, his mother dear,
And little Chris was satisfied.

And there they both together wait,
Till John shall reach that happy home,
And often from the golden gate,
They watch in hopes to see him come.

But John had many years to live,
For he had useful work to do;
And he grew up an honest man,
A sober man, and Christian too.

His friend, the lady at the house,
When little Chris was dead and gone,
Bound John apprentice to a trade,
And so he did not feel alone.

And that bright Minister of Love,
Appointed by the Saviour King
To guard those orphan boys on earth,
And then to heavenly glory bring,

Still walked with John his journey through,
And though unseen was ever nigh,
Nor left him till his work was done,
And then went up with him on high.

And there in everlasting joy,
The mother and the brothers meet,
To part no more, and weep no more,
Nor dwell in that dark, dirty street:

To toil no more with bleeding feet,
Nor hungering long for something nice;
For they are clothed as angels are,
And eat the fruits of Paradise.

No more the cold shall freeze their limbs,
Nor darkness chill their dreary night;
It is eternal summer there,
And all the blessed rest in light:

And there with thousand thousand souls,
All saved from sorrow, fear, and shame,
They join to sing the happy song
Of praise to God, and to the Lamb.

Dear boys, who read the simple tale
Of these poor sweepers in the street,
The gracious God, who cared for them,
Will also guide your willing feet.

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