

THE BRITISH WORKMAN

# BRITISH WORKMAN



PUBLISHED FOR THE EDITOR BY S. W. PARTRIDGE, AT THE OFFICE OF THE "BRITISH WORKMAN," No. 9, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

## THE MARRIAGE FESTIVAL OR, THE USAGES OF WORKSHOPS.

**JAMES BACKHOUSE, Esq.**, the well-known African and Australian traveller, stated on his return to England some years ago, that during his sojourn in Van Dieman's Land he conversed with several hundreds of convicts, and was surprised to find that a very large proportion of those poor fellows, who had been transported from their native land, referred to the "fines and footings" of English workshops as the first steps in their ruin.

This and other testimonies stimulated the uniting Scotch Philanthropist, John Dunlop, Esq., in his important investigations in the manufacturing districts, and resulted in one of the most surprising complications now ever read. The perusal of Mr. Dunlop's extraordinary book on the drinking customs of various trades, the *drinks*, the *footings*, and the *weddings*, excites the deepest surprise; not as there being so much intemperance amongst the working classes, but that any *apprentices* who has had to pass such a fiery ordeal has escaped being burnt.

We rejoice to state that in many parts of the country, and particularly in Yorkshire, the men and masters are heartily uniting in breaking up these injurious drinking customs; adopting in lieu thereof, new and more rational workshop usages.

We have just been informed of a manufactory in Barnsley, where for many years the new apprentices have had to furnish "drinks" as their "footings" (a course which has not only inflicted evils upon the workmen themselves, but has been in many cases a cruel tax upon the poor parents of the apprentices), where now the drinking has been abolished, and the bonds, by subscribing a trifle from each workroom, purchase a *box of tea*.

At the brass and iron works of Messrs. Guest and Chrimms, Rotherham, when a workman gets married, a subscription is made through the works, to which the firm contributes, for the purchase of some useful articles of furniture, to be presented to the newly married couple. A tea meeting is held, at which the employers, the workmen and their wives, and the apprentice employees, at the works are present. After the removal of tea tables, the festive occa-

sion is enlivened by the singing of pieces of music by the singing class, performances on the pianoforte, harmonicon, accordion, &c., with recitations and occasional addresses. About the middle of the entertainment the articles of furniture are presented in due form to the young couple.

On Saturday evening, November 3rd, 1855, the sixth festival of the kind, during that year, was held in the large room of the Mechanic's Institute, when about 200 sat down to a plentiful repast, after which, the usual course of music, &c., as set forth on a printed programme, ensued.

About nine o'clock the articles of furniture, consisting of a clock and

part of your week's wages to be spent in a drunken spree, ending perhaps in a bloody broil, which might have sent you home to your young wife an object almost of loathing, instead of fond expectations. I congratulate your fellow workmen on the truly manly, say, noble usage they have substituted for those selfish, bad, and brutal drinking customs, which yet degrade and disgrace the working classes in some parts of our country—will these things *ever* be extirpated. I congratulate you, the wife of a sober husband, on the happier auspices which introduce you into the responsibilities and duties of the married state, inasmuch as the good will and kind feeling which is evinced towards you and your husband by his fellow workmen and their wives on this occasion, must be a pleasant assurance to you, that he is, in the midst of his daily toils, amongst those who are not likely to mistreat or injure him; in short, that he is surrounded by safe associates, who now give a gratifying proof that they mean him good, and not harm; and it must be a solid satisfaction to you, in the midst of your household duties, to see the articles of furniture before your eyes, to feel that such is the case, and that your husband is amongst those who will rather help than hinder him in the path of life. I can now only wish that you may long live happily to use these articles of furniture—which in the name of your fellow workmen and their wives I have now the pleasure of presenting to you. My remarks have as yet been confined to the presentation of your welfare and happiness in *this* life. It remains for me, on behalf of my respected partner, Mr. Chrimms, and myself, to present you each with a *Bottle*, and I beg earnestly to recommend to you his regular and prayerful perusal, as a safe and sure guide to that higher happiness in eternal life, to which it is my prayer that you and all of us here may, through God's mercy, attain.

At one of those Rotherham marriage festivals, which was celebrated only a few weeks previously, the number of visitors was greatly increased by the presence of Mr. Guest having presented tickets to between sixty and seventy workmen, (and the wives of such as were married,) who had been employed in erecting two villa residences for him, at Moorgate Grove. This excellent course, founded upon truly philanthropic principles, and worthy of imitation by all employers under the same or similar circumstances, was adopted by him in lieu of giving them what is generally called the "roaring supper."



PRESENTATION TO THE NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE.

mahogany dining table, were presented to the young married couple by Mr. Guest, who, as spokesman for the workpeople delivered the following short address. "I have once more the great satisfaction of being the mouthpiece of your fellow workmen and their wives in presenting you with the articles of furniture now before you, as a testimony of their good will and kind feeling towards you at the outset of your married life. I cannot but congratulate you both, on what seems to me the favourable circumstances under which your married life commences. Under other circumstances, and in other places, you, the husband, might at your marriage being made known to your fellow workmen, have been coerced by them into parting with the greater



reposed for many hours and woke wondering aloof. She noticed that the sunbeams were streaming through the high up windows and were playing on the walls, and she floated like a globe among the air, and she put on her hand and tried to catch the rays—

and as her grasp went through it, she thought at the strange sound of her own hand as it hid her head from the clothes and went bitterly; for the face of her dead mother came before her eyes. At the first time she comprehended that she was alone in the world. Her weeping died away, and it was healthy. Her young heart was stronger as she again looked up, and she said Dr. French said she spoke to her when he came to her bedside, and asked if she might get up. He seemed surprised at the improvement, and gave permission—and shortly after, while doctoring some she was making her way to a stool beside the seat of the blind woman. As she freely caught it was noticed that though she was tall for eleven years old, yet she was crooked; nursing young children had completely twisted her shoulder out of place, and permanently distorted her. The face was pale and rigid, with bright dark eyes that seemed too large for the pinched visage; and yet with all these great defects no one looked definitely at that face without feeling kinder and gentler. There was such an engaging sweetness in her eyes, and her gentle glance—such a softness in her voice—as in her liquid tones—that the very lips trembled and just pronounced her "a poor creature"—"quite a fright" became an instant after struck with a feeling that could not be defined, but that was very like sympathy.

Recently yet decidedly the child took her course, and that throned of infirmity in London. In every prominent company, she was seated in the school, in the theatre, the foundry, the market, or the hospital, there are some better, and some worse than others. To be in her society, and to be intimate with none but the very best is true wisdom, and this course our little girl took.

"Shall I read to you, ma'am?" said she kindly on the second day of her recovery, to the blind woman.

"Can you read?"

"Yes, my mother taught me a long while ago, and I taught Tom, who he didn't like much."

"What's your name, child?"

"Patience, ma'am, Patience Grant, but they call me Patty for shortness."

"Patience, might I have a book, or a paper, which I have never opened with real interest in their lives, had seen how eagerly this child would have long to understand how his simple teachings struck to her heart and melted her to tears, and she was praying aloud before she knew that the words were a prayer—"Lord, help me!" and feebly as the petitioner was, we shall see that the prayer was answered.

patients; while her strength was being gradually restored by regular hours, quiet rest, and food, which, although very scarce, and grumbled said insufficient, was better and more ample than she had ever known in the world, and her house where starvation and blow had been her daily martyrdom.

Meanwhile Patty improved in her sewing from a young dressmaker who was recovering from rheumatic fever, learned to knit of her friend, and read aloud for an hour every evening seated at her feet. This poor soul had been called in mock courtesy to nurse, and she was known by that name only, for she seemed not unwilling that her real name should be forgotten; and she was known by that name by the nurse knew, and even she in the midst of many occupations did not care to remember the blind woman's real name.

At first it was not easy for Patty to make her soft voice heard by her friend amid the constant hum of talk going forward, and as length one and another caught a sentence, and so it came to be that she was known by that name only, for she seemed not unwilling that her real name should be forgotten; and she was known by that name by the nurse knew, and even she in the midst of many occupations did not care to remember the blind woman's real name.

After many years. He who came the birds of the air, and the winds of Heaven, to be seen to distant climes for the support or gratification of man, has often appointed very humble and very unlikely means of bearing his truth to the waste places of the human heart.

As Patty read again and again the glowing words, their hidden meaning came fully into her heart. Then the book of books, the Bible was sought; and O that those who have lived, that they never opened with real interest in their lives, had seen how eagerly this child would have long to understand how his simple teachings struck to her heart and melted her to tears, and she was praying aloud before she knew that the words were a prayer—"Lord, help me!" and feebly as the petitioner was, we shall see that the prayer was answered.

HOME TRAINING.

If there be one course more bitter to men than another, it is to be the offspring of an irreligious home, of a home where the voice of prayer and praise ascends not to God, and where the ties of human affection are not purified and elevated by the refining influence of a religious faith.

Such homes need their own special thoughts, unbalanced in their feelings, uncontrolled in their passions, and untrained in love to God and affection to man.

Those who are careless to avoid men, and who are not set to take offence themselves. Those who are too susceptible of sympathy, and who are afflicted of others, are not the most to be commended of their own.

NOTICE TO LEAVE.

A woman man who had lived in the service of late Edmund Thompson, Esq., of Armin, near Gough in Yorkshire, hired himself to a master, who never had family prayer. The master, who valued his own servant, was surprised at the end of the first week, by his coming to him and saying, "I am very sorry, sir, but I must leave your service."



CONSISTENCY REWARDED.

A carriage harness was accustomed to make arrangements with his servants on the Sabbath, for the evening work's work. Having his his accustomed builder, he was under the necessity of employing another, a man who resembled the Sabbath. On one occasion, he desired him to attend on the Sabbath, returning to make plans for a new building. This demand tried his principles, but he determined not to sit against conscience.

ALL MEN, OF WHATEVER CLASS, WHO MUST NECESSARILY OCCUPY SIX SEVENTHS, AND IN THE COURSE OF LIFE, WOULD CAREFULLY GAIN BY BRINGING TO THEIR BODIES THE REPOSE, AND TO THEIR MINDS THE CHANGE OF IDEAS SUITED TO THE DAY, FOR WHICH IT WAS APPOINTED BY GOD.

THE LABOURER—EVENING.

On the hardened soil of sin;
Thou art heaven's holy fruit,
And thou hastest holy power,
Com'ing like a volcano shower.
God hath bid thee lift the ground,
That the harvest may be sown.
Bid thee work within thy soul,
Which can fertilize the whole.
Then, when evening shadows close,
Hooding thee to calm repose,

COLUMNS FOR WIVES AND MOTHERS.

MOTHERS THAT ARE WANTED.

It is a blessing and an advantage, utterly incalculable, to have for a mother a woman who is not only a mother, but a woman of character; with talents and clearness; of solid information; with tact, temperance, and skill fitted to train and mould the mind; to implant principles, and awaken a lofty and noble ambition; and to preside over and purify by religious faith, good piety, and careful direction. These are the mothers that the church and the world alike want. The destinies of the race depend more on its future mothers than on anything else; that is to say, on the quality of those

THE LAST WORD.

The last word 's sons of the most dangerous weapon that exists—a woman's protest. Let wives fight for it than they would struggle to possess of a lighted bomb-shell.

SUGAR.

SUGAR is one of the substances most generally abused in our domestic life. Let wives and husbands take a hint from this provision of nature.

THE WIFE.

The wife in the sum of the domestic or social system. Unless she attends, there is nothing to keep heavy bodies like husbands from flying off into space—A wife will keep both herself and her house tidy and attractive.

MARRIAGE.

Dr. Fuller says of marriage: "Deceive not thyself by over-estimating happiness in the married state. Look not down for contentment greater than God can give, or a creature like you, and you will be disappointed from all incoincidences. Marriage is not like the hill of Olympus, wholly clear, without clouds."

EARLY TEACHINGS.

MOTHERS! be careful what you teach your little ones. A striking illustration of the importance of teaching correct views of a childhood occurred some time ago, which proves that it matters much what is sung even at the cradle. A mother was reading to her little child from Mother Goose's well-known, but foolish fable about the "Goosey Gander," by which the old man was thrown away stairs.

"Naughty Julia," exclaimed the child, "naughty Julia, to throw me down stairs." It did not occur to the mother that she was thus giving approval to a renegade spirit, but the tender mind of the little child, at once detected the error of the lesson contained in the verse.

MOTHERS! you cannot be too careful as to what you teach your little ones!

FOR MOTHERS.

Let no mother suppose that her child's education does not begin before it is sent to school—the quick perceptions of children are more active and observant than we are often aware of. Mothers, speak to your children, seriously, truthfully to your children. Never attempt to deceive them, but set them an example of honesty in all things. What is likely to be the effect of such a scene as the following on the mind of a child?

Child: "Mother, I want a piece of cake."
Mother: "I haven't got any—it's all gone."
Child: "I know there's some in the cupboard. I saw it when you opened the door."
Mother: "Well, you can't see my money; cake hurts children."
Child: "No, it don't; (whispering) I do want a piece; mother, might I have a piece?"
Mother: "Be still; I can't get you any more, I'm busy."
Child: (Owing nothing) "I want a piece of cake."
Mother: "Be still, I say; I shan't give you a bit. If you want any more, you must go and buy some."
Child: (Still crying) "I want a piece of cake—I want a piece of cake."
Mother: (Whispering) "I want a piece of cake."
Child: "There, take that, and teach your tongue. Don't let it speak. There's Ben come. Don't tell your mother you've got any more, I'm busy."
(Ben enters) Child: "I've had a piece of cake. Ben, you can eat my cake."
Ben: "Yes, I will;—mother, give me a piece."
Mother: (Very cross) "There, take that, it seems as if I could never keep a bit of anything in the house; (to the child) you'll see. If I give you another thing, (Another woman) Child: "I've had a piece."
(Younger sister) "Oh, I want some too."
Child: "Well, you can't have any more, I'm busy."
Child: "Did this mother love her children? I don't do this: she is telling, early and late, to the support and comfort; and yet she is thus thoughtlessly training them up in the practice of selfishness, giving, selfishness, and deceit. Let mothers be constantly in mind the injunction, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will leave for a world of trouble in his family, and repay her care a hundred times over."

Every mother, on the birth of a child, should imagine herself addressed by the creature of her hands. Let her home may be to the house and comforts here.
To thy home and comforts here.
Thy life's grace shall be mine,
Through a bright twilight,
From "Flowers of Sacred Poetry."

And thus it happened that amidst that mad career of the life, the weak, the wicked, and the unfortunate, the blind old woman who had known better days, and who had the desertion of a drunkard for help, and the little destitute child, formed a tender friendship; and such is the arrangement of Providence that intends all human beings to be helpful to each other, these two feeble friends were of the very greatest mutual aid.

A troublesome cough that afflicted Patty, called for rest in the winter, a plan in all respects beneficial, for the child made herself sit among the sick, that she might converse with the matron, the nurse, and the

Think upon the night of death,
When shall cease thy fleeting breath;
Think upon thy rest below,
And the Spirit's gentle power,
Com'ing like a volcano shower.
God hath bid thee lift the ground,
That the harvest may be sown.
Bid thee work within thy soul,
Which can fertilize the whole.
Then, when evening shadows close,
Hooding thee to calm repose,

