Poem

No 41

Subject

How to show Sympathy

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How to Show Sympathy.

Near to the night, one autumn day,
By Chicago's lake so bleak and cold
Gathered poor women in tatter'd array
For fragments of wood, ~~as are~~ pieces not sold;
Like the gleanings of old.

Mid women there, shrivelled by care,
Where the dark waves heave their debris,
See that young maid, so thin and fair,
Tugging away at the limb of a tree
Witness too her industry!

That child, they tell, so poor and wan,
Yet trig and gentle in every way,
Is sole inmate of a drunkard's home.
Her mother, broken so they say,
Has died and left her to condone
A father's faults, alone!

Tell me plainly my blear-eyed man,
What makes all drunkards' homes the same?
With a leaky roof and shabby van,
With broken stair and table lame,
And rooms ~~whence~~ where bedlam came?

No furniture whole in either room
Except perhaps a rickety bed:
For the better things, all too soon,
So I hear it always said,
Have gone away to pawn.

"Oh, papa dear, you know 'tis drear,
To think alone of poor mamma.
I seem to hear, it makes me fear,
Her gentle voice, call you, papa!
He answers back , "Ha! Ha!"

"Oh, go Christine, and let me be;
Who could, I say, ever stay here?
Clearly you see, no hope for me,
Except in rum, or gin or beer!
The fact is very clear!"

"Then woe to me! how plain I see,
My poor papa has lost his mind.
Will he ever again from drink be free,
And to himself and me be kind?
Oh I'm a drunkard's child!

That very morn, Christine had gone
With other waifs, who loved her ways,
To the pastor's Sabbath Mission;
Mother-taught, she loved the lays,
And songs of happy days.

She, with pain relieved for shortest time,
Had now come back to wretchedness!
Her stupid sire, half daft in mind,
caught there no glimpse of blessedness;
Nor cared for her distress.

"No fire, Christine, thou cursed child,
No chairs, no food or drink from thee;
Why little Miss, You'll drive me wild!
'Tis a matter ~~right~~ full plain to see,
Nobody cares for me!

Without remorse the drunkard greets
~~Thus~~ The weeping girl, and with a whirl
Her fiercely ~~threw her~~ threw into the street.
"Go, jade, and fetch some knot or gnurl
Out from yonder surge!

Poor little child, with sobs choked down
Had ~~found~~ caught a branch, near heavy launch,
And tugging hard what she had found
Mid teams and crowds that Ere might daunt
Hearts of bolder ~~vaunts~~ Make!

She trips and falls, a common thing!
Too late a man holds up his ~~van~~ span;
The hind'ring branch to skirts did cling
And oh, see now: so many ran
To save from horse's tramp.

Christine was crushed, could not be saved,
For God says No! it must be so;
With bleeding limbs, her mind half dazed,
She lisps ~~the~~ her street and home of woe:
There, there the bearers go!

Nor lingers long, this little maid
With weakened frame, and body lame
Yields all too soon to death's demand.
All sobered now, the drunkard came
To catch her parting hymn!

Her neighbors ~~assembled~~ gathered the, old and young.
In grief give mead to her ~~kind~~ good deeds!
From ~~that~~ her father's new heart were wrung
Expressions strong, and promises deep--
Which God help him keep!

Pastor and daughter and children were there,
The burial service to recite
His voice was rare, his reading fair
Sorrow and comfort to fresh excite,
A And sympathy indite/

However tender the children around,
Where but few ~~not an~~ eyes were ~~was~~ really dry,
The daughter, like ~~a~~ soldiers, her father found
Who in truth all emotion defy;
None saw the pastor cry!

When Christine was ~~gently~~ laid in the tomb
The heart-broken drunkard left to his grief,
Pastor and daughter took their way home.
Of pastor the daughter ~~begged~~ took leave
To put a question brief!

"Papa didn't you love that child?"
"Why, yes indeed; why do you ask?"
"You did not join in all the tide!
Your face was smooth, your eye was dry/
Who saw my father cry?

Do you love me, my papa, dear?
If it were I, in death to lie
So cold and stiff upon a bier,
Wouldn't you mourn and sadly cry,
Should your daughter die?

His tears then came, his heart beat strong,
As she with childish skill did speak
How clear I see; confess my wrong,
The human soul doth ever seek
A genuine Sympathy!