A DISTRACTED PARENT.

Five daughters—four of them engaged—
I think I shall go mad!
For such a surfeiting of love
No parent ever had.
The very atmosphere is charged
With it; no matter where
I go about the house, I trip
Upon some whispering pair.

At evening when I take my pipe
And seek a quiet nook
To sit and read my paper, or
Some new and tempting book,
I ope, perhaps, the parlor door,
When a familiar sound,
Quite unmistakable, suggests
It is forbidden ground.

So then more cautiously I turn
To our reception room;
But, lo! again upon my ear
From its romantic gloom
Comes softly, yet with emphasis,
That warning; when I start
And leave as Lady Macbeth wished
Her guests would all depart.

My next resort is then the porch,
Where roses trail and bloom;
Ha! is it echo that betrays
The joys of yonder room?
Ah, no! a startled change of base
Reveals the presence there
Of Cupid's votaries, and alas!
There's still another pair.

"But sure," I think, "my library
Will be a safe retreat."
So there at once with quickened step
I take my wearied feet.
Vain hope—that warning sound again
Breaks on my listening ear;
Thank heaven! my youngest hath not yet
Attained her thirteenth year.

Hark! there she is! and bless my heart,
That popinjay, young Lunn,
Is at her side—I do believe,
That she, too, has begun.
Oh, ye who live to sit and dream
Of future married joys,
Pray heaven with honest fervor that
Your girls may all be boys.

—*Philadelphia Press.*

A WORTHLESS FELLOW.

There was a rumor afloat at the fort that Tom O'Halloran was to be discharged from the regiment for drunkenness, and everybody was sorry for it. Even though those were stirring days, and every man and woman had their heads and hearts full of the expedition against the Indians for which the regiment was preparing, yet each had a thought of pity for Tom, a word of kindness for Tom's mother. They had, after a fashion, belonged to the regiment longer than any officer or soldier now included in it, for Tom's father had been band-master from the early days of the war to his death, which occurred just after Tom was enrolled as a private, some five years since; while Mrs. O'Halloran, whose patience and faithfulness as a nurse were beyond praise, was endeared to almost every officer's family by some battle with death which they had fought together. They had more than their share of Irish beauty, those two, and the gray eyes which laughed or flashed under Tom's dark brows were, his defenders said, very like those which looked at the world with such gentle kindness from beneath his mother's white hair. He was a strong, clever young Irishman, with an aptitude for doing well anything that he was set to do, from fighting to masonry, but with a passion for drink which his mother's prayers, his colonel's warnings, and his own resolutions were powerless to overcome. Clever and handsome and brave as he was, and "Child of the Regiment," as he was jokingly called, his officers would scarcely have had such patience with his always recurring escapades if it had not been for his mother, whose love for him was so devoted, and whose faith in his promises of reform so unwavering, that the hardest hearts (and soldiers' hearts are not very hard ones) always yielded to her entreaty for another chance for her boy.

But this time things lookedvery serious for poor Tom. He had been drunk while on duty as sentry, and being in quarrelsome humor, had been with difficulty prevented from knocking down the officer of the day who had ordered him under arrest. Within a week a large portion of the regiment was to start on an expedition of several months, and as Tom's company was among those which were to go, the colonel had been heard to say that patience in his case had reached its limit, for a drunken sentry could endanger an army, and nobody could possibly rely upon Tom's sobriety from one hour to another. Punishment and warnings had alike failed a hundred times, and Tom must be left behind and discharged. I think the good colonel, under whose bluff aspect was hidden a very kindly heart, was quite conscious that he was in disfavor with all the ladies and many of the officers, that day, and it was even whispered that he had been repulsed with great disorder, in an attempt to prove to Mrs. Colonel that he was right in his resolution. At all events, he carried rather a gloomy countenance about his duties, and it was with lagging footsteps that, toward evening, he entered the little hospital. There was only one patient at present, but he was one who would never leave it alive, a man who had been a good soldier, and the colonel's orderly for years.

A little old woman with a white apron and a quaint cap rose from beside the bed where poor Butler lay—a pale little woman, with a look of patient trouble in her soft eyes that touched the colonel more than vehement reproaches, for this was Mrs. O'Halloran, and to him, as to most of the officers, she was the old and tried friend of many an illness and anxiety, rather than merely the mother of a private solder who was in a scrape. The room was as neat and pleasant, the bed and the patient as well cared for as, though his nurse had no thought but his welfare; and the sight of this also touched the colonel, who would have done his duty under any circumstances, and who respected the evidence of such a character in others.

"Butler must not talk much, if you please, Colonel," Mrs. O'Halloran said, as she left the room and sat down on the lowest step of the hall stair, for she was trembling so that she could scarcely stand.

After a few moments the colonel came slowly out. He was surprised that Butler had not interceded for Tom, because he knew the man's liking for the nurse, who, as a special favor, had been allowed him, instead of the usual hospital steward, and that he might reasonably expect to be heard with patience at least by his old master.

"You know what I would say, Colonel," Mrs. O'Halloran began, rising and clasping her wrinkled hands. "My heart has been breaking to say it this long day, but I could not leave Butler."

"Does Butler know anything about this affair?"

"No, sir. Sure I couldn't trouble a dying man, who has been a good friend to Tom, and his father before him, this many a day."

"I wish Tom had your sense of duty, Mrs. O'Halloran!" cried the colonel, with a sudden dimness in his keen eyes, as he thought of the mother's agony of suspense that she had concealed for the good of her patient.

"I knew that I could see you when you came to see Butler, as you always do, colonel," she said, simply; and then, while the slow tears of age crept down her pale face, "Colonel, it is good and kind you have been to my poor boy many and many a time, and sorely he has tried your kindness! But his heart is set on going to this fighting, and if you turn him out of the regiment now, the regiment that has been his home since he was a little lad, sure, sir, you will ruin his life entirely, and he so young. He is a brave boy, too, is my Tom, Colonel, and I have a feeling here" (pressing a trembling hand against her heart) "that if you take him with you, he will do something to make you and his regiment proud of him."

It was weak logic, but the brave, pathetic old eyes, the passionate pleading of the faltering voice, made it very eloquent, and though the colonel told himself that he was a fool, he knew that he was yielding.

"Take him with you this once! Give him this one more chance!" she implored. "Sure, Colonel, the God of the widow will not let any harm come to you, because you heard the widow's prayer."

"Very well, Mrs. O'Halloran, foryour sake Tom shall have another trial, but I shall keep my eye on him and if he does any harm, it shall only be to himself," cried the colonel, with a sense of apologizing to his conscience. "The son of such a mother as you are ought to be better stuff than hopeless drunkards are made of."

"God bless you, sir, for ever and ever!"—catching his hand and kissing it. "His mother knows Tom O'Halloran better than himself does; and you will be glad of this day's mercy as long as you live, Colonel."

The sun had risen on such hopes and such confidence, such light hearts and such gay laughter, on a well-ordered, well-appointed regiment that scorned its foes and believed in its own invincibleness. The sun was sinking, at the June day's close, on a couple of hundred exhausted men huddled together within a rampart of saddles and dead horses on the bare crown of a steep hill, whose base was surrounded by howling savages who stretched in dusky hordes, it seemed to the tired eyes that watched them, endlessly through the valley beyond the little river. They had been surrounded and slaughtered by overwhelming numbers, and the remnant still alive were worn out with fatigue, heat, hunger, discouragement, but most of all by thirst. The steep sides of the hill were strewn with bodies; for the Indians, with the recklessness of triumph, had charged almost up to the rifles several times, and none of that weary band could say but what the next charge might be successful, though each man vowed silently to himself that his own weapon should prevent his becoming a prisoner if he survived his comrades.

They were not quite hopeless, however, for they knew that within twenty-four hours' march of them were reinforcements of such extent that at their approach the Indians would vanish, and that if they could but maintain their position, by sunset to-morrow they would be safe. But in the meantime, though hunger and fatigue could be endured, thirst was maddening, and the wounded, who lay in the center of the little circle, would not live until morning without water, the surgeon said. The colonel and two or three of the surviving officers, who had been holding a council (if such could be called anything so unanimous as the opinion that they must defend themselves while there was life left), looked hopelessly at each other when the surgeon made his report, and then, with the energy of desperation, the colonel sprang to his feet. They were all lying flat behind their rampart to protect themselves against occasional volleys fired by the Indians from an opposite but less high hill.

"Boys!" said the colonel, and between fatigue and sorrow (for had he not seen his best friends die that day?) the strong, kindly voice was sorely shaken, "you have done to-day all that brave men could. You are tired and hungry and grieved. Your colonel will not order you to do him an extra service, but the surgeon has told us that our wounded will die of thirst before morning unless they have water. Boys, there is a little stream at the foot of this hill. Will any of you volunteer to bring some for your comrades?"

There was a moment's silence, for all the men knew that the service he asked was a desperate one. The stream lay within the Indian line—if anything so irregular could be called a line—and they were physically so tired that exertion, much less daring, seemed impossible. Only a moment, and then a tall young man jumped up in his place, a couple of yards from the colonel's side, and waved his cap over his head.

"I will go, colonel!" cried Tom O'Halloran's cheery voice. "Friends, who will help to bring some water for those who have not been so lucky as we have?"

Soldiers only need a leader to do a gallant thing, and in two moments more eight men—the colonel would not permit more to go—crept out over the rampart, every second man carrying a tin bucket, and the other acting as guards. Very breathlessly their comrades waited the result, and the colonel clinched his hands in helpless grief when he heard the firing that told they had been attacked. But they came back presently—seven of them, wonderful to say—with water enough to give everybody a drink, and to keep the wounded supplied for several hours, and the only missing man was Tom O'Halloran!

"His mother said that he would make the regiment proud of him," muttered the colonel to the officer beside him, and neither was ashamed of the tears on his cheek.

It was not a night on which it was possible for a commanding officer, however tired, to sleep; and two hours later, when all had been quiet for over an hour, and in the dusky skies the stars were shining brilliantly, the colonel moved noiselessly across the sleeping men to a sentry who for some five minutes had been fixedly watching something on the other side of the defenses.

"What is it?" he asked, in a sharp whisper.

"I think it is one of our men, colonel but I am not sure," answered the soldier pointing to a dark form crawling on hands and knees, with many pauses, near the top of the hill.

"Who goes there?" cried the colonel.

"Tom," came a faint reply; and in an instant, forgetting that it was his duty as commander not needlessly to expose his life, the colonel was over the defenses, and kneeling beside bleeding, ghastly, but living Tom O'Halloran."

"Good God! my boy, how did you get here? We thought you were dead!"

"So did I, Colonel, twice," murmured Tom, with a gleam that was half fun, half tenderness, in his dim eyes. "But I promised my mother to go back to her, and I was not going to break her heart just when I had done something at last to make her a little proud of her worthless fellow!"

You all know that they were rescued next day, "all that was left of them;" but I think you will be glad to hear that Tom O'Halloran kept his promise to his mother, and lived, though he lost a leg, and was otherwise so injured that he will never be a strong man again. But he is the hero of his regiment, and whether a desire to live up to his new place in men's esteem helped him, or whether the good in his nature would have triumphed sooner or later without the assistance of his heroism, is a question the colonel is fond of arguing, always ending by inviting his auditor, if a stranger, to go with him to the regimental hospital, where Tom has become a model bookkeeper and steward, and the best of sons to his happy and proud old mother. —*Harper's Weekly.*

A Wealthy Chinaman's Estate.

I was permitted the very rare privilege of passing over the famous Houqua estate, one of the wealthiest and most imposing homes in this whole empire, writes a correspondent of the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* from China. The elder Houqua died some forty years ago, supposed to be worth nearly a million of dollars for every year of his life. His wealth was illustrated by the fact that when the English demanded a ransom of several million dollars for the city of Canton, about the time when they were holding the city, Mr. Houqua came forward and said:

"Permit me the happiness of donating $1,000,000."

And the citizens cheerfully accorded him that liberty. Of the sons, grandsons, great-grandsons now living on the estate (including, of course, the servants, for in China the patriarchal system prevails, and servants are reckoned as members of the family), there are about four hundred persons.

For a time we strolled about in the countless courts and outer halls of the place, in order to give the family a chance to take cognizance of our presence. Everything was grand, massive and gloomy, but not by any means pretty. We were escorted into a cherry orchard, where there were perhaps one hundred trees of Chinese variety of this fruit, all in full bloom. The odor from the billowy burden of blossoms that hung on the boughs was so sweet that the air seemed to rise and fall in waves of perfume. The ground was literally white underneath with a carpet of fallen petals.

We now began to encounter representatives of the family, who flocked about us noiselessly and cordially remarked: "Chin-chin!" in greeting. They were the finest and most cleanly looking Celestials I have yet seen in China, though I must reluctantly announce that the girls affected small feet and the young men cultivated immensely long finger-nails. These are indispensable badges of aristocracy, however. Not only did the wives and daughters peep out at us from behind curtained windows, but they came out in a plain sight and bowed timidly. They were painted clear to their foreheads and had their lips crimsoned with vermillion. Their feet were invariably small—or rather mangled—and their attire was exceedingly immaculate. The little tots flocked about us, not at all afraid, apparently, reaching out their cute little hands and piping the salutation, "Chin-chin!" Their cleanliness made them the first native children I have seen in China who were attractive. Some of them got hold of the plug hat of Mr. Seymour and in great glee began trying it on.

The Grocer Who Caved.

There was, up to a year or two ago, a man in the grocery business in one of the villages of Western Michigan who was famous for his hatred of drummers. Travelers for Chicago, Detroit and other houses were ordered out of his store in the roughest manner, and several were assisted to leave in a style more hurried than graceful. The boys, however, rather enjoyed it, and a sort of ring was formed among them with a solemn agreement to keep calling on the grocer until he gave some one an order.

One day, eight or ten months ago, an agent for a Detroit house entered the grocery prepared for the worst, but what was his amazement to be received with a smile of welcome. This was followed by kind words, and later on by an order for about $800 worth of goods. The agent was so elated that he telegraphed the news home and to several of his acquaintances, and it was a week before he recovered his usual equilibrium of spirits.

"And did he continue to buy of your house?" asked one who had listened to the drummer's story.

"Well, no."

"Why not?"

"Because, within ten days after he got our goods he failed and couldn't pay five cents on the dollar."—*Detroit Free Press.*

The Labrador Cod Fishermen.

The men engaged in the Labrador codfishery, says a correspondent of the Springfield *Republican*, are of two classes, the employers and the employed. The employers all along the coast are generally men who, coming here poor, have earned their way by hard work and "luck" to a position of more or less independence, or have been sent as agents from some firm of merchants abroad to hire men and conduct a fishery, large or small, as the wealth of the firm or the accumulation of business may allow. The men employed in the fishery here are either hired from the surrounding families or from Newfoundland. The home men are rough, hearty, healthy and good-natured, and those from Newfoundland, generally speaking, are large, robust, rough men in nearly every respect. They are apt to be quarrelsome, and in many cases, I sadly fear, the habit of taking whatever they see that they wish and can safely get away with, is very strongly imbedded in their nature. When detected, they seem, like the ancient Spartans, to regret being caught more than to have taken what was not theirs. Yet many are the reverse of ill-natured. All are strong and accustomed to endurance that would wear out an ordinary individual, while it just seems to fit them for their work. Having employed some thirty or forty men the season before, the next thing is to get everything in readiness for their reception and work the approaching season. Part of the men work on wages, while most of them work on shares, the share being a certain per cent., say one-third or one-half of the fish caught by them during the season, the other part, of course, going to the employer. During the winter months the nets are netted or mended as the occasion may be; while in the spring the buildings containing the sleeping apartments, or bunks—arranged barrack-fashion, like the berths of a ship's cabin—and the eating-room and cook-room attached are put in order. In the winter, also, the nets, lines, hooks, etc., are all prepared for immediate use as soon as the season opens. In the spring, again the boats are taken from their storing place, thoroughly repaired, repainted inside and out, the sails and oars mended or furnished anew if so required; when dry they are launched and moored by sunken buoys at a short distance from the stage head. The stage itself is repaired, new props and foundation logs often being required, as well as boarding for the floor proper, and fully cleaned; the empty puncheons, hogsheads and barrels arranged to occupy as little space as possible in some sunny position, while the sheds are also cleaned and swept. By the first of May, or the breaking up of the ice in the bays and harbors, everything is ready for the advent of the summer fisheries.

We will now consider that the summer has begun, that the time is June 1, and that the men are arriving ready to begin work. Rough-looking fellows they are indeed. Tall and short, stout and broad, full-faced, full-bearded and correspondingly fleshy in proportion. They are dressed quite alike, with suits of good thick cloth in the shape of jumper and trousers, over which are hauled the overalls and frock when in working trim on the shore and oil jacket and pantaloons with an old "sou'wester," as it is called, or rubber hat with a huge rim that hangs over the body, allowing the rain from it to drip, at least on the oil garments if not completely over them on to the ground. Four-fifths or more of the men wear a thin belt and sheath-knife buckled around their body, which, however, is used more for appearance's sake than anything else. It has been reported that occasionally on board some ill-managed craft, these knives are used for weapons of offense and defense, as the case may be, but I have not heard it proven here at least. Though the men look fierce and ill-tempered—they are generally of a better disposition than they are usually given credit for being.

Cleaving Unto the Dust.

It has been remarked that the funniest object in the world is a hen, because it is so perfectly unconscious. It is not often that an intelligent human being vies with the hen in this particular, but the gentleman of whom the following story is told evidently made an effort in that direction:

"Before beginning the second psalm for the day, a Glasgow clergyman reached down into his pocket, and took a pinch of snuff. Even yet he cannot understand what there was in the first verse of the psalm to make the congregation laugh when he read: 'My soul cleaveth to the dust.'"