

### An Angel in a Saloon.

The following was published about three years ago in the Golden Censer, but it is worthy of being published often:

One afternoon in the month of June, 1870, a lady in peed mourning, followed by a child, entered one of the fashionable saloons in the city of N. The writer happened to be passing at the time and, prompted by curiosity, followed her in to see what would ensue. Stepping up to the bar, and addressing the proprietor, she said: "Sir, can you assist me? I have no home, no friends, and am not able to work."

He glanced at her, and then at the child, with a mingled look of pity and curiosity. Evidently he was much surprised to see a woman in such a place begging, but, without asking any questions, he gave her some change and, turning to those present, he said:

"Gentlemen, here is a lady in distress. Can't some of you help her a little?"

They cheerfully acceded to the request, and soon a purse of two dollars was made up and put in her hands.

"Madam," said the gentleman who gave her the money, "why do you come to a saloon? It isn't a proper place for a lady, and why are you driven to such a step?"

"Sir," said the lady, "I know it isn't a proper place for a lady to be in, and you ask me why I am driven to such a step? I will tell you in one short word, pointing to a bottle behind the counter labeled 'whiskey'—that is what brought me here—whiskey. I was once happy, and surrounded with all the luxuries that wealth could procure, a fond, indulgent husband. But in an evil hour he was tempted, and not possessing the will to resist the temptation, fell, and in one short year my dream of happiness was over, home was forever desolate, and the kind husband and the wealth that once called mine, lost—lost never to return, and all by the accursed wine cup. You see before you only the wreck of my former self, homeless and friendless, with nothing left me in this world but this little child," and, weeping bitterly, she affectionately pressed the golden curls that shaded a face of exquisite loveliness. Regaining her composure, and turning to the proprietor of the saloon, she continued:

"Sir, the reason why I occasionally enter a place like this is to implore those who deal in the deadly poison to desist, to stop, a business that spreads desolation, ruin, poverty and starvation. Think one moment of your own beloved ones, and then imagine them in the situation I am in. I appeal to your heart, for I know you possess a kind one, to retire from a business so ruinous to your patrons."

"Do you know the money you take across the bar is the same thing as the bread out of the mouths of the famished wives and children of your customers? That it strips the clothing from their backs, deprives them of all the comforts of this life, and throws unhappiness, misery, crime, and desolation into once happy homes? Oh! sir, I implore, beseech and pray you to retire from a business you blush to own you are engaged in before your fellowmen, and enter one that will not only be profitably to yourself but to your fellow-creatures. You will excuse me if I have spoken too plainly, but I could not help it when I thought of the misery, the unhappiness and the suffering it has caused me."

"Mamma," said the little girl, who meantime had been spoken to by some of the gentlemen present, taking hold of her mother's hand, "these gentlemen want me to sing 'Little Bessie' for them. Shall I do so?"

They all joined in the request, and placing her in a chair, she sang, in a sweet, childish voice the following beautiful song:

"Oh! in the gloomy night sadly I roam,  
I have no mother dear, no pleasant home;  
No one cares for me, no one will cry,  
Even if poor little Bessie should die.  
Weary and tired, I've been wandering all day,  
Asking for work, but I'm too small they say;  
On the damp ground I must now lay my head,  
Father's a drunkard and mother is dead.  
We were so happy till father-drunk rum,  
Then all our sorrow and trouble begun;  
Mother grew pale and wept every day;  
Baby and I were too hungry to play;  
Slowly they faded, till one summer night  
Found their dead faces all silent and white;  
Then, with big tears slowly dropping, I said,  
Father's a drunkard and mother is dead.  
Oh! if the temperance men only could find

Poor, wretched father, and talk very kind;  
If they would stop him from drinking,  
then I should be so very happy again.  
It is too late, temperance men! Please try  
Or poor little Bessie must soon starve and die.  
All the day long I've been begging for bread;  
Father's a drunkard and mother is dead."

The game of billiards was left unfinished, the cards thrown aside, and the unemptied glass remained on the counter; all had pressed near, some with pity-beaming eyes, entranced with the musical voice and beauty of the child who seemed better fitted to be with angels above than in such a place.

The scene I shall never forget to my dying day, and the sweet cadences of her musical voice still rings in my ears, and every word of the song as it dropped from her lips sank deep into the hearts of those gathered around her.

With her golden hair falling carelessly around her shoulders, and looking so trustfully and confidently upon the gentlemen around her, her beautiful eyes illuminated with a light that seemed not of this earth, she formed a picture of purity and innocence worthy the genius of a poet or painter.

At the close of the song many were weeping; men who had not shed a tear for years now wept like children. One young man, who had resisted with scorn the pleadings of a loving mother, and the entreaties of friends to strive to lead a better life, to desist from a course that was wasting his fortune and ruining his health, now approached the child, and, taking both hands in his, while the tears streamed down his cheeks, exclaimed, with emotion:

"God bless you, my little angel! You have saved me from ruin and disgrace, from poverty and a drunkard's grave. If there are angels on earth you are one!" and putting a note into the hands of the mother, said:

"Please accept this trifle as a token of my regard and esteem, for your little girl has done me a kindness I can never repay; and remember, whenever you are in want, you will find me a true friend," at the same time giving her his name and address.

Taking the child by the hand she turned to go, but, pausing at the door, said:

"Good bless you gentlemen! Accept the heartfelt thanks of a poor, friendless woman for the kindness and courtesy you have shown her." Before any one could reply she was gone.

A silence of several minutes ensued, which was broken by the proprietor, who exclaimed:

"Gentlemen that lady was right, and I have sold my last glass of whiskey; if you want any more you will have to go elsewhere."

"And I have drunk my last glass of whiskey," said a young man who had long been given up as utterly beyond the reach of those who had a deep interest in his welfare, as sunk too low ever to reform.

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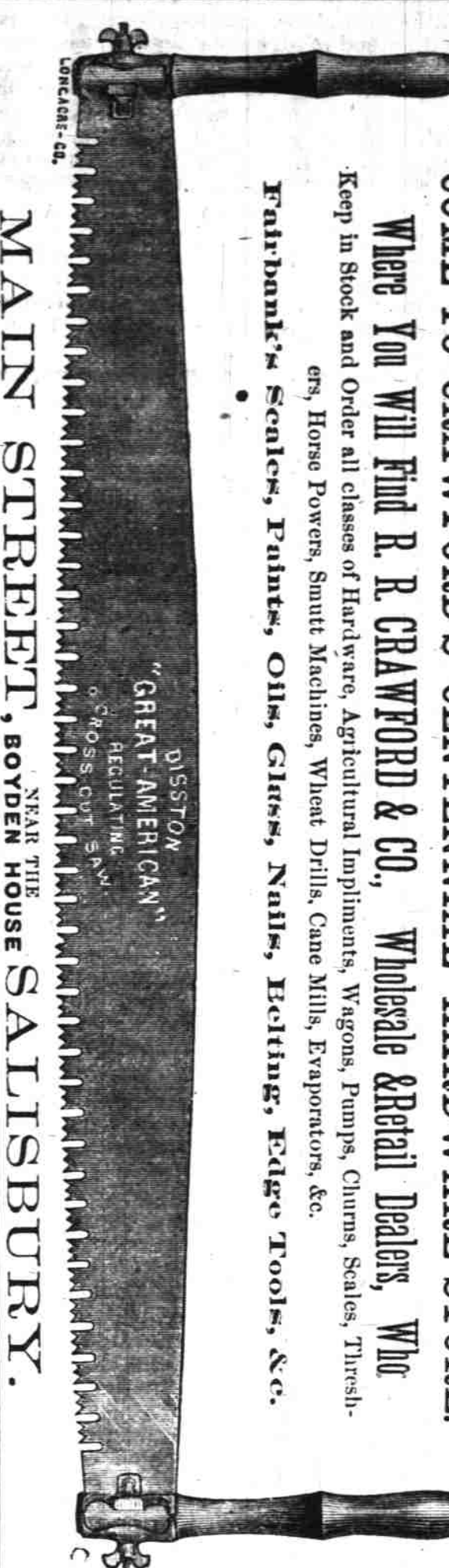
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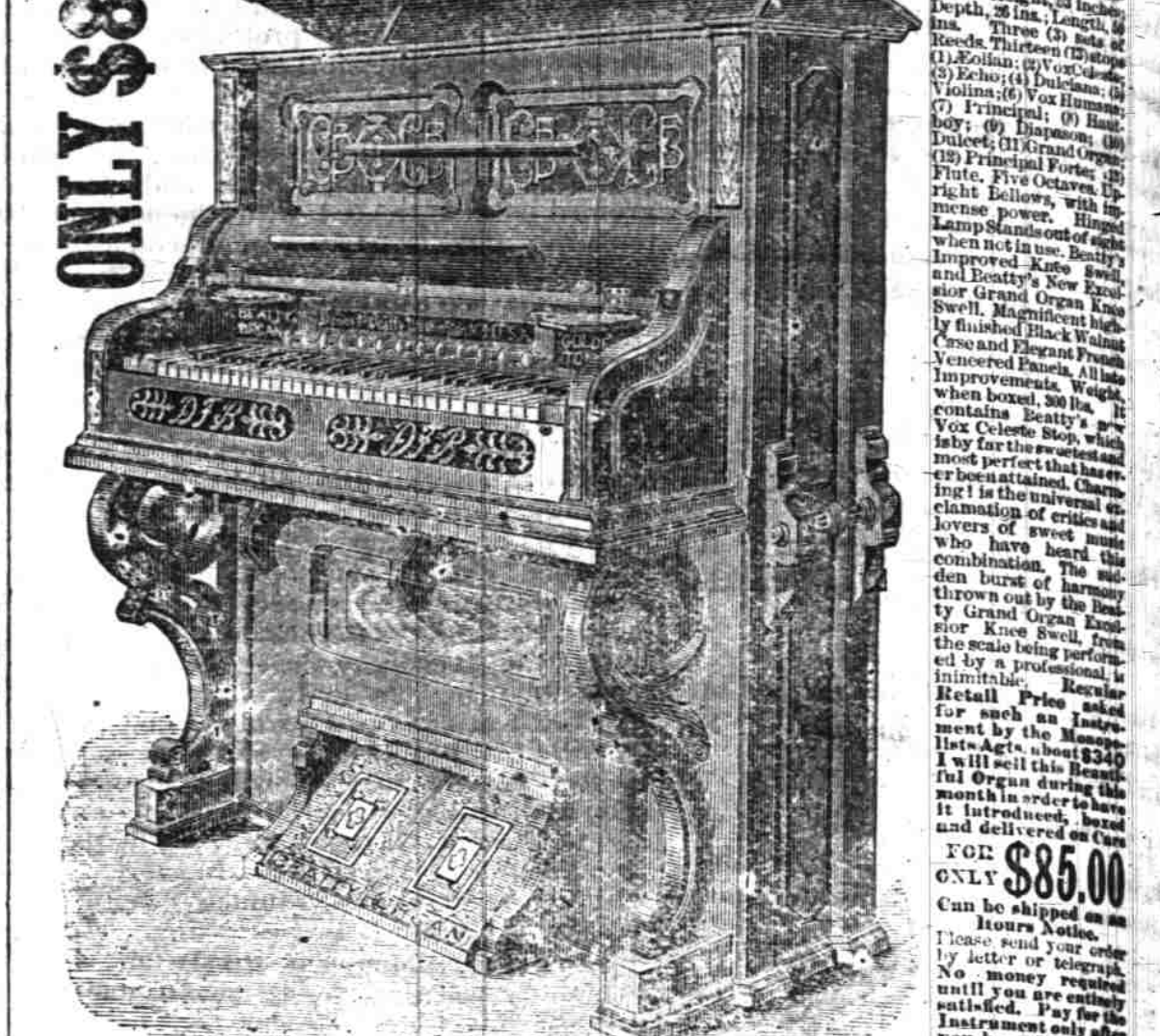
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