Thrashed into Manhood.

By a New England Farmer.

Constable John Frick. That's me. A matter rough to look at, but sound inside.

Lots of folks affect to sneer at a constable; look down on him in a way as if he was naturally mean and no account.

But Constable John Frick has a soul in him, and a heart as soft as a woman's. Indeed, he has been called chicken-hearted just because he wouldn't kick a stray dog nor tramp on a sick kitten.

But that is neither here nor there. Constable John Frick is going to tell some of his experience on duty.

I mind the day well when I received the paper to warn a certain family that they must "get out," that is, leave the house of Landlord Craigly, because it was an awful cheap old day in March, when the wind seemed to be tearing things to flinders round the corners of the old brute like buildings, and whistled and howled in a way to make a base burner head boss of the ranch.

Rooms 6 and 7, in a great rambling barn of a place, one of a dingy block down the river; a grimy-looking brick building had once been a cotton warehouse. Now, the long, narrow wilderness of storerooms were cut into little cubby holes to live in at both ends, with just one window for light, and dark passageways to pass in and out.

I remember I thought they were miserable places for God's creatures to live in, and awful weather to put a family out onto the sidewalk in.

I may as well own up that Constable John Frick had "no heart" for this part of the business. Of course the landlord had a right to his rent. That's evident. If the tenants didn't pay they must go out.

All the same Constable John Frick felt mean and uncomfortable.

To save his neck he couldn't account for it but it seemed as if something would keep on suggesting: "Suppose there's a delicate woman and a lot of little children!"

For answer the soul of Constable John Frick kept on responding: "Darting men out into the cold roadway such stinging weather will be miserable, make the best of it" and his heart "kicked" strong against it.

But this was borrowing trouble. And it wasn't business.

So right in that the man—Carl Sevholm was the name on the writ—would go out peaceful. I know I prayed strong it might be so, though it would be less out of Constable John Frick's pocket if he did.

Room 6 in the rear on the ground floor. I had to reach it through a saloon. Curious how saloons seem to be everlastingly mixed up with poor families who have to be put out into the street.

Who kept the saloon I never knew. There was a greasy-faced, fat-bellied bulk of a man, in a brown knit woolen jacket behind the bar, and a slim young fellow crouched against the wall to one side, boozy, stupid from the effects of liquor or both.

It pretty nigh make me sick to look at this young chap; he was so frowsy and rumpled and filthy, and he had been rolled in a dust heap and then raked through the gutter.

Mr. Sevholm. As I looked at him I involuntarily said to myself: "God help your wife and children!"

The greasy-faced man jerked his thumb after his absolute "Yes" indicated room 6, and I rapped for admittance.

Never was so surprised in my life. Expected to find a shatterly, frowsy woman to match the sodden husband, and a mess of dirty, squalling brats tumbling about the floor in confusion.

Nothing of the kind. If you'll believe it, I found a slim-built, pale-faced little woman, sitting in a low rocking chair with a wee baby on her lap, trying to coo it out of the fretful pain it was in.

One day—and not fair away, either, —she had been as "pretty as a picture." But this was past. Trouble of mind had got in its awful wearing work and her delicate face it had thin and pinched and death-like, and the big eyes unnaturally bright.

There was a pretty fair show of tidyish furniture, only it looked as if discouragement had fallen like a mildew on it and the mistress had lost all heart in trying to keep it trim and shapely.

I could see that as plain as a big sign-board. Constable has its one stamp and if you've seen it once you know it again the minute you set your eyes on it.

I swear, I felt bad, looking at the discouragement and troubled look on the woman's face, and the we sick baby in her lap—heartbreaking when a den brute ot a husband outside. It made my voice tremble so when I went to explain my business, that I don't believe I made myself understood. But she was expecting what I came for, because the landlord had handed her notice to her, and had tried to smile, poor thing, faltering out the word that she supposed I was the constable.

It was an awful sick smile though. It made my heart ache to see it. It was a sight more pitiful than a frown. It made a person feel ashamed to be a man, but Constable John Frick apologized for doing his duty. Actually said he was sorry he was going to do it. Then he touched the weeny cheek of the baby with his rough fingers and said he hoped it would soon be well, and otherwise acted in a way that some folks might have thought was ridiculous in a constable.

But then if a man has a soft, tender heart, being a constable won't change it, you know.

When the landlord came to the 'squire's office, four days later, and peremptorily ordered the things put out of rooms six and seven, Constable John Frick didn't like about as well as ever did in all his life. He hadn't been able to get that delicate little woman's face out of his mind, nor the sick baby, nor that drunken wretch of a husband.

To tell the plain truth, he and his good wife talked the matter over very frequently. You see she was a mother and had a mother's big and tender heart in her bosom, quick as a flash to feel where children were concerned. Only that morning when I was starting away on duty, she said, promiscuous like:

"Recollect, John Frick, if you put that poor woman and her baby out into the street such a day as this—snowing and blowing fit to kill—you needn't never look me in the face again."

"Jane," I said in my most dignified voice "I must do my duty."

"Hut, Lord, what a heap of mean, cruel things we sometimes do in that same name of duty.

When the writ of expulsion was put into my hands, and the landlord said he wouldn't give another day, I felt meaner than a skunk. The weather was just awful. It was not only biting cold, but damp and foggy, and enough gloomy to make folks lose trouble and their ideas to getting relief by self murder.

I found the same sodden young man in the saloon, as tipsy and slouchy and dirty as before. No one to think, not exactly the same. Now he was noisy drunk, swaggering about the place, swearing and bragging, thick-tongued and maudlin, and looking still more disgusting than when he was doubled up on the chair.

"What the—do you want in here?" he yelled, as I was passing on to room six.

"You dry up, Sevholm!" snapped the greasy faced man, grabbing him by the arm and swinging him back from following after me. "He's got business with your wife. Keep still—you're not fit for business."

But the tipsy loafer broke away and burst into the presence of his wife, and when I had explained the nature of my errand, he raised a row.

"It's all right, Elsie. I've got a place ready. I'll fetch a wagon and have the things moved right away." And out he started on the run.

"I am glad of that," I said to his wife, as she held up her white, troubled face toward me. How in the world did so nice a woman become tied to a brute like this?

"Oh, if he only will!" was the pitiful exclamation of the heart-stricken woman.

I now learned that another suite of rooms had been secured, and that on payment of the first month's rent in advance, and that by the sale of a portion of his wife's few personal apparel, the needed money had been secured. I also learned that the man was a first-class workman in a business which paid exceptionally high wages, and that until he had fallen into habits of intoxication they had lived happily and respectably as hearts could desire.

I would be return with the team and gain the new home for his family? or would he continue his drunken spree and spend the money his wife's clothing had been sacrificed to secure? Those were questions a score of times, as I stole furtive glances at the troubled look in the woman's eyes, and noted the horrible strain her mind was in while he was gone.

The furniture was nearly all packed in readiness for removal, and I knew, though she did not tell me, that the frail wife had spent her strength in the arduous preparation.

I had told the landlord that they were ready to go and would to surely gone that day. He was not half satisfied. He came tearing to the door when I was in a great hurry to get away, impatience to have them thrust out forthwith. He would not grant another hour's delay, so there was no help for it. I felt that the only approval appear I should be compelled to place their effects on the sidewalk.

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"Come right in and see Mrs. Sevholm!" he said, pulling me up to the side porch, all covered with pretty vines. "She'll be mighty glad to see you."

Pleased? You'd believe it. Pleased wasn't half a name for it. By the light of new-born happiness and thankful gratitude was just dancing in her bright eyes.

Ah, wasn't she a picture! Health and rosy gladness of heart had all come back to her. Soul-numbing trouble had all gone. She was just as sweet and noble looking a lady as I ever set eyes on; and the baby, as plump and fresh as a spring robin, was toddling around like a house a-fire.

House was furnished handsome, I can tell you. Everything in top apple pie order. It was awful to think the old miserable saloon tippling was played out for good. When I stood up to leave, after enjoying a real pleasant chat and promising to call again, Sevholm clasped my hand as he said.

"Constable John Frick, that was an awful low trick you gave me. My bones ached for a month. But it did me more good than anything I ever had in my life, so to-day, and I mean it. It made a man of me. God bless you!"

A WAR REMINISCENCE.

How the Tennessee river was Bridged in Twelve Hours.

Cincinnati Times-Star.

"A man could go through twenty battles on a quarter the cold nerve that Andy Hickenlooper had to use in one little episode with McPherson down there at Corinth," he said. "If there wasn't an enemy is sight," said Capt. Jim Harper to a reporter one day recently, "it was midnight and an hour before sundown Col. Hickenlooper was called to McPherson's tent and informed that it was necessary for the crossing of 30,000 men to be across the river and after the Johnnies by daylight next morning.

"'Hell,' said Andy, 'that's easy, there isn't a stick of timber within forty miles big enough to carry an empty caisson, and the wagons with the pontoons are back with the army.'

"'Can't help that,' replied McPherson curtly. 'The bridge must be built and the army must be across the river by 4 o'clock to-morrow morning. Good afternoon, Gen. Hickenlooper.'

"'I left the tent and went down to the river,' said Gen. Hickenlooper, in telling this experience not long ago, 'and I don't suppose a man could be in greater need, mentally, than I was. I walked up and down the bank for an hour sizing up the situation. I thought of Gen. Grant's Engineer Corps, I was expected to solve the problem some way, and that to fail then was to lose all standing professionally and would to the war, but probably for all the future. I think I must have sweat blood, if such a thing were possible. Finally I wandered nearly half a mile up the bank, and there, half a mile back, I came across an old gin piled full of cotton. Eureka! my solution was at hand. Engineer Corps, I was expected to solve the problem some way; and that to fail then was to lose all standing professionally and would to the war, but probably for all the future. I think I must have sweat blood, if such a thing were possible. Finally I wandered nearly half a mile up the bank, and there, half a mile back, I came across an old gin piled full of cotton. Eureka! my solution was at hand. Engineer Corps, I was expected to solve the problem some way; and that to fall