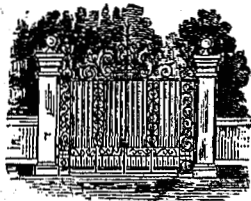


## FROMM'S SOUPS.

ALL private nurses are aware of the difficulties of obtaining and preparing palatable food for convalescents, especially if these are at all in straitened means. To a large class, therefore, Fromm's Soups will come as a valuable adjunct to the dietary. They are most nutritious and palatable, and remarkably cheap; and as far as the nurse is concerned they are most easy to prepare. They are sold in dry tablets, which only require to be broken up and dissolved in hot water to be ready for use. They can be obtained through any grocer or chemist, and we cordially recommend them to the notice of our readers.

## Outside the Gates.

## GLIMPSES OF A GUTTER-SNIPE.



To have been born in horrible publicity on a shakedown of straw in a tenement room, with the single birthright of hideous disease, to suffer in turns from excess of heat or cold and hunger and thirst, to become inured to the demoralisation of dirt, to have no mother and to know no God, is so common-place a situation for the children of the gutter in every large city in Christian England, that it cannot be claimed for Susan's Sal that she was in any sense a unique or picturesque little person. Quite the reverse. Apparently the child had not one redeeming feature—dirty, unkempt, clothed in rags, her alcoholised temperament had already made hideous her vicious little face, with its prominent toothless gums, and coarse lips ever gaping gudgeon-like after food, and the ray-rimmed lustreless eyes which for seven interminable years had blinked in outer darkness, could never, to judge from their expression, have been upraised to the stars. Sal's one and only object in life was to appease an acute and ceaseless hunger for food.

Even at Christmas time, when the fogs became denser and the easterly blasts swept off the great tidal river were more piercing, when the naphtha jets flared on street barrows heaped up with plenteous cheer, and when behind the spacious windows in the "High" dainty fare and flowers, furbelows and glittering fairies were displayed in gorgeous and tantalising profusion, Susan's Sal was still true to carnal cravings; dolls bespangled in tinsel and tulle, life-like toys, silks, furs, and laces, flowers all agrowing and ablowing, for none of these things cared Sarah.

But there, in a corner shop, where two highways met, was exposed to view her heart's desire, and there she would linger and loiter long. She would stand on tip-toes, and flattening her grimy face against the smeary panes, her pinched nostrils would flicker and expand to inhale the smell of savoury meats—a succulent, appetising odour which co-mingled with the fog and penetrated far. And the pink-faced pork-butcher stood within, all glorious in white smock and paper hat, surrounded by graceful festoons of sausages of all shades and sizes,—black, white and tender pink—while arranged on his counter were anæmic baby pigs, marble smooth, and pale, dismembered parental

pigs—pallid trotters—and dish upon dish of toothsome dainties sold as "fry," and composed of scraps of porcine lights and livers and other mysterious "innards," all most discreetly hidden from the vulgar, gaze beneath a lacey "frill" of superfine fat. Here also, were pies and patties—and in steaming tins over which the pink-faced one presided, knife and fork in hand, were ravishing sausages, cooking and cooked—and graceful twirls of bubbling, savoury onions, all ready for the feast. And Sal slobbered as she gazed, and stood her ground without the twitch of an eyelash—when the greasy butcher brandished his steaming knife within an inch of her devouring eyes on the other side of the pane.

Once, oh! sumptuous day! had he not invited her to step within and then permitted her "to tike her chice"? since when he had scowled and puffed out his pink cheeks at sight of her, and in retaliation the child played gutter tricks with thumb to nose, and on this particular occasion had popped her head within his door and "called him shameful."

Later on the same night Sal might have been seen peeping through the railings behind which a palatial building stood, and from every window of which came bright streams of light. Sal had once been inside this grand building—three Christmases ago—when she had trotted in after her mother on the day on which her little brother, left alone in the tenement room, had quenched his thirst from the spout of a boiling kettle, and had been hurriedly taken to the hospital. The awful screech of the injured child sometimes comes to Sal in the night season, but she retains clearer memories of the Children's Ward in which he died, all decked out in crystalline greenery, with myriads of rose-hued lights, and at one end a snow-flaked glistening tree, on every bough of which dangled rare ribbon-bound fruits and toys, and which appeared to spring from a mound heaped up of cakes and crumpets and crackers and sweets, at the sight of which the soul of the child seemed to swoon within her. And then she had awakened to the howl of the mother robbed of her child, and a nurse had spoken softly and said "all was over," and covered the white face of little Sam with the sheet, and someone had clutched her hand and urged her reluctant feet towards the outer door, her eyes lingering to the last moment, not on the little cot which contained her dead brother, but on the wonderful—wonderful fairy tree.

Step by step Sal crept nearer and nearer to the open gate of the great hospital through which all sorts and conditions of men and women were passing to and fro, and edging close to the gate-porter, she asked in her grating voice:—

"Ow can a body spend Christmas in theer?" The man grinned broadly—he was a kindly man, and knew the genus gutter-snipe well.

"That is the Great Eastern 'Orspital, he replied; only very ill little boys and girls can enter there—the clever doctors and nurses they knows by peeping at yer, whats wrong inside yer, no kidding takes them in;" and he gave a knowing wink.

"What sort o' illness?" Sal asked stolidly.

"Oh! accidents, and terrible painful things," the man answered vaguely. "But 'unger aint no good, and them common place ailments; so just you shunt off and go 'ome to yer mother—its getting late;" and he slipped into his little box office, and lit a pipe.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)