Frontispiece.



E. M. Ward, R.A.] [Dalziel Brothers.

THE FIRST DROP.

BOONS AND BLESSINGS.

Stories and Sketches

TO ILLUSTRATE

THE ADVANTAGES OF TEMPERANCE.

BY MRS. S. C. HALL.



"Spirit of Temperance! hail! what mighty things,—
High boons to soul and body—Temperance brings."

Illustrated by Engravings from Designs by eminent Artists.

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TO THE RIGHT HON.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G., ETC.

My Lord,

I have the honour and the pleasure to dedicate this Book to you who have been so long doing the work of God for the good of man, and to whom Society, of all orders and of every grade, is indebted for many useful and practical reforms that have advanced the cause of virtue, social progress, and vital religion.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your faithful servant and friend,

ANNA MARIA HALL.

Avenue Villa,
50, *Holland Street, Kensington.*

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE been induced to collect into a volume these STORIES and SKETCHES, some of which were written so long ago as to be almost as old as the Temperance movement in England and Ireland. They have been in circulation ever since, as "Tracts" issued by Temperance Institutions; and in that form have, I humbly trust, aided a cause that is of the highest and deepest importance to every class and order of society.

Several of these stories are now first published: for the more prominent of those I reprint, "Building a House with a Tea-cup" and "Digging a Grave with a Wine-glass," I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. T. B. Smithies; and for the Irish sketch, "It's only a Drop," to that of Dr. William Chambers.

It is also my pleasant duty to express my grateful thanks to the FIFTEEN artists who have powerfully assisted me in combining ART with LITERATURE: thus aiding the efforts of many valuable Societies that are labouring—earnestly, zealously, and with great success—to convey conviction that "THE NATIONAL VICE" is THE NATIONAL CURSE, and that the labours of the Pastor, the Schoolmaster, and all the other engines of religious, as well as moral, social, and intellectual, progress, must comparatively fail, while intoxication, not only "fills our jails, our lunatic asylums, and our workhouses with poor," but

degrades to poverty so many households, and effectually frustrates all efforts for the discharge of duty to God and neighbour.

I could not manifest the Boons and Blessings of Temperance without exhibiting the terrible evils of Intemperance; I have endeavoured to do both.

It is to PUBLIC OPINION we must mainly look for the suppression of this "National Vice:" happily, help is energetically and effectually given by the Press: the artist and the author are well employed—doing the work of God and man—who advance a cause so vital to the interests of humanity.

ANNA MARIA (MRS. S. C.) HALL.



PAGE

1. THE DRUNKARD'S BIBLE 1
Illustrated by E. M. WARD, R.A., AND W. J. ALLEN.
The Engraving by DALZIEL BROTHERS, AND J. D. COOPER.
(*The Frontispiece* by E. M. WARD, R.A.)

2. A ROLLING STONE 21
Illustrated by FRED. GOODALL, R.A.
The Engraving by BUTTERWORTH AND HEATH.

3. WHAT HE LOST 37
Illustrated by A. J. WOOLMER.
The Engraving by BUTTERWORTH AND HEATH.

4. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE 47
Illustrated by P. R. MORRIS.
The Engraving by BUTTERWORTH AND HEATH.

5. MARY RILEY'S SIMPLE STORY 59
Illustrated by MRS. E. M. WARD.
The Engraving by DALZIEL BROTHERS.

6. THE WORN THIMBLE 65
Illustrated by H. R. ROBERTSON.
The Engraving by W. J. PALMER.

7. REST AND BE THANKFUL 87
Illustrated by F. D. HARDY.
The Engraving by J. D. COOPER.

PAGE

8. BUILDING A HOUSE WITH A TEA-CUP 95
Illustrated by GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.
The Engraving by DALZIEL BROTHERS.

9. PEPPER AND HER FOES 113
Illustrated by E. SHERARD KENNEDY.
The Engraving by DALZIEL BROTHERS.

10. THE TWO FRIENDS 163
Illustrated by F. D. HARDY.
The Engraving by J. AND G. P. NICHOLLS.

11. IT'S ONLY A DROP 173
Illustrated by ALFRED ELMORE, R.A.
The Engraving by BUTTERWORTH AND HEATH.

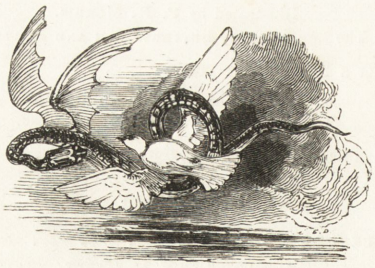
12. BRIDGET LARKINS 189
Illustrated by ERSKINE NICOL, A.R.A.
The Engraving by BUTTERWORTH AND HEATH.

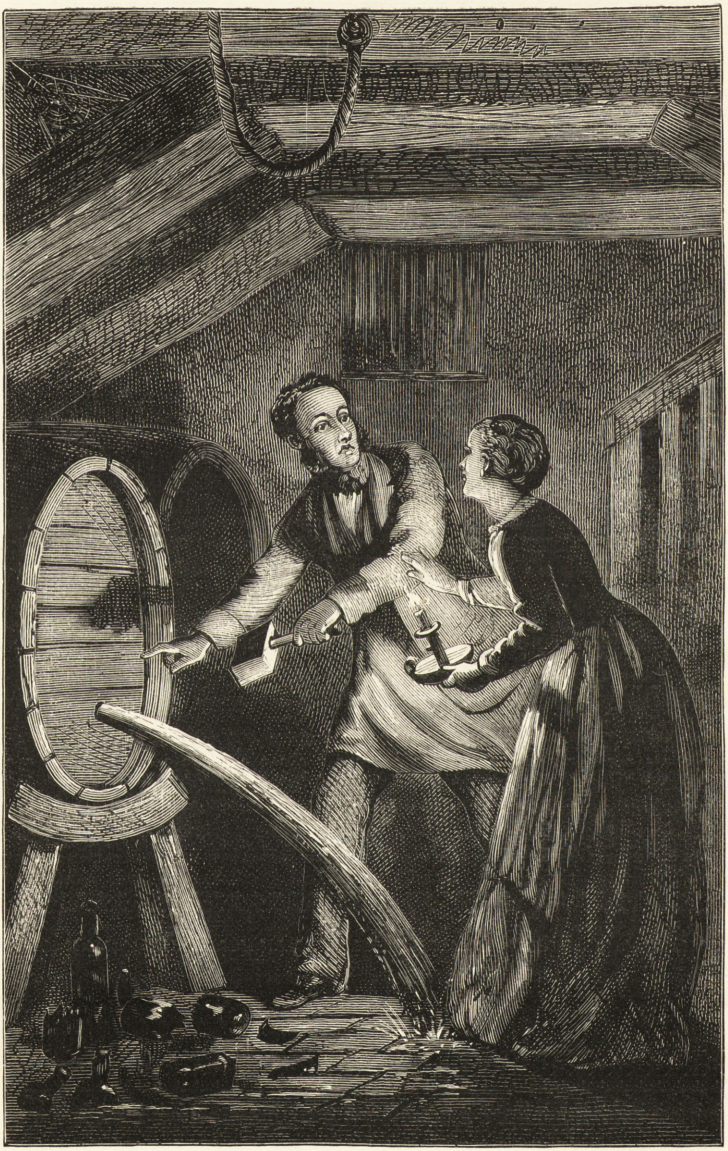
13. THE TRUE TEMPERANCE CORDIAL 195
Illustrated by G. H. BOUGHTON.
The Engraving by BUTTERWORTH AND HEATH.

14. MRS. GRANT'S PERPLEXITIES 203
Illustrated by R. THORBURN, A.R.A.
The Engraving by C. M. JENKIN.

15. DIGGING A GRAVE WITH A WINE GLASS 235
Illustrated by N. CHEVALIER.
The Engraving by J. C. GRIFFITHS.

The Initial letters and Tail-pieces drawn by W. J. ALLEN.
The Engraving by W. J. WATSON.

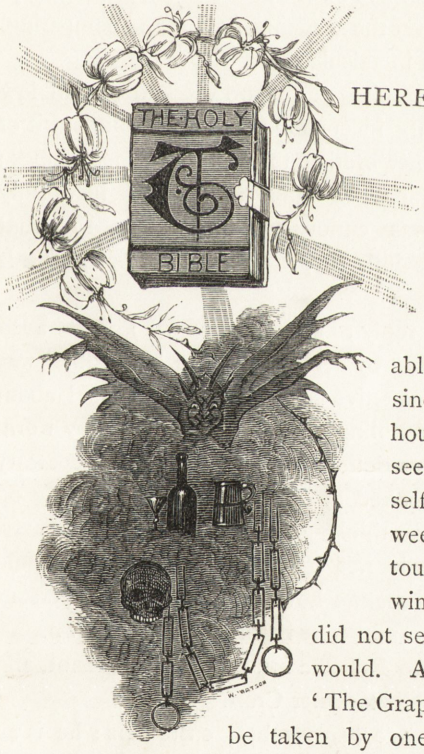




W. J. Allen.] [J. D. Cooper.

THE DRUNKARD'S BIBLE.—RESTITUTION.

THE DRUNKARD'S BIBLE.



"HERE is more money made in the Public line than in any other, unless it be pawn-broking," said Martha Hownley to her brother; "and I do not see why you should feel uncomfortable; you are a sober man; since I have kept your house, I never remember seeing you beside yourself; indeed, I know that weeks pass without your touching beer, much less wine or spirits. If you did not sell them somebody else would. And were you to leave 'The Grapes' to-morrow, it might be taken by one who would not have your scruples. All the gentry say your house is the best conducted in the parish——"

"I wish I really deserved the compliment," interrupted

Mathew, looking up from his day-book. "I ought not to content myself with avoiding beer, wine, and spirits; if I believe, as I do, that they are injurious alike to the character and health of man, I should, by every means in my power, induce others to avoid them."

"But we must live, Mathew; and your good education would not keep you—we must live!"

"Yes, Martha, we must live! but not the lives of vampires;" and he turned rapidly over the accounts, noting and comparing, and seemingly absorbed in calculation.

Martha's eyes became enlarged by curiosity—the small low curiosity that has nothing in common with the noble spirit of inquiry. She believed her brother to be wise in most things; but in her heart of hearts she thought him weak in worldly matters. Still, she was curious; and yielding to what is considered a feminine infirmity, she said, "Mathew, what is vampires?"

Mathew made no reply; so Martha—who had been "brought up to the bar" by her uncle, while her brother was dreaming over an unproductive farm—troubled as usual about "much serving," and troubling all within her sphere by worn-out and shrivelled-up anxieties, more than by the necessary duties of active life—looked at Mathew as if speculating on his sanity. Could he be thinking of giving up his business, because of that which did not concern him!—but she would "manage him." It is strange how low and cunning persons do often manage higher and better natures than their own.

"Martha," he called to her in a loud voice, "I cannot, and will not, give longer credit to Peter Croft."

"I thought he was one of your best customers: he is an excellent workman; his wife has plenty to do as a clear starcher; and I am sure he spends every penny he earns here" —such was Martha's answer.

"And more!" replied Mathew—"more! Why, last week the score was eighteen shillings—beside what he paid for."

"He's an honourable man, Mathew," persisted Martha. "It is not long since he brought me six tea-spoons and a sugar-tongs, when I refused him brandy (he will have brandy). They must have belonged to his wife, for they had not P. C on them, but E.—something; I forget what."

Mathew waxed wroth. "Have I not told you," he said,—"have I not told you that we must be content with the flesh and blood, without the bones and marrow, of these poor drunkards? I am not a pawnbroker to lend money upon a man's ruin. I sell, to be sure, what leads him to it, but *that* is his fault, not mine."

"You said just now it *was yours*," said his sister sulkily.

"Is it a devil or an angel that prompts your words, Martha?" exclaimed Mathew impatiently; then leaning his pale, thoughtful brow on his clasped hands, he added: "But, however much I sometimes try to get rid of them, it must be for my good to see facts as they are."

Martha would talk: she looked upon a last word as a victory. "He must have sold them whether or not, as he has done all his little household comforts, to pay for what he has honestly drank; and I might as well have them as any one else. My money paid for them, and in the course of the evening went into your till. It's very hard if, with all my labour, I can't turn an honest penny in a bargain sometimes, without being chid, as if I were a baby."

"I am sorely beset," murmured Mathew, closing the book with hasty violence—"sorely beset; the gain on one side, the sin on the other; and she goads me, and puts things in the worst light: never was man so beset," he repeated helplessly; and he said truly he *was* "beset"—by *infirmity of*

purpose, that mean, feeble, pitiful frustrator of so many good and glorious intentions.

It is at once a blessed and a wonderful thing how the little grain of "good seed" will spring up and increase—if the soil be at all congenial, how it will fructify! A great stone may be placed right over it, and yet the shoot will forth—*sideways*, perhaps, after a long noiseless struggle with the oppressive weight—a white, slender thing, like a bit of thread that falls from the clipping scissors of a little heedless maid—creeps up, twists itself round the stone, a little, pale, meek thing, *tending upwards*—becoming a delicate green in the wooing sunlight—strengthening in the morning, when birds are singing—at mid-day, when man is toiling—at night, while men are sleeping, *until it pushes away the stone*, and overshadows its inauspicious birth-place with strength and beauty!

Yes! where good seed has been sown, there is always hope that, one day or other, it will, despite snares and pitfalls, despite scorn and bitterness, despite evil report, despite temptations, despite those wearying backslidings which give the wicked and the idle scoffers ground for rejoicing—sooner or later it will fructify!

All homage to the good seed!—all homage to the good sower!

And who sowed the good seed in the heart of Mathew Hownley? Truly, it would be hard to tell. Perhaps some sower intent on doing his Master's business—perhaps some hand unconscious of the wealth it dropped—perhaps a young child, brimful of love, and faith, and trust, in the bright world around—perhaps some gentle woman, whose knowledge was an inspiration rather than an acquirement—perhaps a bold, true preacher of THE WORD, stripping the sinner of the robe that covered his deformity, and holding up his cherished sins as warnings to the world; perhaps it was one of Watts's hymns

learned at his nurse's knee (for Mathew and Martha had endured the unsympathising neglect of a motherless childhood), a little line, never to be forgotten—a whisper, soft, low, enduring—a comfort in trouble, a stronghold in danger, a refuge from despair. O what a world's wealth is there in a simple line of childhood's poetry! Martha herself often quoted the *Busy Bee;* but her bee had no wings; it could muck in the wax, but not fly home with the honey. As to Mathew, wherever the seed had come from, there, at all events, it was, struggling but existing—biding its time to burst forth, to bud, and to blossom, and to bear fruit!

The exposure concerning the spoons and sugar-tongs made Mathew so angry, that Martha wished she had never had anything to do with them; but instead of studying how, in future, to avoid the fault, she simply resolved in her own mind never again to let Mathew know any of her little transactions in the way of buying or barter—that was all!

Mathew, all that day, continued more thoughtful and silent than usual, which his sister considered a bad sign: he was reserved to his customers—nay, worse—he told a woman she should not give gin to her infant at his bar, and positively refused, the following Sunday, to open his house at all. Martha asked him if he was mad. He replied: "No;" he was "regaining his senses." Then Martha thought it best to let him alone—he had been "worse"—that is, according to her reading of the word "worse"—before—taken the "dumps" in the same way, but recovered, and had gone back to his business "like a man."

Peter Croft, unable to pay up his score, managed, nevertheless, to pay for what he drank. For a whole week, Martha would not listen to his proposals for payment "in kind;" even his wife's *last* shawl could not tempt her, though Martha confessed it was a beauty, and what possible use could Mrs.

Peter have for it now? it was so out of character with her destitution. She heard no more of it, so probably the wretched husband disposed of it elsewhere: that disappointed her. She might as well have had it; she would not be such a fool again; Mathew was so seldom in the bar, that he could not know what she did!

After awhile, Martha thought she saw one or two symptoms of what she considered amendment in her brother. "Of course," she argued, "he will come to himself in due time."

In the twilight which followed that day, Peter Croft, pale, bent, and dirty, the drunkard's redness in his eyes, the drunkard's fever on his lips, tapped at the door of the room off the bar, which was more particularly Martha's room—it was in fact her watch-tower—the door half-glazed, and the green curtain about an inch from the middle-division; over this, the sharp observant woman might see whatever occurred, and no one could go in or out without her knowledge.

She did not say, "Come in," at once; she longed to know what new temptation he had brought her, for she felt assured he had neither money nor credit left.

And yet she feared—"Mathew made such a worry out of every little thing." The next time he tapped at the window of the door, her eyes met his over the curtain, and then she said "Come in," in a penetrating sharp voice, that was anything but an invitation.

"I have brought you something now, Miss Hownley, that I know you won't refuse to *lend* me a trifle on," said the ruined tradesman; "I am sure you won't refuse me, Miss Hownley. Bad as I want the money, I could not take it to a pawn-broker; and if the woman asks for it, I can say I lent it, Miss Hownley—you know I can say that."

Peter Croft laid a BIBLE on the table, and folding back the

pages with his trembling fingers, showed that it was abundantly illustrated by fine engravings. Martha loved "pictures:" she had taken to pieces a *Pilgrim's Progress*, and varying the devotional engravings it had contained with abundant cuttings from illustrated newspapers, and a few coloured caricatures, had covered one side of a screen, which, when finished, she considered would be at once the comfort and amusement of her old age. After the drunkard had partially exhibited its contents, he stood by with stolid indifference, while she measured the engravings with her eye, looking ever and anon towards the screen. "Very well," she said, uttering a deliberate untruth with her lips, while her mind was made up what to do—"I don't like it: what did you say you wanted for it?" He repeated the sum: she took out exactly half, and laid the shining temptation on the table before him.

"Have you the heart, Miss Hownley," he said, while fingering, rather than counting, the money—"have you the heart to offer me such a little for such a great deal?"

"If you have the heart to sell it, I may have the heart to offer such a price," she answered with a light laugh; "and it is only a DRUNKARD'S BIBLE."

Peter Croft dashed the money from him with a bitter oath.

"Oh, very well," she said; "take it—or leave it."

She resumed her work.

The only purpose to which a drunkard is firm, is to his own ruin. Peter went to the door, returned, took up the money—"Another shilling, miss? *it will be in the till again before morning.*"

Martha gave him the other shilling; and after he was fairly out of the room, grappled the book, commenced looking at the pictures in right earnest, and congratulated herself on her good bargain. In due time, the house was cleared, and she went to bed, placing the Bible just inside her table, amongst a miscel-

laneous collection of worn-out dusters and tattered glass-cloths, "waiting to be mended."

That night the master of "the Grapes" could not sleep; more than once he fancied he smelt fire; and after going into the unoccupied rooms, and peeping through the key-holes and under the doors of those that were occupied, he descended to the bar, and finally entering the little bar-parlour, took his day-book from a shelf, and placing the candle, sat down, listlessly turning over its leaves, but the top of the table would not shut, and raising it to remove the obstruction, Mathew saw a large family BIBLE; pushing away the day-book, he opened the sacred volume.

It opened at the 23rd chapter of Proverbs, and, as if guided by a light from Heaven, his eyes fell upon the 29th verse, and he read:

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

"They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

"At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder!"

He dashed over the leaves in fierce displeasure, and, as if of themselves, they folded back at the 5th of Galatians:

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

"New and Old, New and Old," murmured Mathew to himself—"I am condemned alike by the Old and New Testament." He had regarded intoxication and its consequences

heretofore as a great social evil; the fluttering rags and the fleshless bones of the drunkard and his family, the broils, the contentions, the ill-feeling, the violence, the murders, wrought by the dread spirit of alcohol, had stood in array before him as *social* crimes, as *social* dangers; but he did not call to mind, if he really knew, that the Word of God exposed alike its evils and its sinfulness. He was one of the many who, however good and moral in themselves, shut their ears against the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely; and though he often found wisdom and consolation in a line of Watts's hymns, he rarely went to the Fountain of living waters for the strengthening and refreshing of his soul. He turned over the chapter, and found on the next page a collection of texts, written upon a strip of paper in the careful hand of one to whom writing was evidently not a frequent occupation.

Proverbs, the 23rd chap.—"For the *drunkard* and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." 1 Corinthians, 6th chap., 10th verse—"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor *drunkards*, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

"Again that awful threat!" murmured Mathew; "and have I been the means of bringing so many of my fellow-creatures under its ban?"

1 Samuel, the 1st chap.—"And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee." Luke 21—"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so *that day* come upon you unawares."

"Ay, THAT DAY," repeated the landlord—"*that day*, the day that *must* come."

Ephesians, 5th chap.—"And be not *drunk* with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Proverbs,

20th chap.—"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Again, there was a passage from the prophet Habakkuk, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken!"*

He rose from the table, and paced up and down the little room; no eye but His who seeth all things marked the agitation of that man; no ear but the All-hearing heard his sighs, his half-muttered prayers to be strengthened for good. He said within himself: "*Who* will counsel me in this matter?—to whom shall I fly for sympathy?—who will tell me what I ought to do?—how remedy the evils I have brought on others while in this business, even when my heart was alive to its wickedness?" He had no friend to advise with—none who would do aught but laugh at and ridicule the idea of giving up a good business for conscience' sake; but so it was that it occurred to him—"You have an Immortal Friend, take counsel of Him—pray to Him—learn of Him—trust Him; make His Book your guide;" and opening the Bible he read one other passage. "Keep innocency, and *take heed to the thing that is right*, for *that* shall bring a man peace at the last."

* The idea that wine, spirits, and beer are to be classed among the good things given of God for the enjoyment of man is exploded by science as well as experience. "Alcohol can in no sense be regarded as a good creature of God;" it is an artificial, not a natural product—"a product of fermentation, an *educt* of distillation;" in the process, the primitive character of the grape and the grain undergoes an entire change. It is a gross slander to describe alcohol as a production of Nature; "alcohol does not exist in plants, but is a product of vinous fermentation." "Alcoholic liquors are no more found in creation than pistols and powder, bullets and bowie-knives." Intemperance, "for who selicense the authority of Holy Writ is blasphemously pleaded by the deluded victims." The Bible continually exhibits the evils of the use of strong drinks. A volume of comments on 700 illustrative texts has been published by Dr. F. R. Lees and the Rev. Dawson Burns. "Its execution shows accuracy, conscientiousness, and fidelity." It sets before us the whole matter.

Pondering on this blessed rule of life, so simple and so comprehensive, he turned back the pages, repeating it over and over again, until he came to the first fly-leaf, whereon were written the births, marriages, and deaths of the humble family to whom the Bible had belonged; and therein, second on the list, he saw in a stiff, half-printed hand, the name—EMMA HANBY, only daughter of James and Mary-Jane Hanby, born so-and-so, married, at such a date, to PETER CROFT!

"Emma Hanby"—born in his native village; the little Emma Hanby whom he had loved to carry over the brook to school—by whose side in boy-love he had sat in the meadows—for whom he had gathered flowers—whose milk-pail he had so often lifted over the church-stile—whom he had loved as he never could or did love woman since—whom he would have married, if she, light-hearted girl that she was, could have loved the tall, yellow, awkward youth, whom it was her pastime to laugh at, and her delight to call "Daddy"—was *she* then the wife—the torn, soiled, tattered, worn-out, insulted, broken-spirited wife—of the drunkard Peter Croft! It seemed impossible; her memory had been such a sunbeam from boyhood up; the refiner of his nature—the dream that often came to him by day and night. While passing the parochial school, when the full tide of girls rushed from its heat into the thick city air, his heart had often beat if the ringing laugh of a merry child sounded like the laugh he once thought music; and he would watch to see if the girl resembled the voice that recalled his early love.

He had seen with loathing, this miserable betrayer of his home, this moral and social deserter of his wife, this traitor to his children, this disgrace to his neighbours, this dishonour to his native town—he had seen him often degraded to a state far lower than that of the lowest brute that revels in filth—and

the remembrance came to him as an audible curse; for well he knew that from *him* had the temptation come, and with it the ruin—the never-ending ruin of, it might be, a whole family; for who will dare to say of the drunkard that "he is no man's enemy but his own."

Nay—and he recalled the fact with a sensation amounting to horror—he had seen the young child of Peter Croft's wife, a very short while ago, bearing from the house of the publican to the home of the drunkard, a large can of the poisonous trash *he* had sold—he had seen that child stopping at the street corner, taking HER FIRST DRAUGHT, taking a lesson in theft as well as in drunkenness: and he remembered his self-reproach when conscience accused *him* of thus laying the foundation of a future of misery and sin.

What of the woman—the wife of such a man, the mother of such a child!

"And I have helped to bring her to this," he repeated over and over to himself; "even I have done this—that has been my doing." He might have consoled himself by the argument, that if Peter Croft had not drunk at "the Grapes," he would have drunk somewhere else; but his seared conscience neither admitted nor sought an excuse; and after an hour or more of earnest prayer, with sealed lips, but a soul bowed down, at one moment by contempt for his infirmity of purpose, and at another elevated by a stern resolve of great sacrifice, Mathew, carrying with him the *Drunkard's Bible*, tried to rest. He slept the feverish, unrefreshing sleep which so frequently succeeds strong emotion. He saw troops of drunkards—blear-eyed, trembling, ghastly spectres, pointing at him with their shaking fingers, while, with pestilential breath, they demanded him "who had sold them poison." Women, too—drunkards, or drunkards' wives—in either case, starved, wretched creatures, with scores of ghastly children, hooted him as he passed

through caverns reeking of gin, and hot with the steam of all poisonous drinks! He awoke just as the dawn was crowning the distant hills of his childhood with glory, and while its munificent beams were penetrating the thick atmosphere that hung as a veil before the bedroom window.

To Mathew the sunbeams came like heavenly messengers, winging their way through the darkness and chaos of the world for the world's light and life. He had never thought of that before; but he thought of and felt it then, and much good it did him, strengthening his good intent. A positive flood of light poured in through a pane of glass that had been cleaned the previous morning, and played upon the dull cover of the Drunkard's Bible. Mathew bent his knees to the ground, his heart full of emotions—the emotions of his early and better nature—and he bowed his head upon his hands, and prayed in honest resolve and earnest zeal. The burden of that prayer, which escaped from between his lips in murmurs sweet as the murmurs of living waters, was—that God would have mercy upon him, and keep him in the right path, and make him, unworthy as he was, the means of grace to others—to be God's instrument for good to his fellow-creatures; to minister to the regeneration of his own kind. Oh, if God would but mend the broken vessel, if He would but heal the bruised reed, if He would but receive him into His flock! Oh, how often he repeated: "God give me strength! Lord strengthen me!"

And he arose, as all arise after steadfast prayer—strengthened—and prepared to set about his work. I quote his own account of what followed.

"I had," he said, "fixed in my mind the duty I was called upon to perform; I saw it bright before me. It was now clear to me, whether I turned to the right or to the left; there it was, written in letters of light. I went down-stairs, I unlocked the street-door, I brought a ladder from the back of my house

to the front, and with my own hands, in the gray, soft haze of morning, I tore down the sign of my disloyalty to a good cause. 'The Grapes' lay in the kennel, and my first triumph was achieved. I then descended to my cellar, locked myself in, turned all the taps, and broke the bottles into the torrents of pale ale and brown stout that foamed around me. Never once did my determination even waver. I vowed to devote the remainder of my life to the destruction of alcohol, and to give my power and my means to reclaim and succour those who had wasted their substance and debased their characters beneath my roof. I felt as a freed man, from whom fetters have been suddenly struck off; a sense of manly independence thrilled through my frame. Through the black and reeking arch of the beer-vault, I looked up to Heaven; I asked God again and again for the strength of purpose and perseverance I had hitherto wanted all my later life. While a 'respectable man,' and an 'honest publican,' I *knew* that I was acting a falsehood, and dealing in the moral—perhaps the eternal—deaths of many of those careless drinkers, who had 'sorrow and torment, and quarrels and wounds without cause,' even while I, who sold the incentives to sorrow and torment, and quarrels and wounds without cause, knew that they 'bit like serpents and stung like adders.' What a knave I had been! erecting a temple to my own respectability on the ruins of respectability in my fellow-creatures! talking of honesty, when I was inducing sinners to augment their sin by every temptation that the fragrant rum, the white-faced gin, the brown bouncing brandy, could offer—all adulterated, all untrue as myself, all made even worse than their original natures by downright and positive fraud; talking of honesty, as if I had been honest; going to church, as if I were a practical Christian, and passing by those I had helped to make sinners with contempt upon my lip, and a 'Stand by, I am

holier than thou!' in my proud heart, even at the time I was inducing men to become accessories to their own shame and sin and the ruin of their families.

"Bitter, but happy, tears of penitence gushed from my eyes as the ocean of intoxicating and baneful drinks swelled, and rolled, and seethed around me. I opened the drain, and they rushed forth to add to the impurity of the Thames. 'Away they go!' I said; 'their power is past; they will never more turn the staggering workman into the streets, or nerve his arm to strike down the wife or child he is bound by the law of God and man to protect; never more send the self-inflicted fever of *delirium tremens* through the swelling veins; never drag the last shilling from the drunkard's hand; never more quench the fire on the cottage hearth, or send the pale, overworked artizan's children to a supperless bed; never more blister the lips of woman, or poison the blood of childhood; never again inflict the Saturday's headache, which induces the prayerless Sunday. Away—away! would that I had the power to so set adrift all the perverted produce of the malt, the barley, and the grape, of the world!' As my excitement subsided, I felt still more resolved; the more I calmed down, the firmer I became. I was as a paralytic recovering the use of his limbs; as a blind man restored to sight. The regrets and doubts that had so often disturbed my mind gathered themselves into a mighty power, not to be subdued by earthly motives or earthly reasoning. I felt the dignity of a mission; I would be a Temperance Missionary to the end of my days! I would seek out the worst amongst those who had frequented 'The Grapes,' and pour counsel and advice—the earnest counsel and the earnest advice of a purely disinterested man—into ears so long deaf to the voice of the charmer. I was a free man, no longer filling my purse with the purchase-money of sorrow, sin, and death. owed the sinners tempted to sin in my house—I owed them

atonement. But what did I not long to do for that poor Emma? When I thought of her, of her once cheerfulness, her once innocence, her once beauty—I could have cursed myself.

"Suddenly my sister shook the door. She entreated me to come forth, for some one had torn down the sign, and flung it in the kennel. When I showed her the dripping taps, and the broken bottles, she called me, and believed me, mad; she never understood me, but less than ever then. I had, of course, more than one scene with her; and when I told her that, instead of ale, I should sell coffee, and substitute tea for brandy, she—like too many others, attaching an idea of feebleness and duplicity, and want of respectability to Temperance,—resolved to find another home. We passed a stormy hour together, and among many things, she claimed the Drunkard's Bible; but that I would not part with.

"I lost no time in finding the dwelling of Peter Croft. Poor Emma! If I had met her in the broad sunshine of a June day, I should not have known her; if I had heard her speak, I should have recognised her voice among a thousand. Misery for her had done its worst. She upbraided me as I deserved. 'You,' she said, 'and such as you, content with your own safety, never think of the safety of others. You take care to avoid the tarnish and wretchedness of drunkenness yourselves, while you entice others to sin. Moderation is *your* safeguard; but when did you think it a virtue in your customers?'

"I told her what I had done, that in future mine would be strictly a Temperance house; that I would by every means in my power—God helping me—undo the evil I had done.*

* Nothing stronger could be written concerning public-houses than this—copied from the *Times*, July, 1872:—"It would be impossible to find anything which stands for so much loss to soul, body, and estate, for so much discomfort and everything that is disagreeable, as the public-house.

"'Will that,' she answered in low, deep, tones of anguish—'will that bring back what I have lost?—will it restore my husband's character?—will it save him, even if converted, from self-reproach?—will it open the grave, and give me back the child, my first-born, who, delicate from its cradle, could not endure the want of heat and food, which the others have still to bear?—will it give us back the means squandered in your house?—will it efface the memory of the drunkard's songs, and the impurity of the drunkard's acts? O Mathew! that you should thrive and live, and grow rich and respectable, by what debased and debauched your fellow-creatures. Look!' she added, and her words pierced my heart—'look! had I my young days over again, I would rather—supposing that love had nothing to do with my choice—I would rather appear with my poor degraded husband, bad as he has been, and is, at the bar of God, than kneel there as your wife! You, cool-headed and moderate by nature, knowing right from wrong, well educated, yet tempting, tempting others to the destruction which gave you food and plenishing—your fine *gin-palace!* your comfortable rooms! your intoxicating drinks! the pleasant company! all, all! wiling the tradesman from his home, from his wife, from his children, and sending him back when the stars are fading in the daylight. Oh! to what a home!

Even if we accept the best case that can be made for it in principle, the fact is still a huge nuisance and misery. It is not only the quiet religious family, or the respectable householder, who regards the public-house as one of the enemies of his peace, but it is almost everybody except the publican and his landlord. It is the wife and children who see the day's or week's wages spent there. It is the neighbourhood disturbed by nightly broils and deeds of violence. It is the employer who finds his men demoralised and enfeebled. It is the honest tradesman who sees the money that should come to the counter go to the bar. THERE IS NOT A VICE, OR A DISEASE, OR A DISORDER, OR A CALAMITY OF ANY KIND THAT HAS NOT ITS FREQUENT RISE IN THE PUBLIC-HOUSE. IT DEGRADES, RUINS, AND BRUTALISES A LARGE FRACTION OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE."

"'I do think, as you stand there, Mathew Hownley, well dressed, and well fed, and respectable—yes, that is the word, "*respectable!*"—that you are, at this moment, in the eyes of the Almighty, a greater criminal than my poor husband, who is lying upon straw with madness in his brain, trembling in every limb, without even a *Bible* to tell him of the mercy which Christ's death procured for the penitent sinner at the eleventh hour!'

"I laid her own Bible before her. I did not ask her to spare me: every word was true—I deserved it all. I went forth: I sent coal, and food, and clothing into that wretched room; I sent a physician; I prayed by the bedside of Peter Croft, as if he had been a dear brother. I found him truly penitent; and with all the resolves for amendment which so often fade in the sunshine of health and strength, he wailed over his lost time, his lost means, his lost character—all lost; all God had given—health, strength, happiness, all gone—all but the love of his ill-used and neglected wife; that had never died! 'And remember,' she said to me, 'there are hundreds, thousands of cases as sad as his in England, in the Christian land we live in! Strong drink fills our jails and hospitals with sin, with crime, with disease, with death; its mission is sin and sorrow to man, woman, and child; under the cloak of good-fellowship it draws men together, and the "good-fellowship" poisons heart and mind! Men become mad under its influence. Would any man not mad, squander his money, his character, and bring himself and all he is bound to cherish, to the verge of the pauper's grave; nay, into it? Of five families in this wretched house, the mothers of three, and the fathers of four, never go to their ragged beds sober; yet they tell me good men, wise men, great men, refuse to promote temperance. They have never watched for the drunkard's return, or experienced his neglect or ill-usage—never had the last penny for their children's bread

turned into spirits—never woke to the knowledge, that though the snow of December be a foot on the ground, there is neither food nor fire to strengthen for the day's toil!' *

"When I spoke to her of the future with hope, she would not listen. 'No,' she said, 'my hope for him and for myself is beyond the grave. *He* cannot rally; those fierce drinks have branded his vitals, burnt into them. Life is not for either of us. I wish his fate, and mine, could warn those who are around us; but the drunkard, day after day, sees the drunkard laid in his grave, and before the earth is thrown upon the coffin, the quick is following the example set by the dead—of another, and another glass!"

"She was right. Peter's days were numbered; and when she knelt beside his coffin, she thanked God for his penitence, and prayed that she might be spared a little longer for her children's sake. That prayer gave me hope: she had not then spoken of hope—except of that beyond the grave.

"My friends jested at my attention to the young widow, and perhaps I urged her too soon to become my wife. She turned away, with a feeling which I would not, if I could, express. Her heart was still with her husband, and she found no rest

* "Not only does this vice produce all kinds of positive mischief, but it has also a negative effect of great importance. It is the mightiest of all the forces that clog the progress of good. . . . . The struggle of the school, and the library, and the church, all united, against the beerhouse and the gin palace, is but one development of the war between heaven and hell. IT IS INTOXICATION THAT FILLS OUR JAILS; IT IS INTOXICATION THAT FILLS OUR LUNATIC ASYLUMS; AND IT IS INTOXICATION THAT FILLS OUR WORKHOUSES WITH POOR. WERE IT NOT FOR THIS ONE CAUSE, PAUPERISM WOULD BE NEARLY EXTINGUISHED IN ENGLAND. . . . . Looking then at the manifold and frightful evils that spring from drunkenness, we think we are justified in saying that it is the most dreadful of all the ills that afflict the British Isles. THE INTELLECTUAL, THE MORAL, AND THE RELIGIOUS WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE, THEIR MATERIAL COMFORTS, THEIR DOMESTIC HAPPINESS, ARE ALL INVOLVED."—*Charles Buxton, M.P.*

until she was placed beside him in the crowded church-yard. The children live on—the son, with the unreasoning craving for strong drink which is so frequently the inheritance of the drunkard's child; the daughters, poor, weakly creatures—one, that little deformed girl who sits behind the tea-counter, and whose voice is so like her mother's; the other, a sad sufferer, unable to leave her bed, and who occupies a room at the top of the COFFEE HOUSE that was 'the Grapes.' Her window looks out upon flower-pots, the green leaves and struggling blossoms of which are coated with blacks, but she thinks them the freshest and most beautiful in the whole world!"





Frederick Goodall, R.A.] [Butterworth & Heath.

A ROLLING STONE.—IN THE GAP OF DUNLOE.

A ROLLING STONE.

AN IRISH STORY.



"GLAD to see you, Randy. As I came up the hill, I thought your oats looked exceedingly well."

"Thank yer honor," answered Randy Cassidy to his landlord's greeting, as he leaned over the gate of his garden. "I'll say this of yer honor, go where I will, that you have always a pleasant word on yer tongue, and a sunbeam in yer eyes for yer tenants—strong or wake. But I wish I'd sown whate instead of them green shimmering oats; the crop will be mighty light intirely."

"I think, in that quarter, wheat would have yielded a far worse crop; and your oats look as well as any I have seen to-day, and I have ridden over twenty miles."

"Twenty mile!" repeated Mrs. Cassidy, who had come to the cottage door with a fine, fat, rosy, baby on her arm, "would

yer honor come in and rest; and sure the pratees are just on the boil, and we have sweet milk and a herring—or I could make yer honor a beautiful cup of the rale Dublin tay, which the mistress—God bless her!—sent me when she was born."

"The mistress born!" exclaimed Mr. Lister laughing.

"Augh, no, yer honor! ye'r always down on me about me English—the babby, sir. Sure if it hadn't been for her goodness, I'd never have raised my head in the light of day. The heavens be her bed when she laves us!"

"It's a fine child, God bless it!" said Mr. Lister, who knew the Irish liked a blessing to follow praise.

"Good luck to yer honor! the gentry seldom say 'God bless it.'"

"I do not know why," was the landlord's reply. "I say it with reverence, for I know nothing prospers without the Divine blessing; and surely a child, just on the threshold of life, should evoke a prayer."

"I'm sure she'll be the better for it," said the woman, pressing her infant more closely to her bosom.

"Oh, then, it's a girl!"

"Worse luck," exclaimed the father. "I tell Nancy she'd better take it to the poor-house, and swop it for a boy."

"He doesn't mane it," replied his wife indignantly. "He's not called 'Rolling Randy' for nothing, sir; but the nature is too warm round his heart for that. Sure yer honor will step in, sir? The room isn't as nice as that we had when we kept the little shop at Tarbert. And, indeed, we war just beginning to carry all before us, when Randy thought he'd maybe get his health and happiness better in the farming line; so we sold off the bits of sticks; he said they'd only be in our way here, where we'd have no call for them; nowhere to put them by, in a cabin; and that was true, though I never stopt lamenting my grandmother's corner cupboard that went for a song—

to say nothing of the rale mahogany table with two flaps to it."

"Hold yer whisht, Nancy," interrupted her husband; "what does his honor care for such talk? I'm not going to deny, sir, that the farming isn't altogether what I'd thought it would be. I laid out a heap of money on manure, and no return yet."

"Why, of course you have not, you must have patience; the land must be prepared, the seed must be sown; it will have its time, and it must be coaxed out of the earth by sunshine and shower."

"That never seems to come at the right time, yer honor," interrupted the young farmer with a groan. "Sure you'll come in an' take the air of the fire, and such a bit and sup as we can give, with the kindly welcome?"

"Not now, thanks," was the reply. "But, Randy, as I said, you must give the land time to bring forth its increase; and while you work earnestly, patiently, and hopefully, you must remember that the earth and the fulness thereof are the Lord's gift."

"True, yer honor," said Mrs. Cassidy.

"How are the potatoes?" inquired Mr. Lister, after a pause.

"Why bravely, thank yer honor; that is, they war; but somehow the weather that seems good for the green-crops ain't good for the roots. Tom Lawrence says his swedes and mangold are gone to the bad, and I'm afeard the potatoes will follow."

"Well," observed Mr. Lister, "I must wish you both good-day. You are young at farming, Randy, but there is one farming habit you have learned to perfection."

"What's that, yer honor?"

"GRUMBLING," and his landlord cantered off with a nod and a smile.

"It's asy talk with the likes of him that has nothing to grumble at," said Randy. "I wonder how he'd like to sit down to wet potatoes and a salt herring for dinner five days out of the seven?"

"We had a pig in the tub always at Tarbert, and bacon in the chimney; and we'd have it here, only you war forced to sell the pig," said Nancy; "but never mind, the tailor is paid, Randy dear, and no one can say your Sunday coat isn't your own."

"I wish I had been a tailor—or even a brogue maker—rather than what I am. It was an ill day, Nancy, when I threw up my indentures, and my time half served out to the carpentering; but I could not bear it after the first six months—and mad enough my poor father was with me; he was always repeating 'A rolling stone gathers no moss.'"

"My poor darlin' 'Rolling Randy!'" said his pretty wife, looking at him as lovingly with her blue-grey eyes, as if he had been the wisest of men. "Sure," she continued, when their dinner was ended, and she had thrown out the skins and potatoe crumbs to some importunate fowls who had been demanding their dues at the door, and attempted more than once to enter and take them. "Sure, Randy, darling, I never could make out how it was you got such a taste for rowling; all your people—and I may say, all mine—have been contint to live and die where they were bred and born; only a few, who took heart and went off to America."

"Well, Nancy, and I'm sure there's no more sign of moss on their rolling stones than there is on mine."

"Oh, my Uncle James has been a hundred year and more on his land, and has money in the bank; he has a strong back." Randy knew quite well what his wife meant, and did not laugh at her.

The wealth and perseverance of her Uncle James was

always Nancy's stronghold when Randy "took," as she called it, "the magrims," and would rather leave a place where he was earning good bread, to go to another where the bread might be better, than remain stationary. But this wandering, roving from place to place, changing from one occupation to another, is by no means a prevailing Irish propensity.

The Irish are, as a people, more prone to "take it asy," to say "sure it was always so" and "it'll do," sit cheerfully down with the dirtiest content, and withstand any changes that indicate and lead to improvement. At all periods of their history they cherished the strongest possible attachment to "the sod;" latterly they have got a passion for emigration, which has been, perhaps, too freely encouraged; but "Rolling Randy" had no desire in these latter days for any distant move. After he "broke his indentures" to the carpenter he ran away to sea, under the impression that with no other fortune than "his four bones," he'd be a captain or "something" in no time. But he was soon undeceived, and always shook his head at the bare mention of a ship after his return, declaring "it never agreed with him." At all events, he left it, whether of his own free will or as a result of dismissal, I cannot say; but he returned to Ireland after an absence of nearly two years, poor and penniless. His fortune, however, as his mother—a singularly sharp, clever old woman—expressed it, "had a stroke of good luck." At Randy's christening the expected godfather did not arrive, upon which the officiating priest volunteered to accept the responsibility. A week after Randy's return the good old priest died, leaving Randy two hundred pounds, accompanied by advice and expressing a hope that he'd "settle down."

Now Randy said he was determined to settle down if Nancy Brian would settle with him; and Nancy had a "laneing" for Randy before he cast "carpentering" to the winds,

and had treasured next her heart a blue riband he gave her one "Hallow Eve" when she was a "slip of a girl."

So she agreed to "settle with him." Some said Nancy had made a great catch to get a boy with two hundred pounds, and the "likeliest boy" in the county. Randy took a shop at Tarbert—which the young couple opened in the general line; and very proud he was to see his name in yellow letters that "looked like goold" over the door. A fine show of strings of candles and eggs, and "streaky" bacon, and red-herrings, and cotton handkerchiefs, and tea in a Brobdignag painted canister, and tobacco, and bulls-eyes, and a cone of "lump sugar" hanging from the ceiling; sweeties in two glass jars, a small pile of large and small loaves, and balls of cotton, and a brown crock of brown sugar in the opposite corner to the tea canister, and gilt gingerbread husbands for the little girls, and such books as were popular in Tarbert, and strings of ballads that were hung to match the strings of candles; a tub of beautiful butter and a fine barrel of salt herrings sentinelled the door, and pretty Mrs. Cassidy behind the counter, zealous to serve, recommending her "English prints" that occupied some shelves at the back of the shop, and a grand blue and green shawl, for a show, that was hung on a rope. "The beauty of the world," Mrs. Cassidy proclaimed it; "and the very moral of one the Queen, God bless her! wore at coort."

For the first week Randy went across the road half-a-dozen times a day to look at his shop, and inwardly resolved—a resolution he adhered to for a whole month—that he *would* "settle down." He knew he should soon be high up in the world, and then—but no, they shouldn't "even" Rolling Randy to him any more!

His shop was filled with customers; both desired to please. Nancy was not a gossip, but attended to her business; and

Randy quickly learned to do up parcels, and for some time was always cheerful. While their customers paid ready money they both found shopkeeping easy and pleasant; but when it came to putting the penny and three-halfpenny debts down on the slate, and entering them in a book in the evening, Randy became impatient, and wearied of the task—one, unfortunately, in which Nancy could not help him, though he declared she made surprising "offers" on the slate, and could count up anything almost on her fingers.

They were really doing very well; the first quarter they made fair profit, and, both were true and honest. Nancy's good temper never failed; she was always the same, smiling and civil. But Randy became irritable and fractious. "He had," he said, "no peace, no rest;" it was slave, slave all day, and then, at night, stowed away in the back room over that slate and book, until he soon shouldn't have an eye left in his head. He wished Nancy had been a scholar, then she could have kept the books. Poor Nancy suggested there was very little to keep, "everything went as soft as new milk;" for which reply she got well snubbed. Every one said Mr. Cassidy would soon have a very strong shop, and both were getting on "wonderful." The pig had a greater number of "*bonneens*" than ever was known; and as to eggs, Mrs. Cassidy's were so fine that the gentlemen at the bank would buy no others.

Nancy did not care how hard she worked if she could only prevail on her husband to be content; but he took to reading the advertisements in the newspaper, and instead of looking over the slate, or attending to the pig and her progeny—a self-inflicted task in which, for a time, he took great interest—he would say, "Listen to this, Nancy; here's a fine malt-house to be sold. Now that's what I should like. I could soon understand malting, and I knew a man in Amereeky (as he always pronounced it) who made no end of money by malting. To

be sure they want a large premium." And then would follow a pause until he discovered another Eldorado. "Listen, Nancy; if we had only the luck to hear of this—'A school'——"

"Oh whisht, Randy! now, anyway; you haven't the larning nor the patience for a school; a mighty fine schoolmaster you'd make intirely. Do, like a darling, put by that paper, and settle the book to-night, the things get so rubbed on the slate."

"Whisht, Nancy, and hear to this. 'A mill, with house and five acres of fine land'—of all things in the world I should like to be a miller!" and he read the whole of the advertisement.

"It reads mighty pretty," said the prudent little wife; "but what call have ye bothering yerself, thinking how much better you might be? Set a case; how much worse you might be. Oh, dear! let us give the ALMIGHTY thanks for what He gives, and not be thinking how much better we might do for ourselves than He has done for us. Take the slate, Randy; I declare Molly Clary's snuff and butter have got so mixed together I can't tell which is which, only sure she'd never get eight ounces of snuff—snuff goes in penn'orths. Take the slate, dear—the night's going on—and you'll say you're sleepy before you get to Mrs. Craks' smoothing-iron that she's disputing over, and will neither take it nor lave it. I never can remember the first cost of hardware, and I had quite a bother with Mary Murphy; she said she never thought it of me, that I'd be after putting farthings down against her. But I keep as steady as I can, and go on, never heeding them, poor things! they mean no harm."

"I would never have taken to the shop if I had a notion of all this; and I'll tell you the truth, Nancy, I'll not stand it, I'm wasting to a shada."

"Oh, asy, dear," interrupted his wife, "last market-day you said you had gained four pound."

"Ah," replied Randy with a sigh, "but that's a long time past."

"Eight days, dear, come to-morrow."

"Well," he returned testily, "no matter whether I gained or lost; here I'll not stay—wearing myself to smithereens—to be at the beck and call of every ould fogey in the place who wants a ha'porth of snuff or a clay pipe. I was meant for better things than that! It's no place to bring up the babby when it comes—in a shut-up hole like this."

"Hole!" repeated Nancy, with a touch of indignation in her tone; "our beautiful bran new shop to be called a hole! och, Randy dear, what are you after? Oh, sure you won't put from you the good priest's advice?"

"No; only I've made up mee mind when I get a chance to wash mee hands of Tarbert altogether. I suppose I shall lose a thrifle by the shop—but I'll make it up, Nancy, when—

'A little farm we keep,'

and grow everything we ate, and have fresh air all over us, and no bother about slates and books; enough to bother the finest brains that ever war made into nothing."

Poor Nancy! she loved her husband with her whole heart, and thought "he'd a wonderful head of his own." Still, when the shop was fairly sold, and she was obliged to part with the furniture that had been her grandmother's to make up enough to get into the farm where we found them, she repeated to herself with bitter tears, what she had often heard and now knew it to be true, that "a rolling stone gathers no moss."

Mrs. Lister had formed a high opinion of Randy's pretty little wife; she was always clean, and her cottage in order; she

was cheerful and steady, and when Mr. Lister told her that Rolling Randy had thrown up the farm, at the very time when every inch of land was full of promise, she was really grieved. "He deserved," she said, "to be punished for his total want of firmness of purpose, but it was sad to see that, drifting as he was, he would bring himself and his family to absolute beggary, particularly as he had determined to turn the remnant of his possessions into cattle dealing." He understood, he told Mr. Lister, on very good authority, that the English had taken a great fancy intirely to Kerry cows; so he determined to buy some, and ship them from Cork. He had a friend at Killarney who would put him in the way of it, and give him credit if he wanted it.

Mr. Lister asked him where he would place his wife and children, for there were now two. "Oh, Nancy would go with him to Killarney, and turn her hand to something; he had always a fancy for cattle dealing, and anything was better than to be stuck down in one spot for ever."

It was no use to advise. Mr. and Mrs. Lister could only mourn over him and his; it was so grievous—an active, well-looking, intelligent, and generally hard-working fellow, by no means ignorant—the means given him, according to his station, to make a fair start in life, even after he had experienced the evil of being—

"To one thing constant never,"

yet repeatedly casting good fortune from him with a recklessness bordering on insanity.

"It's no use setting a case before him," said his wife to Mrs. Lister, when bidding her farewell; "he means it all for the best. Sure the finest friend he ever had asked him to 'settle down,' but he couldn't do it. He'll take a turn maybe, my lady, when he has nothing. I don't mind for myself. I'd

go through the world barefoot with him; but it's the fear of what the poor children may come to that's brakeing my heart."

After this, with weeping eyes, pretty Mrs. Cassidy fell on her knees to invoke a blessing on her kind landlady, who, for a long time, saw her no more.

Randy's farm was let to an earnest, plodding young fellow, who reaped the harvest of Randy's labour.

Five or six years afterwards, when Rolling Randy's name was almost forgotten, or only remembered as a jest, Mr. and Mrs. Lister made an excursion to Killarney, and were, like other tourists, wherever they appeared, surrounded by the itinerant dealers in bog-oak and arbutus wood.

The morning after their arrival, when leaving their car, to mount the rough but sure-footed ponies that were to convey them through the beautiful Gap of Dunloe, among the crowd of big and little wood merchants, Mrs. Lister observed two delicate, fair-haired children, of a different type from the dark-eyed, Spanish-looking beauties of the kingdom of Kerry. One of them held a horse-hair chain for her inspection.

"Keep back wid ye!" exclaimed a rough-voiced girl; "mee lady, they don't want it as we do, none of their breed or seed belong to Killarney; they're strangers, ma'am, out and out; all the rest of us is mountain-born, yer honor! rale Kerry."

"What is your name, little maid?" inquired Mrs. Lister of the child.

"Nanny, my lady," she answered, with a blush and a curtsey. "Mother's coming on with the babby, and beautiful goods, ma'am."

"Never heed her, my lady," persisted the first speaker, "they're all strangers; the father, they called him by the name of——"

"Whisht, Jenny," interrupted a gentler looking girl; "here's

the poor widdy, and we've no call to harden her fortune worse than it is; stand back. It's as thrue as daylight, my lady, she has three fatherless children, and only God's light to show her how to get them a bit of bread."

Mrs. Lister looked at the thin, worn-out, wild-eyed woman, who presented her basket of arbutus toys; a baby was at her back, supported by its mother's gown, turned up gipsy-fashion; she hardly looked at the lady, who recognised her—changed as she was—as the once cheerful, beaming, Nancy Cassidy.

"Mrs. Cassidy! have you forgotten me?" said Mrs. Lister. The basket of ware fell from her hands; her eyes became deeper and darker, and great large tears burst from their sockets, but she could not speak. One of the sympathetic by-standers made her drink a few drops of goats' milk—a beverage that belongs especially to the Gap of Dunloe.

"The sight of a friend is killing her intirely, poor woman!" exclaimed a thoroughly Irish beauty, whose bare feet, however at variance with our ideas of English comfort, did not detract from the soft tender expression of her sweet face, as her eyes filled with tears of sympathy and tenderness while she regarded the widowed stranger and her little ones. "Sit down, avourneen," she continued, "under the shadda of the rocks, and get your breath out of the sweet air that the Lord sends into the Gap of Dunloe, above all the gaps in ould Ireland. I wish you'd take a taste of the goat's milk and whisky—though, indeed, mee lady, it's useless offering her a 'sup of the craythur,' for she's as dead against it as if she had taken 'the pledge' from the hand of the holy Father Mathew himself. Well, no one could even a love of the whisky to her, or to him she's lost, and *that* often makes both priest and minister build hopes on her, and say, that if she ever comes rightly to herself, a good time will blossom for her and her children—and so it will, plase God."

"Now, my good girl," said Mrs. Lister, "how can you agree with priest and minister and yet go on with the whisky traffic as you do, tempting the strangers, as well as the sojourns, to more than taste what you know creates distress and disunion among rich and poor? Why cannot you be content to sell your pretty chains, and arbutus and bog-oak ornaments—or the goat's milk without the whisky?"

"Musha, then, I dun know," replied the girl. "I put only a dawshy drop of it in the milk; and if I didn't, sure the other girls would get the better of me. I never touch it meeself, not one of me could do it—nor hardly the other girls. If they war once seen 'overtaken' there would be nothing but shame to follow. It's an ould custom, a sort of 'caith mille faltha' to the strangers, meaning 'a hundred thousand welcomes,' nothing but that. I hear tell that the drink in the big towns is a disgrace to ould Ireland. But, barring of a fair or patern time, when the boys are tempted in the town of Killarney, I am sure your honour, mee lady, would not find a boy who could not walk a chalked line by day or night, and that tells of the wise brain."

The girl put down her basket and steadied the "noggin" that held the milk in it. She made a rock as she said, "Soft wid the ferns, so that the craythur could sit down and come to herself. The sight of a friend is killing her entirely," she added. "We'll lave you alone with the good lady, dear. We'll go on, and meet you above, madam."

"Success, Nellie," exclaimed another sympathizer. "Yours is the soft heart that can find the soft words. She has supped sorrow herself, mee lady. God help her, and it's wonderful how that nourishes the heart!"

"Poor Mrs. Cassidy! it's long since such a face as that sent hope into her," observed another of the Kerry girls.

The wild-looking, yet sympathising mob dispersed—at first

silently and reverently, but before Mrs. Cassidy was able to speak, Mrs. Lister heard them laughing and hulloaing, and singing scraps of Lady Morgan's song—

"Oh, did you not hear of Kate Kearney?"

as they scrambled up the mountains or splashed each other with the foaming waters of the fretted torrent that leaped among and over the rocks below; but those noises floated away in the distance. Mr. Lister and the guides left the two women alone—the lady and the worn-out, heavily-sorrowing woman, who had been cast into sore tribulation by the restless improvidence of the "rolling stone that gathered no moss." Mrs. Lister sat on a fragment of rock, close to her whose beauty and neatness she had once so admired; but it was some time before poor Nancy could collect her thoughts, and find words to tell her tale. The eldest child lifted the youngest from its mother's shoulders, and, seating it on the grass, the trio made as lovely a picture of childish beauty as a painter could wish to paint.

At last she spoke. "After we left the farm, my lady, and got here, he took over his first venture of cows, madam, and told me he did mighty well with them, and had more bespoke, and came back to me, and 'deed I thought he'd be steady; and so he would have been only the old rolling fancy came over him, and instead of sticking to the cows he took up with pigs. Sure I never thought to see my fine handsome husband turned into a pig driver, and consorting with such animals; and it was while he was away I gathered up some of the woodwork to turn a penny—for it isn't what we were, but what we are, we must think of; and he went off in such spirits—it was his last venture—for well I knew the fag-end of his little property was in them long-backed Connaught pigs! for *him* to up with the like of *them!* But it wasn't for long; a storm

came on in the Channel, and to save the ship they threw the cattle overboard! You see, my lady, that was no fault of my poor Randy's; the storm would have come anyways, and cows would have gone as readily overboard as pigs; no blame to my poor Randy for that—was there now?" she inquired, looking anxiously with her poor faded eyes into Mrs. Lister's face.

"No, certainly not," said the kind lady, "certainly not!"

The woman grasped her hand and kissed it.

"God bless you for *that*," she exclaimed. "God for ever bless you for that! Sure the ignorant people here wanted to blame him for that ill-luck; as if *he* made the wind, and drownded the cattle. That was the end; he had as much money left as brought him home, and this dawshy craychur you saw at may back only come into the world a few hours.

"'I b'leve, Nancy darlin', he says, when he took him in his arms; and it was himself that had the sweet soothering words ever on the tip of his tongue. 'I b'leve, Nancy darlin', there's truth in the sayin' that "a rowlin' stone gathers no moss."'

"'Give God thanks your life is spared, mee jewel,' I said, and I felt what I said.

"'Have you had him christened?' he says; and I says, 'No, dear; as it is the first boy, you should have the naming of him.'

"'Very well,' he says, 'we'll call him anything but Randy.'

"I didn't know at all what he'd turn his hand to, only there's no use in crying after spilt milk; and it's thankful I am I never said, when I saw everything was gone to the bad, a hard or reproachful word to him. He came in quite cheerful in the mornin' and told me that, out beyant Ross Island, he'd heard that at every new moon, if you make the sign of the cross on the first of its beams that fall on the water—'I know the exact spot,' he says, for I went out with a man who knows—and if you make the holy sign, and look straight down, you'll see where

there's a crock of goold, only the difficulty is to keep the mark. But, Nancy, darlin', we'll be rich yet,' he says, 'for I think I know the way to mark it. It's new moon to-night, and I'll see what it's made of.'

"Well, a terror came over me, and I begged and prayed of him not to go on the lake, of which he knew nothing, all alone at night; but he laughed at me, and went.

"That was the last I saw of my darlin'. Some say he overbalanced himself stooping after a moonbeam! I don't know. I only know that the little sense I had, left me, and I walked round and round, and on and on, and good people in the town took care of the children. They found my poor Randy, but I did not know him, and he rests in the church up there; they call it by the name of Aghadoe."

The guides told Mr. and Mrs. Lister that, at times, poor Nancy's mind still wandered, that at full moon she would watch for her husband's return, close to Ross Island, and after the moon went down, creep in, weeping, to her children.





A. J. Woolmer.] [Butterworth & Heath.

WHAT HE LOST.—WAITING AND WATCHING.

WHAT HE LOST!

TOM RUDGE AND HIS FRIEND.



"MY dear fellow," said Tom, "I am delighted to see you; but oh! this confounded head ache. You know what it is."

"Indeed I do not," answered his friend. "I never had a headache of *your sort*, in all my life."

"What a lucky dog you are!—it was owing to that *last glass of brandy and water*. Now don't shake your head at me—I tell you *it was*—look! I was as cool as a cucumber. I could have walked a chalked line; a pint of sherry and half a bottle of claret, and two glasses of champagne—those, you know, could not have left me with such a tattering headache as this. Here goes the third bottle of soda-water I have swallowed this morning; and my head is thumping like a diseased steam engine. That *last glass of brandy and water* did the business. What a fool I was!"

"You were, certainly," said his friend.

Tom would rather have been contradicted; so he tossed

over some papers that lay upon his table, and then rang the bell furiously.

"Did you take a letter to the post this morning?" he inquired of the servant.

"No, sir," answered the man, "there was no letter left for me to take."

"I told you to remind me when I came home," said Tom, "that I was to answer a letter."

"I did, sir," quoth the servant.

"You did not," persisted the master.

"I beg your pardon, sir, I did."

"How dare you contradict me?" said the irritated Tom.

The servant remained silent.

"Well, what do you stand there for?—you must have been drunk, and forgotten it."

"*I* was not drunk," muttered the man, rudely enough, for he laid great emphasis on the personal pronoun. Tom was what is called "a hasty good-natured fellow," so he flung the toast-rack at his servant's head—but he put Tom to the torture in a few minutes, by returning to give him warning.

"I shall not know what to do without the rascal;" exclaimed Tom to his friend when the door was again closed, the servant having declared his determination to throw up his month's wages and leave. "The scoundrel! and he knows as well as I do *it was that last glass of brandy and water*."

"As there is so much danger in the *last* glass, Tom," observed Tom's friend, "I wonder you take a first. You see how well I get on without it. I am as much in the world as you; I am more occupied than you; and I must say," he continued, with a vanity which is by no means *confined* to the ladies, even if it originated with them, "that I think I am growing a handsomer fellow than I used to be—while you certainly do not improve. Your eyes are as heavy and bilious

looking as if they anticipated the jaundice; your skin (you *had* a clear, soft berry-brown skin, Tom, which the warm blood tinted) has a parchment and blotched effect, as if it were greatly troubled by perplexities of the stomach. Your lips are chapt, not chiselled, as they used to be; in fact, Tom, you are gone off! that is the simple truth, and I am certain—*the last glass of brandy and water* has a great deal to do with it."

"You are very complimentary this morning, I confess," said Tom, as he pressed his hand to his throbbing temple, "but I have a great deal to distress me—I am confoundedly *hard up*—that's the truth. I make fifty resolves that I will never play at the club, and I never do,"——

"Until after *the last glass of brandy and water*," muttered his friend.

"Who told you that?" inquired Tom gruffly; "there are always some fellows about who tell you everything."

"Go on," said his friend.

"And my father threatens to stop the supplies," persisted Tom Rudge. "And I really was ashamed yesterday, when all of you came down so handsomely at that subscription, and I had nothing to give."

"But you might have had, Tom."

"I'm no coiner," said Tom, in a sulky tone.

"You turn the coin that at this period would save lives upon lives—you turn it into '*last glasses of brandy and water*,'" continued his friend. "And then the consumption of soda water and time that follows—the occasional fits of low fever—the various little scrapes and difficulties that arise out of these glasses—the occasional disrepute you get into—the loss of personal attraction: what bright eyes you used to have, Tom! —Have you thought of Laura."

Tom Rudge's face flushed an angry red, his deep dark eyes recovered something of their brilliancy, and flashed upon his

friend. "Thought of her!" he exclaimed. "Yes! she sent me back my love pledges, because one evening—and she must have seen the cause—I was not myself. One evening, she says, I offered her an affront. Look you: I would have laid my right hand on that table and chopt it off, sooner than have given her pain"——

"Hush!" again interrupted his friend, "I will speak to you of my sister Laura presently; and of her I shall have much to say. Let us talk of lesser matters first."

"Oh, you do so harp on the same string!" said Tom.

"I want to tune it," answered his friend.

"But I don't want any more tuning just now," was the reply, as Tom sent the cork of another bottle of soda-water to make its score upon the ceiling. "What I wanted, if I was able to talk to you about it, was to see if there was any way to get Briggs to wait. If he tells the manner in which I behaved, I shan't have a friend left in the world but you. I never could ill-use a horse—you know I could not—you know I am tender-hearted to an infirmity."

"When sober, I know you are."

"Well," continued Tom Rudge, lashing himself into the belief that he was badly treated; "and isn't it a very hard case that no allowance is to be made for a fellow when he's three sheets in the wind? As to the poor child the horse galloped over"——

"*You* were *on* the horse," hinted his friend coolly.

"You drive me mad, Ned, you do," exclaimed Tom. "You are always so clear-headed, and so safe, and you look so healthy and happy, and get into no scrapes. I wonder I talk to you; only I must say, of all the fellows I know, there's not one does so much for another—but what are you totting down and casting up there?"

"I have listened to you; now you must listen to me," said

his friend. "I am totting down, and casting up, the losses and the profits of the *last glass of brandy and water*—just in the succession they have had this morning. Listen:

"A HEAD-ACHE, preventing your keeping an appointment upon which in all probability your future destiny depended.

"A LETTER OF CONSEQUENCE UNANSWERED.

"A disgraceful ROW with a SERVANT.

"Loss of PERSONAL BEAUTY—consequent upon mental and moral deterioration—a good introduction destroyed.

"MONEY RESPONSIBILITIES incurred, in a discreditable manner.

"FATHER'S DISPLEASURE.

"A SACRIFICE of ALL POWER to relieve the distresses of your fellow-creatures.

"THE BREAKING OFF AN ENGAGEMENT which might have ensured your happiness.

"So much, my dear Tom, for the *losses*—and the *gain* sounds very much like a bull or a blunder. I forget the distinction between them, but the *gain* is the cause of the *loss* —the gain is the *glass of brandy and water!*

"And do you peril the loss of this world's happiness and respectability—to say nothing of what must follow when we are called upon to give an account of time misspent, and deeds done in the cause of the flesh, rather than at the bidding of the spirit? Do you peril these things for the liquid insanity that enters your lips to steal away your senses? Do you think there is more good fellowship in 'the gaily circling glass,' even in its first form, when it dances and sparkles—before it has rushed in impetuous fires through your throbbing veins, and created an illusive and most fabulous world upon the "realities" and "glories" of your real existence Do you think there is more good-fellowship in drinking to the health you are undermining, than in devoting the *cost* of what

you imbibe to the maintenance of your fellow-creatures? The evils I have chronicled—though like all evils they grow, so that one is the germ of many—are but a portion of those that arise from, I will not confine myself to say the *undue* use, but *any use*, social or domestic, of what, view it as you will, is the foundation of crime and disease all over the broad world. I speak of its use as a habit or a luxury, and only entreat you to review history, sacred and profane, and tell me where it has been other than a curse to him who partakes thereof. It is only a part of the evil that it converts into man's destruction, not only the money, but the aliment that could be wholesome food. I really do not see how any humane person can devote his money to what may be called *wholesome luxuries*, much less imbibe the actual food, the perverted essence of the barley cake, which would preserve fathers, mothers, children, and subjects, to our homes and country."

"Very true," answered Tom musingly. "At least, I can't contradict you: though somehow *I would rather it was not true.*"

"Likely enough, my dear fellow. But there is one thing that has had a worse reputation than it deserved; it has single handed crimes enough to answer for of its own, without having other crimes than its own thrust upon it. The Demon of *Champagne* may be a little brilliant conversational demon, but he is as subtle and dangerous as any of them, and works sad mischief amongst ladies who, unfortunately, believe him so innocent that there is no harm in cultivating his acquaintance. *Sherry* is a hot and thirsty fiend, parching the tongue, and causing the head to ache and throb, while the 'cool *Claret* entices thousands to their destruction, making them familiar with what they would otherwise have shunned. You—according to your own showing—revelled with them all. And yet you put all the blame on '*that last glass of brandy and*

water.' Fellows like you are fond of saying, 'It is the *last* drop that overflows the glass.' BUT WHY IS THE GLASS FILLED AT ALL?

"I have told you of some of your losses; I must tell you of one more; I know it will be to you a heavy and a sad one.

"You have lost—and, no doubt, for ever—one of the sweetest and best and most accomplished of good women; one who perhaps but forty-eight hours ago would gladly have been your wife. And I am here to discharge a sad duty, commissioned by her (my beloved sister), to tell you she will not confide the future of her life to one who is not only in danger to be, but who absolutely is, a drunkard."

Tom rose: his features expressed mingled alarm and anger, but he said no word, overwhelmed by the weight of the penalty he was suddenly called upon to pay for his offence.

His friend continued. "I dared not expostulate with her, for I knew too well that her conviction was right and her conclusion wise. There *can be* no happiness for a drunkard's wife; and whether she be a lady, as my sister is, or a peasant girl, the result must be the same—misery; no matter how many years may pass between the wedding-day and the grave; to say nothing of the disease, wretchedness, and proneness to sin, that *must* be the inheritance of a drunkard's children."

Tom hid his face in his hands, and wept—tears of remorse, though the full effect of his loss was yet but dimly seen.

His friend resumed. "Yes, she was right. She had watched you often; yet hoped against belief; a long time deaf to the thousand tongues of Rumour—and at least one absolute proof; she warned you as you never admitted she did—striving to attribute to any cause but a true one the expression she saw gradually driving health from your countenance and vigour from your step. But last night dispelled whatever remained

of hope, removing, in a word, all doubt, and forcing her to a resolve that nothing can now change.

"You had promised to spend with her the evening you passed with your—FRIENDS: and she waited for you on the balcony of her father's house, dressed as she thought you desired to see her dressed—a grace that adorned a stately home. I saw her there, and knew what she waited for, as she listened for your step along the gravelled walk, skirted by the fair shrubs and fragrant flowers that drank the evening dew.

"She waited long; at last it came. You little thought she watched you, but she did. She saw you—and in such a state that you shunned to seek the door. You were not quite unconscious, and you shrunk from entering while in the degraded condition in which you knew yourself to be. At last, she found you in a sheltered arbour: you had placed yourself there, sleeping a wretched sleep that brings neither refreshment nor rest.

"And standing beside you there, she made there a resolve that God will help her to keep. You have lost her; you had perilled her faith, her trust; her respect was gone, and affection such as hers, could not exist without it: it is a poor, wretched, and entirely unblest love that can give the one without the other.

"Her sacrifice is made—her grief will be heavy; but all her life long there will be no repentance for the step you have compelled her to take. She is safe against the terrible consequences that were sure—if conviction *had* come too late. She has been preserved from the terrible course that must have been the fate of a *drunkard's wife!*

"Oh that the warning was given to other women, as it has been given—in time—to her!

"She has known that peril to life, to health, to mind, to

soul, are the inevitable consequences of marriage with a drunkard: how large would be her recompense for suffering, if her example could but influence others: in high life, in middle life, or in humble life; if this truth could be widely impressed—happiness with one who is a drunkard there can never be; a prosperous home is an impossibility; religion becomes a mockery; duty to God and neighbour a mere empty sound. Woe to the parents who give their child to a drunkard; or to one in whom they know there is a propensity to drink. Better far the direst poverty than the seeming prosperity, the promises of which are but delusive snares.

"You will plead, perhaps, for exemption on the part of the moderate drinker: the argument is specious and has been often used. No doubt, it is wise and good to be 'temperate in all things.' He who drinks in moderation may be safe: but he may not be safe: indeed, it is a serious question whether society does not incur greater peril from him who avoids excess than from the habitual drunkard. It is on its guard against the one, but there is no protection against the other—when he does exceed. How many of the most deplorable cases occur to men who are very seldom absolutely intoxicated. Now and then they are what is called 'overtaken in liquor,' and cease to be masters of themselves. It is under such circumstances that the most fearful crimes are committed, often in a state of total unconsciousness: when repentance comes, and comes too late.

"Yes; my sister's teaching to her sex would be—if her warning voice could be heard—*let no woman trust her future to the keeping of a drunkard.* There may seem to be worldly inducements rich of promise; there may be station, wealth, honour, distinction—they are threads that a single act may snap and sever; there may be rare personal advantages—they fade so as to excite disgust; there may be even a depth of heart-love—

it will change, and become like Dead Sea fruit, that time (and it may be a brief time) will 'turn to ashes on the lips.'

"With her it is *not* too late. Oh that the lesson she has learned might be taught to others!—the one solemn and weighty truth that she is far most happy, and to be envied most, who is laid by her parents in the grave—

> 'Ere sin threw a blight on the spirit's young bloom,
> And earth had profaned what was meant for the skies,'

than she who is doomed to be the drunkard's wife. And alas! it has been my painful duty to tell you

WHAT YOU HAVE LOST!"





P. R. Morris.] [Butterworth & Heath.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE.—"IT IS FATHER!"

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE.

AN IRISH SKETCH.



"WHAT I'm thinking of, Nelly darlin'," said Roney Maher to his poor pale wife—"what I am thinking of is, what a pity we were not bred and born in this Temperance Society: for then we could follow it, you know, as a thing of course, without any trouble!"

"But——"

"Whisht (hold your tongue) Nelly, you've one grate fault, avourneen; you're always talking, dear, and won't listen to me. What I was saying is, that if we were brought up to the coffee instead of the whisky, we'd have been natural members of the Temperance Society; as it is now, agrah! why, it's mate, drink, and clothing, as a man may say."

He paused, and Nelly thought—though in his present state she did not tell her husband so—that whisky was a very bad paymaster.

"You're no judge, Ellen," he continued, interrupting her thoughts, "for you never took to it; and if I had my time to begin over again, I never would aither; but it's too late to change now—all too late!"

"I've heard many a wise man say that it is never too late to mend," observed Ellen.

"Yah!" he exclaimed, almost fiercely; "whoever said that was a fool."

"It was the priest himself then, Roney, never a one else; and sure you would not call him that?"

"If I did mend," he observed, "no one would take my word for it."

"Ay, dear! but deeds, not words,"—and having said more than was usual for her in the way of reproof, Ellen retreated, to watch the effect.

Roney Maher was a fine "likely boy" when he married Ellen; but when this dialogue took place, he was sitting over the embers of a turf fire, a pale emaciated man, though in the prime of life,—a torn handkerchief bound round his temples, while his favourite shillalah, that he had greased and seasoned in the chimney, and tended with more care than his children, lay broken by his side. He attempted to snatch it up while his wife retreated, but his arm fell powerless, and he uttered a groan so full of pain, that in a moment she returned, and with tearful eyes inquired of him if it was so bad with him entirely as that?

"It's worse," he answered, while the large drops that stood on his brow proved how much he suffered, "it's worse—the arm, I mean—than I thought; I'm done for, for a week or may be a fortnight: and, Nelly, the pain of my arm is nothing to the weight about my heart. Now, don't be talking, for I can't stand it. If I can't work next week, nor this, and we without money or credit!—What—what—"

The unfortunate man glanced at his wife and children,—he could not finish the sentence. He had only returned the previous night from having been "out on a spree," as it is called, spending his money, wasting his health, losing his employment,—not thinking of those innocent children whom God had given him to provide for and protect.

They had seen him, staggering homeward: and with a degree of awe amounting to horror, had whispered the one to the other, "It is father!"

When sober, Roney's impulses were all good; but he was, perhaps, more easily led away by the bad than the good. In the present instance he continued talking, because he dared not think,—and it is a fearful thing for a man to dread his own thoughts! It was a painful picture to look upon—this well-reared and well-educated man. He had been an excellent tradesman; he had been respected; he had been comfortable. What was he now?

It was evening. The children crept round the fire—where their mother was trying to heat half-a-dozen cold potatoes for their supper—looking with hungry eyes upon the scanty feast. "Daddy's too badly entirely to eat to-night," whispered the second boy to his eldest brother, while his little thin blue lips trembled half with cold, half with hunger, "and so we will have his share as well as our own;" and the little shivering group devoured the potatoes, in imagination, over and over again, poking them with their lean fingers, and telling their mammy that they were hot enough. Shocking that want should have taught them to calculate on their parent's illness as a source of rejoicing!

"Nelly," said her husband, at last, "Nelly, I wish I had a drop of something to warm me."

"Mrs. Kinsalla said she would give me a bowl of strong coffee for you, if you would take it."

What drunkard does not blaspheme? Roney swore; and though his lips were parched with fever, and his head throbbed, declared he must have just "one little thimble-full to raise his heart and kill the insects in the water."

It was in vain that Ellen remonstrated and entreated. He did not attempt violence, but he obliged his eldest boy to beg the thimble-full; and, before morning, the wretched man was tossing about in all the heat and irritation of decided fever. One must have witnessed what fever is, when accompanied by such misery, to comprehend its terrors. It was wonderful how he was supported through it; indeed, his ravings, when after a long dreary time the fever subsided, were more torturing to poor Nelly than the working of his delirium had been.

"If," he would exclaim, "if it wasn't too late, I'd take the pledge they talk about, the first minute I raise my head from the straw! But where's the good of it now?—what can I save now? Nothing,—it's too late!"

"It's never too late," Ellen would whisper,—"it's never too late," she would repeat: and, as if it were a mocking echo, her husband's voice would sigh, "Too late!—too late!"

Indeed, many who looked upon the fearful wreck of what had been the fine manly form of Roney Maher, stretched upon a bed of straw, with hardly any covering—saw his two rooms, now utterly destitute of every article of furniture,—heard his children begging in the streets for a morsel of food,—and observed how the utmost industry of his poor wife could hardly keep the rags together that shrouded her bent form,—any one who saw these things would be inclined to repeat the words, which have unfortunately but too often knelled over the grave of good feelings and good intentions, "Too late!—too late!" Many would have imagined, that not only had the demon habit which had gained so frightful an ascendancy over poor Roney banished all chance of reformation, but that there

was no escape from such intense poverty. I wish, with all my heart, that such persons would, instead of sitting down with so helpless and dangerous a companion as Despair, resolve upon two things,—first of all, to trust in, and pray to, God; secondly, to combat what they foolishly call fate,—to fight bravely and in a good cause,—and sure am I, that those who do so will, sooner or later, achieve a victory.

It is never too late to abandon a bad habit, and adopt a good one. In many towns of Ireland, thank God, Temperance has its advocates and societies have their members, and those advocates and members are so thoroughly acquainted with the blessings of this admirable system, from experiencing its advantages, that they are full of zeal in the cause, and, with true Irish generosity, eager to enlist their friends and neighbours—that they too may partake of the comforts that spring from Temperance. The Irishman is never selfish.

One of these generous members was the Mrs. Kinsalla whose offer of the bowl of coffee had been rejected by Roney the night his fever commenced. She herself was a poor widow, or, according to the touching and expressive phraseology of Ireland, a "lone woman;" and though she had so little to bestow, that many would call it nothing, she gave what she could with the good-will that rendered it "twice blessed;" then she stirred up others to give, and often had she kept watch with her wretched neighbour Ellen, never omitting those words of gentle kindness and instruction which, perhaps, at the time may seem to have been spoken in vain; but not so; for we must bear in mind, that even in the good ground the seed will not spring up the moment it is sown.

Roney had been an industrious and a good workman once; and Mrs. Kinsalla had often thought, before the establishment of Temperance Societies, what a blessing it would be if there were any means of making him an "affidavit man." "But,"

as she said, "there were so many ways of avoiding an oath, when a man's heart was set to break it, not to keep it, that she could hardly tell what to say about it." *

Such poverty as Roney's must either make a victim or a man rise above it. He was now able to sit in the sun at his cabin-door. His neighbour, Mrs. Kinsalla, had prevailed on a good lady to employ Ellen in the place of a servant who was ill, and had lent her clothes, that she might be able to appear decently "at the big house." Every night she was permitted to bring her husband a little broth, or some bread and meat, and the poor fellow was regaining his health, though his arm still continued weak. Their dwelling, however, remained without any article of furniture; although the rain used to pour through the roof, and the only fire was made from the scanty "bresnaugh" (bundle of sticks) the children gathered from the road-side; they had sufficient food; and though the lady expected all she employed to work hard, she paid them well, and caused Ellen's poor forlorn heart to leap with joy by the gift of a blanket, and a very old suit of clothes for her husband.

"I have seen yer old master to-day, Roney," said the widow Kinsalla to her neighbour; "he was asking after you."

"I'm obliged to him," was the reply, but there was neither joy nor hope in the thanksgiving.

"And he said he was sorry to see your children in the street, Roney."

* The tricks that used to be resorted to, by which men tried to cheat themselves—and God—were sometimes curious. Thus, I remember a man giving an oath that he would not take a drop inside the house nor outside the house; he put one leg inside, and the other outside, and so drank himself drunk. Another vowed that he would never take more than one glass; he procured a glass that held half a pint. Another pledged himself not to drink a drop while on earth; he climbed a tree, sate among the branches, and came down as he best could, drunk.

"So am I. But you know he was so angry with me for that last scrimmage, that he declared I should never do another stroke for him. And," he added, "that was a cruel saying for him—to lay out starvation for me and mine; because I was not worse than the rest. 'Sure,' as I said to Nelly, poor thing,—and she spending her strength, and striving for me,—'Nelly,' says I, 'where's the good of it, bringing me out of the shades of death to send me begging along the road? Let me die asy where I am!'"

"But," suggested Mrs. Kinsalla, "could you die 'asy' the way you are? Could you die 'asy,' Roney dear, while the tears of Nelly would be coorsing each other down the channels that grief and disappointment have ploughed in the rose banks of her cheeks—and she not twenty-eight years old! Could you die 'asy' and see the daylight shining through the little waxy hands of Aileen? or know that there was not food to feed a hungry mouse within the four walls of the house. That might be, Roney, ask your own poor batin' heart what it might be this very day, but for the poison you took to, as if it was dew from heaven—manna in the wilderness—instead of what it is, boiling and bubbling from Ould Nick's own distillery? An 'asy death' is for those who do their duty, in whatever station of life it is the Lord's pleasure to place them; and the knowledge and trust they have in Him rises their heart towards the heavens, no matter for the darkness of earth. I tell you, Roney, you could not 'die asy' with the weight that's about your heart."

Poor Roney closed his eyes, his chest heaved, and his seamed hands were twisted together. The Widow Kinsalla saw tears struggling through his eye-lashes; she wiped them away with her apron, and placed a gentle hand upon his knotted fingers.

"Asy, Roney, the master will take you back—he will indeed. I have his own word for it, and the mistress to the fore—ON ONE CONDITION."

The blood mounted to the poor man's face, and then he became faint, and leaned back against the wall. Three times he had been dismissed from his employment for drunkenness, and his master had never been known to receive a man back after three dismissals. Mrs. Kinsalla gave him a cup of water and then continued. "The master told me he'd take you back, on one condition."

"I'll give my oath against the whisky,—barring," he began.

"There need be no swearing, but there must be no barring. I'll tell you the rights of it, if you listen to me in earnest," said the widow. "The master, you see, called all his men together, and set down fair before them the state they were in from indulgence in spirits. He drew a picture, Roney:—A young man in his prime, full of life, with a fair character; his young wife by his side, his child on his knee; earning from fifteen to eighteen shillings or a pound a week; able to have his Sunday dinner in comfort; well to do in every way. At first he drinks, may be, a glass with a friend, and that leads to another, and another, until work is neglected, home is abandoned, a quarrelsome spirit grows out of the high spirit which is no shame, and, in a very short time, you lose all trace of the man in the degraded drunkard. Poverty wraps her rags around him; pallid want, loathsome disease, a jail, and a bedless death, close the scene. 'But,' said the master, 'this is not all: the sneer and reproach have gone over the world against us; and an Irishman is held up as a degraded man, as a half-civilised savage, to be spurned and laughed at because—'"

"I know," groaned Roney, "because he makes himself a reproach. Mrs. Kinsalla, I knew you were a well-reared and

a well-learned woman, but you gave that to the life;—it's all true."

"He spoke," she continued, "of those amongst his own workmen, who had fallen by intoxication; he said, 'If poverty had slain its thousands, whisky had slain its tens of thousands; poverty did not always lead to drunkenness, but drunkenness always led to poverty.' He spoke of you, my poor man, as being one whom he respected."

"Did he say that, indeed?"

"He did."

"God bless him for that, any way. I thought him a hard man; but God bless him for remembering ould times."

"And he said how you had fallen."

"The world knows that without his telling it," interrupted Roney.

"It does, agra!—but listen: he told of one who was as low as you are now, and lower, for the Lord took from him the young wife, who died broken-hearted in the sight of his eyes; and yet it was not too late for him to be restored, and able to lead others from the way that led him to destruction.

"He touched the hearts of them all; he laid before them how, if they looked back to what they did when sober, and what they had done when the contrary, they would see the difference; and then, my dear, he showed them other things; he laid it down, as plain as print, how all the badness that has been done in the country sprang out of the whisky—the faction fights, flying in the face of that God who tells us to love each other—the oaths, black and bitter, dividing Irishmen, who ought to be united to all things that lead to the peace and honour of their country, into parties, staining hands with blood of men who would have gone spotless to honourable graves but for that curse. Then he said, how the foes of Ireland would

sneer and scorn, if she became a backslider from Temperance, and how her friends would rejoice if the people kept true to their pledge; how every man could prove himself a patriot—a rale patriot, by showing to the world an Irishman, steadfast, sober, and industrious, with a cooler head and a warmer heart, too, than ever beat in any but an Irishman's bosom. He showed, you see, how Temperance was the heart's core of ould Ireland's glory, and said a deal more that I can't repeat about her peace and virtue and prosperity; and then he drew out a picture of a reformed man—his home, with all the little bits of things comfortable about him; his smiling wife—his innocent babies; and, knowing him so well, Roney, I made my courtesy, and, 'Sir,' says I, 'if you please, will that come about to every one who becomes a true member of the Total Abstinence Society?' 'I'll go bail for it,' says he, 'though, surely, you don't want it: I never saw you overtaken, Mrs. Kinsalla.' 'God forbid, and thank your honour,' says I, 'but you want every one to be a member,' says I.

"'From my heart, for his own good and the honour of old Ireland I do,' he says.

"'Then, sir,' I went on, 'there's Roney Maher, sir, and if he takes and is true to the pledge, sir,'—and I watched to see if the good-humoured twist was on his mouth,—'he'll be fit for work next week, sir; and the evil spirit is out of him so long now, and——'

"'That's enough,' he says, 'bring him here to-morrow, when all who wish to remain in my employ will take the resolution, and I'll try him again.'"

Ellen had entered unperceived by her husband, and knelt by his side.

The appeal was unnecessary; sorrow softens men's hearts; he pressed her to his bosom, while tears coursed each other down his pallid cheeks.

"Ellen, mavourneen—Ellen, aroon," he whispered—"Nelly agra! a coushla! you are right—IT IS NEVER TOO LATE."

* * * * * *

A year has passed since Roney, trusting not in his own strength, entered on a new course of life. Having learned to distrust himself, and to trust in God, he was certain to triumph and he did triumph.

It is Sunday; his wife is taking her two eldest children to early mass, that she may return in time to prepare his dinner the little lads, stout, clean, and ruddy-faced, are watching to call to their mother, so that she may know the moment he—her reclaimed husband—appears in sight. What there is in the cottage betokens care, and that sort of Irish comfort which is easily satisfied; there is, moreover, a cloth on the table: a cunning-looking dog is eyeing the steam of something more savoury than potatoes, that ascends the chimney, and the assured calmness of Ellen's face proves that her heart is at ease. The boys are the same who, hardly a year ago, were compelled, by cruel starvation, to exult—poor children!—that their father being too ill to eat, insured to them another potato. "Hurroo, mammy, there's daddy," exclaimed the eldest; "oh, mammy, his new beaver shines grand in the sun," shouts his brother; "and there's widdy Kinsalla along with him, but he is carrying little Nancy. Now he lets her down, and the darling is running, for he's taken off her Sunday shoes to ease her dawshy feet. And oh, mammy, honey, there's the master himself shaking hands with father before all the people!"

The announcement brought Ellen to the door; she shaded her eyes from the sun with her hand, and having seen what made her heart beat very rapidly in her faithful and gentle bosom, she wiped them more than once with the corner of her apron.

"What ails ye, mammy, honey? sure there's no trouble

over you now," said the eldest boy, climbing to her neck, and pouting his lips, cherry-red, to meet his mother's kiss.

"I hope daddy will be very hungry," he continued, "and Mrs. Kinsalla; for, even if the schoolmaster came in, we've enough dinner for them all."

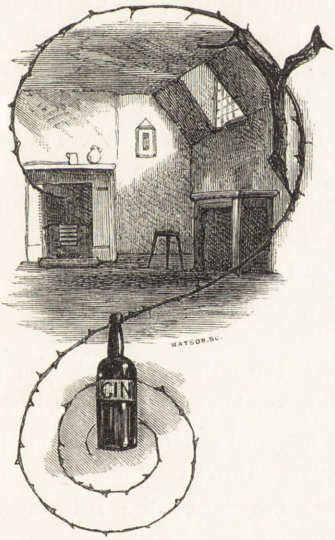
"Say, thank God, my child," said Ellen. "Thank God," repeated the boy. "And shall I say what you do be always saying as well?" "What's that?" "Thank God and the Temperance! Oh! and something else." "What?" "What!—why, "That IT'S NEVER TOO LATE!"

It was a charming picture; one that would have pleased an artist and made a philanthropist happy: but it was no peculiar change, that which had come over the household; it was such only as never fails to be produced by substituting

TEMPERANCE for INTEMPERANCE.



MARY RILEY'S SIMPLE STORY.



YOU could not, I am sure, help being drawn towards Mary Riley. Not by her beauty — that was long ago washed away by tears! Not by her brogue, musical as it was, for its associations might not be as pleasant to you as they always are to me,—but you would have been captivated at a glance by the elevated patience of her expression. She looked, in her mean attire, hallowed by suffering. Her soft grey eyes, shaded by their long black lashes, were still full of tenderness, and her voice was low and soft.

The meeting I wish to describe occurred two years ago at the corner of Pye Street, Westminster, the broken-up corner where you turn into Victoria Street.

A cab had just thrown down her little boy Mike, one of the crack pupils of our ragged school; but Mike is a brave little fellow, and declared he was only "spilt," and not a "taste" the worse—and, to prove this to his trembling mother, he

extemporised several springs, off and on the pavement, and walked on his hands without calling his legs into action, then tried to turn a summersault, but failed.

The cab whirled away after it had done the mischief, as cabs always do, the crowd dispersed, and the mother and son walked along Victoria Street towards that road which is always pre-eminently in a state of mud or dust, the Vauxhall Road. They had not, however, walked many yards, when I perceived that the child was in pain. His mother paused, and I heard him say, "I'm not hurt—it's nothing; just the stiffness out of school. Mother, it's nothing but that and the fright. I own to the fright."

"Oh, my heart's jewel," she exclaimed, "let's turn back to the Westminster Hospital, they'll see what ails you there in five minutes, dear, and not hurt you a bit. Sure, the life was brought into Larry Lycet within those blessed walls, and he's now straight and strong—do come, Mike, avourneen."

She lifted him in her arms, and when his round curly head rested on his mother's shoulder, though he tried to be very brave, he burst into tears.

"Let me go home, mother. I'd rather die with you at home than live there. Sure, they wouldn't let me out when I was in; they'd keep you from me, and me from you. I'll go there to-morrow if I'm not better. Don't send me from you; you wouldn't believe how little I'm hurt: the lady knows me, and knows I'm not hurt."

I could not vouch for that; but the child was so distressed that it was best to take him home, and entreat one of those ministering angels, in the form of a burly doctor who is a real blessing to the poor, to visit him. He was well and at school in a week. Mike is a capital little fellow—half bee, half butterfly—but I must write of his mother.

First, however, I will tell you how I became acquainted with Mike and Mike's mother. I was going home somewhat late

on an autumn evening, when my attention was attracted by two of the city "miserables"—STRAYS OF THE STREETS: they lay couched on the steps of one of the lordly mansions that grace London's most aristocratic suburb—Belgravia. It was a sad picture—that presented to me; but I know it is too common, and I fear that many pass heedlessly by these hapless victims of the misery that so often leads to a life of lawlessness and vice. Having asked a few questions of these children, and being answered by Mike, who considered it his duty to save his little sister the trouble of talking as well as of working, I saw them home, left some means of alleviating present hunger, and called on the next day to obtain information concerning Mike's mother.

She lived in the "third pair back" of a miserable consumptive-looking house Chelsea way. The room was without a chair; the bed was on the floor; there was a box and a stool; a table; a potato, scooped, did duty as candlestick; the grate was fireless; a coffee-pot, battered but bright, stood by its side; and there were also a saucepan; two or three plates on a shelf; a small mug; a cup and saucer; some musk plant flourished in a spoutless teapot, raised by a stick, outside the window; and a little white curtain, darned, but clean, bore silent evidence as to the habits of poor Mary. There were only two unbroken panes in the window, but sunshine passed through them undimmed; the other divisions were patched with many coloured papers. The cupboard door was not more than half closed, but I did not like her to see that I observed its emptiness, or the straw that strayed from under the counterpane that covered the bed. Some slop needlework was on the table—I knew what she received for *that:* no wonder she was so pale and thin—that her wedding-ring hung like a hoop round her finger, and her scant dress hardly concealed her form. Yet she rose with a smile,

and dusted the box that I might "rest." "Sure it was no place for a lady to come to, but some did come now and again, God bless them for it."

I praised Mike: that called a glow into her face. I supposed her husband was dead—then her countenance changed.

"No, ma'am, he is not, thank God."

"What does he do?"

When he is *in it* he is a cabinet-maker, and a better workman never learnt the trade."

"Is he ill?"

"Well, ma'am, he's not just right in himself—sometimes. You see, he is as good a man as ever God put the breath of life into—only—when that weary drink comes over him."

"And then he is unkind to you?"

"No, ma'am, thank God he is not. And if he was, *I'm sure you wouldn't wish me to tell it.* And he's the kindest man living when it's himself that's in it—as I wish he was now—but it's more than a year since I sat eyes on him—or even heard from him!" her voice was tremulous, and she covered her face with her hands, her elbows resting on her knees, rocking, as her countrywomen do, when in trouble.

"And he abandoned you in this state," I said indignantly.

"No, I was better off then; had a tidy room downstairs, and plenty of work; but he couldn't see the fever that hung over me, nor he didn't know that the neighbours would emigrate—sure they wanted us to go with them; but what would he say when he came back—and me not in it? he took blame to himself out of what happened, and would hear no excuse for himself—only ready to tear himself in pieces."

"And what was it?"

"Oh, nothing, because as I have said, 'twasn't *him* but the *drink*, and no one would have been the wiser of it, but for that weary policeman; he had no call to mind it, if I didn't, and

so I told the magistrate; but they will meddle, God forgive them. And he couldn't endure the place afterwards. 'God bless you, Mary,' he says, after kissing the boy; 'God bless you. Pray for me: I'll never come back until I've turned myself out of myself—never till I'm a *changeling*—never till I'm no shame to you.' That cut me worst of all. My glory talking of being a 'shaame to me.'"

"Have you never heard from him?"

"No, lady, I shall never hear from him until I see him—it's no use thinking of it. I never shall, I know that. He'll come when he's—what he saaid."

I supposed it was the old wife-beating story over again, and that her husband's feeelings, as far as pride and shame went, had been mortified, and supplied excuse for abandoning the wreck he had made.

The season was over, and everybody out of town. I paid my farewell visit to Mary, leaving her if not better than I found her, a degree more comfortable, and with sufficient employment to keep out the gaunt wolf "starvation." My little friend Mike could have had a stand in the "Shoeblack Brigade," but he coloured up and hung his head, and then begged to continue making paper-caps and bags in Pye Street, where he had worked himself into the highest class in the school. He certainly was a bright, bold, busy little fellow.

When I returned the autumn was far advanced, and the east wind riding rough-shod over the earth and its inhabitants. I was not able to call on Mary, and I did not like sending. They said at the school that Mike had been some days absent, and absent "without reason." It is wonderful how in London one event proves the grave of another, and one person obliterates another from the memory. One week, two weeks floated away, and I had not seen Mary.

"Please, ma'am," said my maid one evening, "there are two respectable-looking people in the cloak-room waiting to see you."

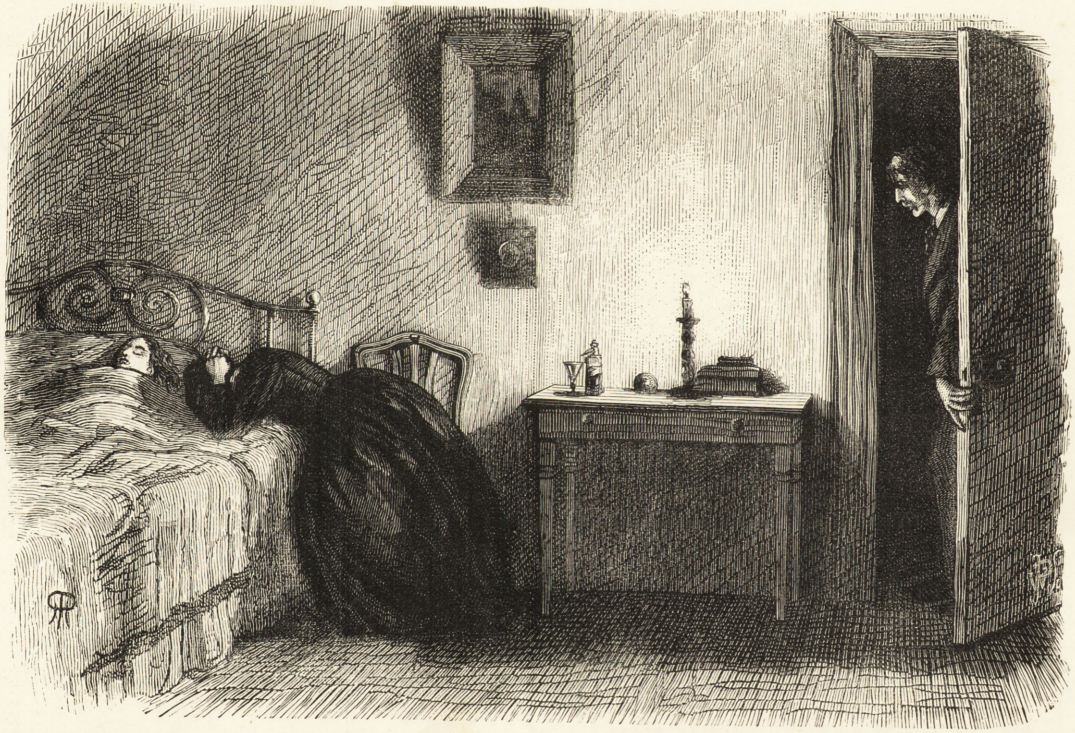
"Did they give their names?"

"No, ma'am——"

"Here he is, my lady," exclaimed a well-known voice; but its tones were tuned by joy, not sorrow." I said he'd come, and he said he'd come back, when he was a *changeling*, as he is—glory be to God! And we're laving London and poverty, to-morrow, and I couldn't help showing him to you who saved me, lady, and gave me the kind look that's sweeter than money, and the gentlemen in Pye Street that's been so good to poor Mike all this sore time. And, thank God, the only grief is, that I may see your face no more. Look at him, ma'am, dear, and let him look at you, that is all I wanted, and to pray the good God to bless you and yours for ever, amen."

No doubt she is doing well in the far-off land to which he took her—still young and still handsome. And now that her husband is "what he said," I have no fear of their prosperity—on earth and happiness in Heaven.





H. R. Robertson.] [W. J. Palmer.

THE WORN THIMBLE.—"AND SO HE CAME IN."

THE WORN THIMBLE;

A STORY OF WOMAN'S DUTY AND WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

PART I.



"NO one, to hear you talk so, Mary," said Ellen Leigh to her sister, Mrs. Hubert, "would ever venture to marry; you worry as much about woman's *duties*, as Mrs. Latham does about woman's *rights*."

Mrs. Hubert looked up from the infant sleeping on her lap, and smiled so sweetly, that Ellen kissed her brow affectionately.

"I will first reply," she said, "to your grave charge, Ellen, —and then we may talk of Mrs. Latham and her rights. I do not think, Ellen, even if I do 'worry,' as you call it, about 'woman's duties,' that my practice would deter any young

lady, who thought rightly, from the state matrimonial: but single women have duties to fulfil, as peremptory as those who vow at God's altar to 'love, honour, and obey.' In whatever sphere she is placed, her sway over the dominion of HOME and HEART is unbounded. Wherever there is a loving and well-organized HOME, it is the child's paradise, to which, when grown into manhood, the mind recurs with thankfulness and love; and no matter how the wiles of the world—nay more, how the *vices* of the world—may, for a time, lure man from the once object of his affection, let woman but continue the ministering angel of good in that home—let her prove the disinterested nature of her duty (bearing in mind, Ellen, that her vow at the altar was unconditional), and sooner or later she will have her reward. She may, I tell you," added Mary, bending over her child to conceal her emotion, "she may close her eyes with the blessed conviction, that she has been made the means of her husband's salvation! Now, sister, I ask you, as a Christian woman, what earthly distinction—what fame—what glory—can equal that?"

"You are always right, Mary, and I know that your *example*, even more than your precept, has wrought wonders, not only in your own home, but beyond it. Edward says it fertilizes as it flows; and he said to-day he hoped you would tell me all the past, as it would be a good lesson—should I change my name," added Ellen, blushing, "which might be, you know."

Mrs. Hubert and her sister belonged, by right of birth, to the upper circle of the middle class; but not being esteemed so "well off as they used to be," it was a question whether Mr. and Mrs. Hubert had not descended to a lower division of the mysterious round. Mr. Hubert at one time "dashed" at the upper circle of the upper class, as men do who ride a hack in Hyde Park, and know (by sight) the leaders of the male and female aristocracy—at least such of them as daily

display their beautiful horses in the ride and drive. Fortunately for him, he "fell in love" with Mary Leigh; and, without at all appreciating her character, he married her for the beauty and grace, the mingled sweetness and sentiment, that were as remarkable, in their way, as the higher and nobler qualities of her mind. They had not been married more than a year, when Mary was called upon to put into practice the theory she had learned from her mother.

"Edward is late to-night," said Ellen to her sister.

"He is," replied Mary, "but I am now never uneasy at his remaining out late."

"What a blessing that is," said Ellen. "I remember the anxious hours you used to pass, and how very different he was when sober, and when under the influence of wine: no servant was then permitted to remain up for 'the master;' I used to hear your light step grow heavier as it neared the door, echoed by a half-stifled sigh, deep and suffocating; and your voice *acting* a cheerful welcome."

"Not acting," interrupted Mary; "I was always too happy to see him to affect 'seeming.'"

"His angry or querulous tones," continued her sister, "contrasted sadly with your kind pleadings that he would go to bed, and instead of that, worn out as you were at one, two, or three, in the morning, he would have you *sing;* and many and many a time you have sung him to sleep on the sofa, and then watched weeping by his side. Oh, Mary, those were sad times!"

Mary made no observation; she was turning his dressing-gown at the fire. Ellen continued: "And often he would insist upon seeing the children, and drag them from their beds, or call the servants up, or bring a couple of boon companions home with him, and insist on your entertaining them. I never thought you could have taught him TEMPERANCE."

"Go on," said Mary. Her sister was aroused to the folly, if not the cruelty, of the reminiscence by the tone of voice.

"Go on," repeated the still lovely wife; "all that you have stated is true. I could not prevent your seeing so much of the suffering that left me a shattered shadow on the brink of the grave, and I permit you to recapitulate, because I hope it may deter you from marrying until convinced that you never can be subjected to the grievous trials that spring from one sad source. Ellen, you would not have borne them as I did. And yet, the man you are about to marry has a much greater tendency to that master crime than Edward ever had. The woman who marries even a *moderate* drinker must prepare to endure more than I could tell you during the longest day of June. She can know no peace, enjoy no security either for life or property. She cannot tell when *moderation* may be urged into *intoxication*, when the *half* glass of to-day may become the *whole* one of to-morrow. She cannot tell when it may overflow, or to what crime its overflowing may lead. Society has, at last, begun to consider it unmanly to drink to *excess;* but until we women RESOLVE that the man who drinks at all, is unworthy of our affection——"

"Stop, Mary," exclaimed Ellen, "you did not think Edward unworthy your affection on that ground; on the contrary, the worse he became, the more unfortunate he grew, the more closely you watched over him. I knew so much at all events."

"He was my husband then—that was my duty," she replied. "Had he been condemned to the scaffold I would have sat to console him at its foot; but that only makes me see the more clearly, that our influence should be exerted against this well-bred evil of society, *before* we bind ourselves to its endurance. It is sufficiently degrading to the dignity of man to see him in the earlier stages of inebriety; but the stronger and coarser

features of the self-imposed insanity are reserved for his home. If you remember so accurately all I endured when poor Edward considered himself '*a moderate drinker*,' contrast the past with the present—but hush! *that* is his step upon the pavement."

PART II.

MARY was right; the house was in a quiet sort of bustle in a moment. Before the knocker could be raised, or the bell rung, there was a rush up the kitchen stairs; the bullfinch that seemed to have been sleeping shook its feathers, and rocking its little black poll along the wires of its cage, uttered a few clearing notes, preparatory to the whistle its master loved. The little dog that started out of the folds of the dressing-gown where it had been curled up somehow, ran down stairs screaming its welcome. Even Ellen arose, and held the slippers to the warm blaze, while Mary met her husband on the landing, and they entered the room together, his arm passed as lovingly, nay more lovingly, round her waist than when, seven years before, he led her to a more splendid home than that they now illumined by their happiness.

Edward Hubert's bearing was that of a gentleman, but his features, though lighted up, were heavily lined. It is only when the *whole* of a man's life has been blameless, and almost untouched by sorrow, that the spring of life lingers on the brow, and he looks younger—or as young as he really is. Edward appeared to be ten years older than his years.

"All well—all the long, long day?" he inquired. "Dear Mary, has anything disturbed you? the time when I caused you anxiety has passed, but I remember its marks and tokens, and I think those brows have been more closely drawn together than usual to-day; is baby well?"

"Quite, thank God!"

"Down, Pink—what a fellow you are—and Bully, too, whistling his waltz: thank you, Ellen, the slippers are quite warm. I often," he continued, "when I enter this happy scene, wonder why I was spared to partake of it—it is a proof of abiding mercy in all things. Something *has* been the matter to-day," he added, gazing affectionately into his wife's face. "I know there has. What letter is that?"

"Mary never tells me who her letters are from," said the fretful Ellen, "so I cannot explain."

"*Never?*" repeated Mary reproachfully.

"Well, not *often.*"

"Not *always*, you would say. Now you never asked who that came from, Ellen, though a *little bit* of your female curiosity peeped forth; for, before I opened it, you took it up, turned it over, and seeing it was written on foolscap, and sealed with a THIMBLE, you did not inquire concerning its contents."

Ellen smiled, and shook her head. "You are a witch, Mary; I certainly thought you had some very shabby correspondent."

"Look again at the seal," answered Mrs. Hubert, when Edward was comfortably seated in the arm-chair, and little Pink curled up at his feet. "Look again at the seal—it has its interest and its history—it may be called the coat of arms of the poor sempstress! A WORN-OUT THIMBLE! Observe, one, two, three of the indentations are perforated—that is, by the head of the needle. The writer cannot be rich, or she would have got a new thimble. The seal, then, tells a tale of industry and narrow means; and yet the woman whose needle flew from that thimble, from morning till night, and often from night till morning, is a true heroine! Yes, Ellen, she knows nothing of '*rights*,' except the rights and righteousness of God's law."

"The letter, then, is from the widow Barnes," said Mr. Hubert. "And her son," he added in an eager tone—

"Is saved, and returning—that is quite certain. I longed to tell you!"

"Thank God!" he murmured. "The thimble, Mary, will have more holes the next time she writes, *unless we can manage to get her another.*"

"And what is the story after all?" said Ellen.

"Nothing very remarkable," answered Edward, "except as an instance of the power of female influence in the lower class—an influence extending over the bye-ways of the world—turning its impure currents into pure streams—effecting a moral revolution in hearts that could scarcely be considered human. Have you patience to hear what cannot be considered a story, only a record of humble life? You say you have. She, who is now the widow Barnes, married a man much older than herself, and whom she did not love; but because her parents were very poor, and her ancient lover promised to support them, 'Auld Robin Gray' was done into actual prose. This match could only be happy as a triumph of duty; and even that fails to be what it ought to be, when you remember that it is a sin to give a hand without a heart; and a sin which, no matter what the motive, brings its punishment. Many volumes have been written, and justly, on the errors of love; but folios could be penned on the evils induced by its absence. However, Mrs. Barnes was so good a wife that no ordinary observer could have discovered she was prompted by duty and not affection—the good result for a time was his, the suffering hers. She bore his ill-temper, his harshness, admirably; but when she found he was undermining, both by precept and example, the good principles she had laboured to teach her children, the difficulties of her position thickened around her; and though her spirits flagged, her resolution in the right

remained unchanged. And while her moral precepts were still more strengthened by example, her attention and gentleness towards her husband never lessened in consequence of his ill-usage, or still worse, the evil habits in which he indulged.

"The children were all sickly from their birth; disease is the sure inheritance of parents who are drunkards. In spite of all the good and pure woman could do, the daughter was early taught to regard drink not as a poison but as a luxury; she was her father's messenger to the public house, and, perhaps, her earliest lesson—one that bore its frequent fruitage, Death—was learned with the first sip of the father's beer.

"All the efforts of the mother were in vain. The lowest degradation of poverty soon visited—nay, took possession of the miserable apartment they called their "home;" but I will not appal you by the picture; I will rather turn to its brighter side.

"She must have been, indeed, very low when her children were in rags; when starvation stared her in the face, and their miserable room was not only without fire, but without a bed. But such is always the fate of the drunkard's family; and of such a character, will always be his home.

"At length he committed a crime that procured him a year's imprisonment; but three months after the sentence was put in force his health gave way, and he was placed in the infirmary of the jail. After much delay, and using the not inconsiderable influence which her good character had procured her, Mrs. Barnes got permission to attend upon him in the capacity of infirmary night nurse; and it was here that her character shone forth in the mild power of its strength. The hospital matron assured Mary, who at that time was more interested about her than I was, that Mrs. Barnes was nurse, physician, and chaplain to the whole ward.

Her kindness was so great, that the patients said they never minded her preaching—which in fact proved that it ceased to be disagreeable to them, and that what they would not hear from others, they listened to with pleasure from her. While she smoothed the pillow of suffering with her kindly hands, she managed to slide in a word or two of consolation or hope, which in due season produced its fruit; and almost for the first time her husband appreciated the worth which he saw appreciated by others. His spirit, now lingering, now reviving, then sinking again, clung, during its numbered hours, to her who followed him into disgrace, which, though she did not share, she diminished.

"How she lived through these sad months, we can hardly tell; for her days were given to her children—one an idiot, another a fine intelligent headstrong boy, and also a pale delicate daughter—they were devoted, as the days of the poor must be, to their children, in a mingling of labour and carefulness; and to enter her little cottage in the morning you would never have fancied the mistress had been absent during the night. The pale daughter always sat where the sunbeams fell, her needle plying diligently, if not swiftly; the idiot stroked his cat, and looked clean and happy, and the very frugal meal that awaited James's return from the trade where his mother's good conduct had stood him in stead of an apprentice fee, was neatly placed on the little table. He felt his father's disgrace with the truest bitterness, and could ill reconcile himself to the course his mother adopted;—but she gained strength 'from above,' and night after night had her reward in being welcomed at last as a ministering angel, not only by her dying and penitent husband, but by others steeped even more deeply than he was in sin and wickedness. Her voice whispered through the ward in praise and prayer during the midnight hours, never disturbing a sleeper and yet teaching the unwilling watcher patience and resigna-

tion. We have in our office at this moment a man as porter, in whom experience has induced us to place entire confidence, who was first taught to think—first made to feel his lost condition, by the words of that humble woman, spoken within the walls of a prison! Mary remembers how moved we were, before you came to live altogether with us, Ellen, by her account of her husband's death; and how her simple way of recording his penitence, and invoking blessings on her as the means of his salvation, touched us. The governor of the jail offered her any terms she pleased, if she would continue as turnkey to a female ward; but she preferred remaining with her children. I remember its being pointed out to her that she would have three times the sum she could earn by her needle to divide among them; yet she replied, with her usual sound sense and good judgment,—'But my eyes would not be over them, and how could I answer for that to my God at the last day?' Poor as she is, she has been the guiding and guardian angel of many a feeble spirit. No matter how she was laughed at by some, or censured by others, she turned 'neither to the right hand nor to the left.' Before the TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT caused, first the poor, and then the rich, to look at the glass of spirits and the sparkling wine steadily, and say to them, 'ANATHEMA!' she got up, in the little court wherein she dwelt after her daughter's death——"

"You never told me her daughter died," said Ellen, whose womanly nature became interested in the simple record, despite the foolscap and the thimble seal.

"Oh yes—the poor girl died, and the mother sorrowed, but she knew

> 'They are not lost,
> Who leave their parents for the calm of heaven.'

She knew this, and the blessing that had changed its character did not make her think less of the blessings she retained. The

idiot boy, so helpless, that but for his mother's watchfulness and love, he would have been loathsome to those who went near him—this poor creature, she said, was company for her by day and night when James was absent.—But this is wandering :: convinced by her jail experience that *Intemperance* is the root of sin, as well as shame, she had got together, I should tell you, in the court wherein she dwelt, a little band of persons, who, convinced in a degree by her arguments of the evil of *Intoxication*, and the perils of *moderate drinking*, agreed to do without their single 'luxury' of beer or spirits, 'for three months,' just to try if Widow Barnes's 'plan had any good in it.' She was a capital example of the safety and efficiency of the total abstinence system. Her complexion had lost little of its rose or its lily; the spirit of universal benevolence diffused a kindness over all she said and did, and nothing has more power over rich and poor than the earnestness of truth; they all knew, such an 'all' as they were, dingy and stalwart coal-heavers, small half-toasted sweeps, crimped-up laundry women, who scalded their throats as much as they did their hands, only with more dangerous fluid than that concocted of soda and potash—all confessed, *when sober*, that Widow Barnes never thought a thought for herself, but always for the good of others: what they said of her, and to her, when they were *not sober*, she never cared for. Nothing, notwithstanding what you, Ellen, would call the *prestige* which accompanied the poor sempstress, can be imagined more troublesome than her half unwilling allies in this new cause. They would break their bonds, and then, after a week's idleness and vice, would come sneaking back to her, certain of a hot cup of coffee, to know if she'd 'take their promise again'—which she never refused to do—saying, to keep them sober for a week was something, no one knew what good a week's thinking might do one—some time or other.

"Widow Barnes at that time had but little fear that her son would fall into the habit which she held in so much terror; seeing, as she said truly, that all her jail experience convinced her that intoxication was the foundation of much practical sin. And to my shame be it spoken, I it was who first tempted James to break the simple pledge he had given to his mother. The young man was fitting up some shelves in my office, and having got wet by coming there, trembling with cold, his feet sopped in snow, I forced upon him a glass of brandy. I respected his mother, though I thought her a little *insane* in her new theory; but I certainly did not know the horror she entertained of his touching strong drink."

"And even if you had at that time," said Ellen, "you would have endeavoured still more to laugh him out of it."

Mary looked reprovingly at her sister.

"She is right, love; at that time sobriety was *a reproach to my own practice.* Whenever I hear a gentleman inveighing against the Temperance Cause, I feel assured that he considers that cause as a reproach to his practice—sin always endeavours to make sinners: the evil spirit is not content until it takes unto itself 'seven other spirits' not better but worse. James, poor fellow, was warmed, '*comforted*,' as he called it, by the brandy, but soon again chilled. I was called out of the room, and told him to repeat the dose if he felt inclined; he did so, and in an hour or two I found him in a state of helpless intoxication. I was then ashamed of myself; I knew his mother was one of Mary's favourites, and if she heard it I was certain of a few words, only harsh from their being true; but something again called me away, and I left my victim, desiring the servant to see him safe home. Stupified as James was, he would not go home; he went to a public-house to get sober! but instead of that he got into a quarrel, and when he partially recovered his senses he found himself in the cell of a station-

house !—there in the grey cold light of a winter's morning he was discovered by his poor mother. The intelligent, high-spirited young tradesman was fined for being 'drunk and disorderly,' and discharged, because his mother pledged her blankets to prevent his being again disgraced by imprisonment! James Barnes noted as drunk and disorderly gave scope to scoffers; such always rejoice in the tripping of their betters; and the widow's temper was sorely tried by those who taunted her for the result of *my* temptation. James felt and reasoned, but he reasoned on wrong principles; he moodily insisted that there was no use *now* in his perpetual sobriety—no one would give him credit for it. Circumstances effected a great change in myself a short time after this; and, in an agony of self-reproach, I sent for him to do away, if possible, the evil I had done. All the reasoning I could use, however, failed to produce the effect I so earnestly and ardently desired; his sensitive nature had lost the self-respect which I found had, as is often the case, been the only bar between him and an inclination, not exactly for drinking, but for the singing, the amusement, the excitement which company brings. He stept into a chaos; he had formed a connection which his mother feared might end in his marrying a woman without character—and all this was my doing. I was not at that time a good specimen of the effect of female influence; I was only in my probation; and James had too recently seen me in a state of excitement to have much faith in my exhortation. His poor mother thanked me, with tears in her eyes, for my advice, and uttered no word of reproach for what I had led him into. I wish gentlemen would take into consideration the evil done by a glass of strong drink, coming as it does, from the hand of gentility, with double danger of evil. However fond the host may be of his 'aged Port,' or 'old Madeira,' he is not disposed to overlook the intoxication of his servant; he

expects *him* to be proof against the temptation to which he himself yields; he expects *him* to take the 'so much'—which he gives or permits—to wish for 'no more:' he puts the poison to his lips, and yet expects his resolution will be proof against it.

"'My coachman has grown quite a drunkard,' said a friend to me the other day, 'I wish you would get him to join the Temperance people again.' I reminded him that I had heard him laugh the coachman out of his pledge; upon which he said he wished he would take it again; if he did not he must lose his place; he had already broken the knees of his cab horse—very odd he could not understand *moderation*, and so forth.

"But to return to Mrs. Barnes.

"James became worse and worse: so bad that his mother had the torture of seeing several of her temperance band fall off discomfited, because she had not influence over her own child, and because she would permit his coming to her at all times, drunk or sober. 'I shall never reform him if I shut my door against him,' she would say; 'and no matter what he does, he is still my child.' At last James married the unfortunate girl, whom, afterwards, he found he could not live with; and to get rid of his burden, he enlisted, leaving the miserable creature behind.

"'If he has deserted her,' said the widow, 'she is his wife, and will soon be a mother. Men won't bear aggravation, however they aggravate others; the poor thing was once innocent, and has still a lovely face; and she has hardly ceased crying since he went away. I have asked her home, and told her she should never want half of my bread, if she kept sober; and indeed,' added the widow, 'if she did not, I could not turn her out in that state to worse vice. I always think of my prison lessons, and believe that our Saviour knew best, when instead of

leaving the sinner in her shame, or pronouncing her accursed, he bade her "go and sin no more." I never knew kindness fail to do the good work sooner or later with any one. People are mightily afraid that showing common humanity to sinners will strengthen them in sin; they were never,' persisted Mrs. Barnes, 'more wrong in their lives:—the HEART bitterness of sin will rise to the sinners' lips till the day of death—it will never leave the heart or the eye without heaviness. Women are often lost through unkindness,' quoth the widow, 'but never regained by it.'"

"What do you say to that, Ellen?" inquired Edward, directly appealing to her.

"It is hardly a question I can answer," she replied.

"There is something wrong in a state of society," said Mary, "which prevents women seeking to reform women; for I am persuaded that the spirit of true reformation (in all matters appertaining to society) is with *us*. I am often perplexed how to act towards our erring sisters, and I do not wonder, Edward, at Ellen's being unable to answer your question, while I quite think that women are often lost by unkindness. Poor Mrs. Barnes for a time certainly brought a scourge into her quiet room—*for a time!*—but at last the unfortunate creature's temper and habits yielded to the true spirit of Christian charity, and her duty and devotion to her benefactor were most beautiful to witness. But her days were numbered, and a more sincere penitent never resigned her spirit to its Redeemer. She left the widow another charge, an infant not six weeks old, and with her new duty the *poor* woman acquired new energy. The care of the helpless baby seemed to renew the days of her youth, and the idiot uncle proved a capital nurse. In short, the cloud was turning its silver lining upon our humble friend, when a new light burst upon her in the shape of a letter from her son in Scinde."

PART III.

"WIDOW BARNES came to me one morning," said Edward in continuation, "with an open letter in her trembling hand: 'See the wisdom of God in this, sir,' she exclaimed; 'look here, how he turns the evil into good. My son, sir, has had the fever, and been mercifully preserved; you can read, sir, where he says that in the night watch in that far country the truth came unto him, and all his mother used to dwell upon entered his heart, while her voice sounded stronger to his memory than ever it had done to his ear. He thought much, too, upon all his mother had said about the evil consequences that result from the use of *Strong Drinks*, and of the numerous advantages to health—to intellect—to character—to comfort—to usefulness, that would be sure, with the blessing of Providence, to follow in the train of *Total Abstinence* from strong drink; and the result has been most delightful: not only has he had power to abstain himself, but he has caused others to do the same, and has been promoted because of his sobriety—is not that a blessed hearing? because of his sobriety he has regained his self-respect—and is respected by others. And if he lives to return, or even if he does not, have I not the knowledge that he is a new man?' And so she ran on, poor creature, her eyes and heart overflowing together. He sent her a remittance, and for a time—the first time in her life—she was independent; not that she had money of her own, but she was out of debt.

"The Temperance movement was heard of from shore to shore; she never sought any distinction for herself by saying she was one of the first who stirred in it: but many of her poor neighbours remembered it, and recalled it. She toiled on unceasingly in the good cause, and her greatest delight was in a Temperance meeting. I have seen her eyes streaming over

with tears of joy while she exclaimed, 'To think I should live to see this!'

"At length came the account of the war; of the numbers killed; of the regiments that had greatly suffered; and that her son's regiment had been nearly hewn to pieces. That was almost more than she could endure. She sat with her arms clasped round her son's child for more than two hours, and the little creature wept with her from pure sympathy. When it became noised abroad that Widow Barnes's son had been killed, it was 'grand' to see the number of her own class who offered her consolation. Many hard-working hands knocked at her door; many dark and dusky faces wiped away tears occasioned by her trouble; and groups of humble people in the little court recalled her patience—her endurance—her charity—her good example. She said she was comforted, and no repining words passed her lips; but in a fortnight her step had grown feeble and her hair grey. We found out, after the lapse of some weeks, that Sergeant Barnes had lost an arm, and been otherwise badly wounded. 'If God spared him,' she would say, 'I could work for him still.' There have been times when I met that pale, patient woman—when I have endured the most humiliating self-reproach; tracing her later griefs to their source, I felt that I had originated much of the sorrow from which she suffered. If it had not been for my temptation, her son would have advanced himself by his energy and industry without leaving England. To make the case worse, I was plunged into difficulties of my own creating, just at the time when she most needed help; and if it had not been, Ellen, for your dear sister's thought and care, for the influence which her virtues gained over my wayward nature, the Widow Barnes's son would not have been the only victim to a habit that is ever a shame and a curse—that has no excuse——"

"I fear," said Ellen, "it has the excuse of ancient *custom*."

"So had all sorts of tortures, in the old times of war and wassail, the 'good old times' of which we hear so much—the 'rare old times!' when servants' ears were nailed to pillories without the law's command—simply at the pleasure of their masters; when men wore serf's collars, and nobles could hardly write their names; when women were liable to be insulted by drunken brawlers in the streets, and within the sanctuary of their own homes. Rare times, Ellen, for slavery—for ignorance—for torture—for impiety, and all sorts of darkness, as well as the orgies of war and wassail; we condemn all this, and yet suffer the great *stimulant to crime* to sit in crystal and gold upon our boards; we punish the *victim* and sanction the *vice*. As a New Zealander, who was reproved for intoxication, once said to his master: 'Ah, sir! you punish poor ignorant man for *drink* the rum—why for you no punish man who *make* the rum?' Thousands of our fellow-creatures are starving around us, and yet we permit the *food* that could relieve their wants to be converted into *poison*. We, the enlighteners of the world, break the fetters of foreign slavery, while we rivet our own chains."

"I have often thought," said Ellen, in whose nature there was a stronger leaven of sarcasm than was fitting, "I have often thought that Mary could deliver an excellent lecture on Temperance; it would surely 'take,' as the phrase goes; and *a lady* administering the pledge would be something quite new."

"I am too happy to be angry with you, Ellen," replied her brother-in-law—"too grateful for wholesale blessings, to care for petty annoyances. I know you do not mean what you say; you argue for victory, not truth. As you grow wiser you will see that the achievement of TRUTH is the great victory of our lives. I am too happy to-night to be angry!—The fate of James Barnes hangs heavily around my heart, but since his life

is spared, we must endeavour to make that life pass comfortably. His mother's influence will extend amazingly—it will increase four-fold—and it is indeed a great encouragement to sow good seed, and strengthen the belief that those who enter the vineyard, even at the eleventh hour, will receive according to their Lord's pleasure rather than their own deserts. As to my Mary turning preacher, her whole life has been an illustration of that Charity which suffereth long and is kind—My dear one!" he continued, taking her hand and pressing it with as much devotion as respect to his lips, "this little hand has wielded the sceptre of domestic sway as befits a Christian woman; the RING I passed upon this finger has been, indeed and in truth, my Amulet. Can I ever forget the time when overwhelmed by difficulties that were of my own creation, her influence pointed out the right path? Her family entreated her to retain her own fortune, and leave me to struggle through the adversity I had earned. On the one side were the luxuries of life, and on the other a husband seeking occasional relief from thought in intoxication; lacking all courage; ashamed to look at his shadow in the glass—agitated by the first advances of *delirium tremens*—yielding to other influences that might have roused the most indignant passion in any other woman: 'Can you trust a drunkard?' they shouted in her aching ears.—'No,' said Mary, 'I cannot, but I can trust myself in the performance of my duty.'"

And that was her lure from vice: it was thus she saved me not only from ruin on earth, but from that which banishes hope in Heaven and trust in God. Women of all ranks may take her as an example; let them follow her plan, and there will be an almost certainty of success. Hers was a very simple rule: her precept and practice may be told in two words—PERSUASION and PRAYER.

"But," said Mary, addressing her sister, "do not fail to

remember this—he was my husband; I had given a promise to his Master and mine, and this was the contract I made when I stood by his side at the altar: To obey him, and serve him, love, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep me only unto him, so long as we both shall live.'

"You, Ellen, are not yet a wife. Do for him you love before you wed that which it was my duty to do after marriage: and yours will be even a happier destiny than mine has been."

The wife interrupted the husband:—

"I recall," she said, "the happy, yet sad evening, from which I date my happiness; although I then lost the only babe with which it pleased God to give me—and to take from me. I was kneeling by the side of the bed in which it lay—alas! never to leave it; stealthily, as if he came as a thief, HE ENTERED THE ROOM, and he saw my utter wretchedness. We had to endure poverty, and were on the brink of shame; our little one was leaving us for the home where neither trouble nor sorrow come, and——"

"Enough, dear wife," resumed the husband; "you say, well, that over the day of our direst grief came the sun-break of hope; for from that day dates the change that has made us both happy.

"When I thought myself a ruined man, I found I stood on firmer ground than ever. And how was this? Whatever was not settled on her children she sacrificed to me; this saved my credit, for her aid was as wise as generous; and, in return, not with the authority she had a right to assume as a benefactor, but on her knees—her eyes overflowing with the tears of supplication, she entreated me to *abandon the wine-cup—to* PLEDGE *myself to abstain from it, altogether and at once.* She insisted that we should

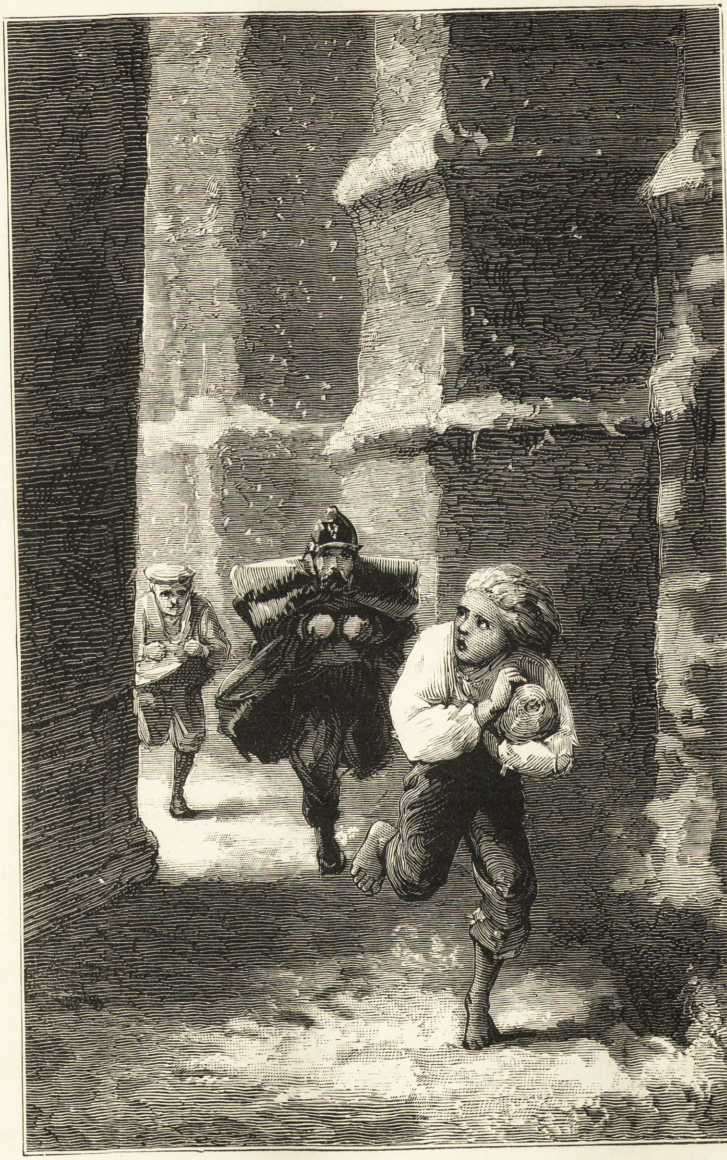
take the pledge together. 'In six months,' said the clergyman whose book I signed, 'that hand will have ceased to tremble.' In *three* months my hand was steady, and my sight clear. I had shunned my former companions as a culprit: I now met them as a conqueror. They soon let me alone. They saw that my spirits were better, and my wit more sparkling than ever. I saw them pass wearily by my window, their pallid cheeks and heavy eyes telling the tale of a night of *moderate* drinking. I did this again and again, and at last one by one, they looked in upon me, and began to say there was '*something*' in what Edward Hubert said—for he did much more than they could—he was earlier up, and later in bed; yet he looked well; and, simply by using the *reflection* of the influence by which my gentle wife had conquered, I conquered in my turn; all reflected, and some have joined the rational bands of Temperance. When I sat amongst them, I wondered if I had been like them once—if I had become maudlin or noisy like some—stupid, and confused, and quarrelsome like others. I speak warmly—for I feel warmly—I feel still more, that if we should ever *return* to the vice by which we are degraded in the eyes of the thinking world, it will be because FEMALE INFLUENCE has failed to emulate the example of——'

"The Widow Barnes!" interrupted his wife, as she pointed to the time-piece.

"How late it is," exclaimed Edward; "but not too late to impress upon our sister's mind the great opportunity which the present state of society affords to the women of England of exerting that influence for the benefit of all around them. Let them cling to the Temperance movement—which, next to Christianity, fixes their position in the scale of rational existence—and they will thus be instrumental in securing the rising generation from a cruel and barbarous vice. I would entreat every woman also, when she has succeeded in prevail-

ing on her husband, brother, or father, to join the faithful band of Temperance reformers, to endeavour by every means in her power to increase their *home comforts*. We are sad animals after all, I fear, Mary; but the world has its tithe and toll of all comforts, and we are allowed, nay commanded, to enjoy the beauties of the world—its fragrance—its music—its luxuries—when they do not stand in the way of higher pursuits, and when they do not render us selfish, or prevent us from ministering to the wants and necessities of others. When WOMAN'S INFLUENCE has succeeded in *removing* the cup of intoxication, let her seek to replace it by the suggestion—or even the creation—of a new pleasure; and thus let her prove that her opposition was to indulgence in that habit which is the prolific source of evil, and not aught that can be necessary —useful—pure—lovely—or of good report!"





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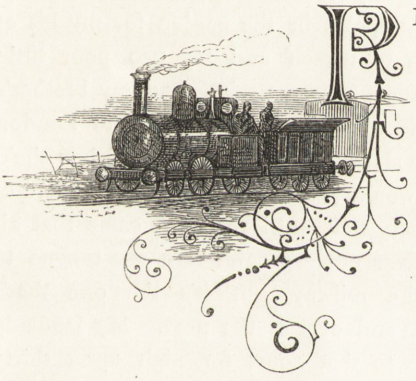
REST AND BE THANKFUL.—THE FIRST THEFT.

REST AND BE THANKFUL.



REST AND BE THANKFUL! Ay, but when and where? Simple enough for those who can rest where—and be thankful when — they please; whom "pleasure, ease, and affluence surround;" whose choice may be divided between Tyburnia and Belgravia; and to whom rent and taxes are matters of indifference. But where shall the poor "rest," and how shall they be "thankful?"

The weighty subject is now being treated by others so much better than I can treat it, that I may leave it to them. My purpose is merely and briefly to illustrate one of our most terrible social evils, by recording a conversation I had with an old Irish woman whom I have known for quite twenty years; one of those who, when I first employed her, could "turn her hand to anything." Clear-headed, true, and trustworthy, she will ever be—though she has passed through a long life since her husband's death, "floundering" from one sorrow into another, the chiefest being a bad and cruel daughter, who deserted her own children; they must have perished but for the clinging love of their grandmother, who has been com-

pelled by "circumstances over which she has no controul," to leave the shed—to quote her own words, "she broke her heart under for as good as three years, come Martimus—and look out for shelter"—where she will probably have to repeat the same procedure ere long.

"We had a pretty tidy back-room," she said, "that kept the rain out—barring it was very bad intirely—until lately; and the use of the shed and poles in the garden for my bit of washing, and the room to myself and my two poor little grandchildren, for eighteenpence a week. And my brother's widdy—a very quiet, decent woman, who comes to London now and agin about the slops she do be making—when she'd have to stay the night, would give me twopence for a share of the bed; that was all very well, until the word came that all in the court were to clear out. I can't turn my tongue to speak the name of the railway, but it's the one that's underground one minute and over it the next. My landlady had been chief mangle to that court for nigh upon thirty years. She mangled all the people in it, and about it, quiet people enough; and though I was sorry for meeself, I was more sorry for the poor old lady when she was bundled out, clinging round her old mangle, and unable to find a room that would take in her and it, that was her bread; but it was a big and noisy mangle, and a landlady may make a noise when a lodger mustn't. I believe the people at the head of the upsetting gave her two or three pounds compensation. But we lodgers just got the wind of the word, and away—there were hundreds of us that same time that could not get a room; first, because of the scarcity of rooms; and, secondly, because of their dearness. And the greater the want the higher grew the rents. There was one poor girl who had known better days, and my heart ached for her. I had not been able to get a room then, only a friend I had let me and the children sleep

under the counter of her little shop for awhile: the poor girl I mentioned had been brought up in decency; she worked beautifully at her needle, until the cough took the strength out of her. She wouldn't turn her face towards the workhouse—small blame to her—and could not get a room, or half a one; and if she could have got it, she could not pay the rent they asked—nothing under three-and-six, fit for a pig. So, when we were all turned, I may say, into the street, she sat still enough under the archway that led into the court—she had worn herself out the whole week looking for a lodging. One of my comarades—a decent woman, but rough—went to her, 'Betsey, a-vick,' she said, 'come with me. I've got a beautiful room, and you can have the warm corner, and the seat in the window to do your work, and you shall pay me only a shilling a week.'

"I was standing by, and saw the quick flush on the poor girl's cheek, and she looked up so happy.

"'God bless you, Mrs. Joyce,' she said; 'but where am I to sleep?'

"'With me, and little Peg, that's the best we can do.'

"'That's very good of you. Will there be no one else in the room at night?'

"'Only my two sons. It's a fine big room, and they'll have a bed to themselves.'

"The colour faded from poor Betsey's face.

"'Thank you, Mrs. Joyce,' she said. 'My cough would disturb you at night.'

"'That's not it,' answered Mrs. Joyce. 'You don't like the boys in the room. But we can't help it: there's many has to put up with worse than that. We should be only six. Why, there's hundreds, may be thousands, since these turn-outs, who will be thankful to be seven or eight, or may be more, in a room of a night, and no question as to whether they're men or

women—only get beds, such as they are, on the floor. I don't much mind the boys in the room.'

"'Very likely,' said she: 'they're your sons, Mrs. Joyce. But, even so, it's hard lines for you who had three rooms.'

"'Ay, indeed,' interrupted Mrs. Joyce, who is mighty nimble on the tongue; 'and I'm forced to pay as much for the one as I did for the three, but the truth is, the poor are herded together like beasts of the field; and there's a deal of preaching against the immorality of the lower orders, but it seems easier to preach against than to prevent it. Well, Betsey, I made you the only offer I could make you, with all my heart. So you must take it or lave it.'

"'Thank you kindly,' she said, sitting down again under the archway, and that was all I saw of her."

"I wish you could find her out, Mrs. Leary," I said. "Rooms are cheaper in Notting Hill."

"She'll never want a room again," said my informant. "That night I was told seven or eight good, honest, hard-working girls lay down to try for an hour or two to forget the world they were in (and Betsey was one of them), in the milkman's shed; those milk-people were mighty good intirely to the women and children for many a night; but Betsey's cough got worse, and Mrs. Doose, the milkwoman, persuaded her to go into the hospital. But, poor Bessie! in a week's time knew the differ betwixt earth and heaven."

That was my old charwoman's poetic way of saying that the young sempstress died in the hospital.

"But now you have a room, and all to yourself," I said.

"Oh yes, ma'am, God be praised; though it's a cupboard you'd call it, on the top of the house in the roof; it's quite ten foot square, and has a window that opens and shuts. And the landlady's a teetotaller, and mighty decent, and quiet; though, before she was that, she was, I heard tell, such a tear

and-ounty! I pay her two-and-sixpence a week, and must dry my bits of rags on a rope in my room; and, indeed, little Anty, that's my youngest grandchild, is never well since in it we've been: and I've been forced to give up the bit of washing I had to do for ould customers; I could not do it or get it up as I used: no place to set the poor broken-hearted wash-tub but in that bit of a room, and turn the bed into an ironing-board—and the bits of things we wash for ourselves. The damp from them strikes on little Anty, who catches everything going except good luck, poor child. And the overcrowding in every room in the house is terrible. Indeed, Betsey is well out of such a world; and any one who has even the relics of *ould dacensy* about them, could hardly be blamed for seeking a bed in the river rather than in the lodgings the poor have been driven into."

"Oh, Mrs. Leary!" I exclaimed. "I never thought you would say anything so wicked. How can you have such a thought?"

"Indeed, I don't know, ma'am, dear; it's not right, I know that; but what the poor have gone through lately, in many and many a place, where they've no rest, nor anything to be thankful for, seems to have changed those I thought God-fearing people into open sinners. Many lie down in what may be called a roofed thoroughfare, weary and worn from a hard day's work; and they rise up weary and worn, often, while shame lasts, ashamed to look each other in the face. How can they kneel down and pray, with strange eyes staring at them, and strange lips mocking them? How could I keep my two poor grandchildren to their duty, unless I had them to myself, morning and evening, for *a word with God?* How can poor, half-hungry, over-worked craythurs have strength to believe in the Lord, and follow His ways, when those that have time for their duties send them astray among those who are already cried down as godless?"

"But, Mrs. Leary, it is at such times you ought to seek the help of the Lord; because you want it most then."

"True for you, ma'am, dear, I feel that sometimes. But, what I wonder at is this: that the religionists, the people that have power and money, will suffer honest, decent people to be turned out before there is any door opened for them—any way made for them to be able to live on what they earn. Sure, if it wasn't for the kindness shown me, I could not afford to pay two-and-six a week, and the three of us live on six-and-six a week—and food so dear!"

"I hope," I said, "that things will mend. Through the instrumentality of the Peabody Fund, Lady Burdett, Sir Sidney Waterlow, and good Lord Shaftesbury, and others, *very much better* house accommodation has been provided for about ten thousand persons; and by-and-bye, refuge will be made for tens of thousands more."

"But," said the poor woman, "*that* should have been done *before* we were turned out of house and home; before clean, honest, decent people were forced to take up with any one or any place, just for the sake of shelter. What will come hereafter will not bring back the perished lives, nor restore the modest decent feelings that have been destroyed—and are still destroying. You don't know what it is. God forbid you should. The district visitors, nor the Bible women, nor the City missionaries, nor the priests, nor sisters of charity—none of them know what the crowded lodgings are at night, though they visit them by day. And some of them talk of the misery of an Irish cabin. Why, the poorest cabin on the mountain-side is a paradise compared to the room-keeper's lodging now! If we are crowded in the cabin, it is with our own flesh and blood. If we have a window, we can open it, and the fresh air, and maybe the sweetness of the clover, comes to us; and if we haven't the window, sure, there's a door anyhow

that does *not* open on a filthy staircase and the steam of human craythurs packed closer than our pigs.* We can stand out in the light and the breath of heaven, and maybe the roses don't bud and blossom on our children's cheeks! and a sup of sweet milk and a mealy potato has raised many a fine soldier for the Queen. Why, when I open my window in the roof, sorra a breath of wholesome air comes through it—nothing but smoke and blacks. God pity the poor innocent children, say I. How can they believe in the goodness of God when they never see a bit of clear sky, nor a blade of clean grass? And I hear people talking of what a blessing it is to have this place cleared out, and that place made wholesome, as if the world was only made for railroad carriages. Look! it would have been a greater mercy to have buried thousands under the rails, than to have turned them into the sin and misery they are still going through. Wouldn't I rather see my two little grandchildren laid under the sod, with the knowledge that their innocent souls returned to the Almighty, than have them grow up in the casual wards of wickedness! While I can keep my little room in the roof, and know that they are at school by day, and with me by night, I try to REST and be THANKFUL where I am. The children, God be praised, are minding me; and will be brought up in the fear, and, I hope, in the love of God. They go to the convent school, and are learning well and fast. That's not the way with every woman's children. 'Twas only yesternight, and the snow was falling heavy enough to chill such as had roofs to cover them, I saw Mary Brady's boy took to the station: to be sure, his

* Happily these evils are soon to be removed—and under the auspices of the Government, as well as by the help of good, considerate, and merciful men. There was but little prospect of so vast a boon to the working classes when this story was written six or seven years ago.

father is a drunkard, and it's no wonder they are all starving: the drunkard's children must starve, and do starve; what had the poor boy done? Troth, he stole a loaf o' bread, and he was running home with it, barefooted, to his mother, when the baker and the policeman got sight of him, and chased him through the snow till they cotched him, and lugg'd him off to prison, to tache him better manners. It's fine manners he'll learn in a jail: grately improved, no doubt, he'll come out of it! It was the hunger did it then: it won't be the hunger that'll do it next time, but something a dale worse!"

"It's THE DRUNKARD'S SON," says the policeman; "what else could come to him?"

"A dale might," says I, "if they'd move off the public-houses, instead of the working-men; but they won't do that! Where is a man to go to when his work is done, if you don't give him a roof to shelter his tired bones? It's few public-houses you'd have, and few drunkards, and few hungry children that are thieves, if you made homes for us where there might be home comforts."

"True for you," he makes answer, "no one knows that better than I do. There 'ud be no drinkers if you gave them dacent places where they could REST and be THANKFUL."

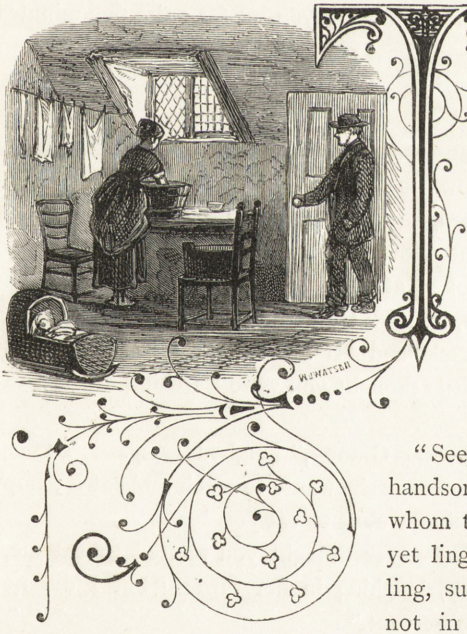




George Cruikshank.] [Dalziel Brothers.

BUILDING A HOUSE WITH A TEA-CUP.—THE FALL.

BUILDING A HOUSE WITH A TEA-CUP.



"THERE, Lucy dear, let it alone," exclaimed Granny Grey to he young visitor. "Why did you remove the shade?"

"Well, dear Granny, only because I really wanted to see it."

"See it," said the very handsome woman, with whom the aspect of youth yet lingered. "Why, darling, surely your eyes are not in the tips of your fingers. You could see it without removing the shade: you mean, I suppose, you wanted to *feel* it?"

Lucy laughed. In common with all the girls in Wooton Reach—the name of the village in which Mrs. Grey resided—

she called her "Granny:" "Granny" was the pet name—the name of love—by which all the young people, boys and girls, recognised Mrs. Grey. Lucy Lynne was one of the good woman's especial favourites; there were steadier and wiser girls in Wooton Reach, but there was not one gifted with a gentler heart, or a kinder nature, than Lucy Lynne.

"I do not know what I wanted," laughed Lucy; "but you all make such a wonderful fuss about that cup that I thought I should like to know why; and just now, when you had done reading, and closed THE BOOK, leaving Mr. Grey's spectacle case in it for a mark, I am sure you sat for quite five minutes looking at that cup—at least your eyes were fixed on it. And yet—" the girl paused.

"And yet what?" questioned Mrs. Grey.

"Why, though your eyes were fixed on the cup, it seemed as if they were somehow looking beyond it. And then, indeed, your cheeks grew red, and your eyes had tears in them, and I thought, without intending it, you clasped your hands; and you got up and looked at the sheet almanac, and I thought you said to yourself, 'Thank God.'"

"Why, Lucy," exclaimed Mrs. Grey, "what an observant puss you are! I little thought you were watching me as a cat would a mouse."

"That won't do, dear Granny," laughed Lucy. "The cat watches the mouse because she wants to catch and eat it; now, you do not believe that I want to eat you"——

"No, dear child, I never thought you wanted to eat me," answered Mrs. Grey, laughing in her turn: "but I did not think you were so observant."

"I am sure," said Lucy, "there are a dozen tea-cups in the house much prettier than that old thing that you lay such store by. Some one said here the other day that the 'willow pattern' was considered 'very old-fashioned,' and in 'bad

taste,' and you said it was, and that you hated the sight of it, and would have a new dinner service as soon as your ship came home; but," added Lucy, with a little pout, "that ship is a long time on the seas. As long as I can remember I have heard you talk of what was to be done when the ship came home; perhaps when it does, Granny, it may bring you a pretty cup to put under the shade instead of that 'willow pattern.'"

"No," said Mrs. Grey, "not all the cups that ever came from China, even if they were filled with gold, would be half as valuable in my eyes as that discoloured old tea-cup of the 'willow pattern,' which I have cared for and cherished for thirty years; and Mr. Grey values it as highly as I do."

"Granny, will you not tell me why," inquired Lucy, "that I also may value it? I know you think a great deal of it, for you always dust the shade with your own hands."

"If you can sit still, Lucy, and listen attentively, it will be a pleasure to me to tell you *why* I value that tea-cup; there, bring your favourite stool to my side, and sit down, and you shall hear, not an imaginary, but a true story, which I hope you will remember all the days of your life:—

"You know my husband was a carpenter—indeed, I may say *is*. Though he does not work as hard as he used with his hands, I think he does with his head; and I hear that his power of calculation is clear and rapid."

"Oh, yes," said Lucy; "I have heard Mr. Grey say that temperance keeps his brain clear."

"I married him when I was very young," continued Mrs. Grey; "some said too young to take the cares of the world upon me; but I thought my husband, who was a very well-educated man, would teach me how to bear them—at least that was what I thought and believed. But the real truth was, I

loved him very dearly; and if there are faults, we are not inclined to see them in those we love."

"Then," said that saucy Lucy, looking archly up into Mrs. Grey's face, "I do not think, Granny, you love *me* very much, for I think you see *all* my faults ever so big!"

"My dear one!" replied her old friend, "I hope I see them all, because I am anxious my Lucy should be very perfect, and if her faults were not known, how could they be corrected? And she has just displayed one."

"A fault!" repeated Lucy, opening her great grey eyes.

"Yes; you interrupted me at the commencement of a story you said you wished to hear, and I now feel indisposed to tell it."

"Oh," exclaimed the repentant Lucy, "indeed I will not do so again; I will be as silent as ever you could wish, and as attentive. I did not mean to be rude, dear Granny."

"Where did I leave off?" questioned Mrs. Grey.

"You said we were not inclined to see faults in those we love," replied Lucy.

"Oh, I remember; well, dear, we had everything very tidy and comfortable, and my husband had plenty of work. I did not think it then, but I had cause to mourn it afterwards, that though I loved my husband, I was not as careful in my early married life as I should have been of his little home comforts. His dinner was not always ready to the moment, as it ought to have been; nor was the hearth swept, and the room tidied up, as it is a wife's duty to see that it is when her husband comes home from his day's work. The hour or two of evening, when the toil of the day is ended, should be the happiest of the four-and-twenty, and cannot fail to be so if a household, however small, is properly cared for. During the early days of our married life, we never omitted reading a portion of the Testament, and sometimes singing the verse of a hymn, before we

retired for the night. Mr. Grey had a beautiful voice," said the old lady, with very pardonable pride, "and, as you know, he leads in the church still. After we had been married about a year it pleased God to make an addition to our family. That should have increased my dexterity, so that my attention to my child should not have taken from but added to the comforts and pleasures of our home; but, instead of that, my new duties rendered me heedless, and often sloppish. My husband liked to see me trim and neat in my person.

"'Katey,' he used to say, 'I only ask to see your hair brushed and shining, and your apron and cotton gown, as it used to be, clean.' He would often take the broom and sweep the hearth, and make up the fire, and put the white cloth on the table for supper; and, though I knew that was what I ought to have done before he came home, yet, I don't know how it was, I did not improve. I had grown rather too fond of gossiping with neighbours who were idler than myself, and carrying about my child, who certainly was a beauty, to have it admired. That was our first baby—our dear, blue-eyed boy!

"I almost seemed fonder of showing him off than looking after my home. When rich married people don't think as much of each other as they ought to do, they have many other things to look to for happiness; but if the lamp which led the poor to the altar grows dim, the house is dark indeed. The light of their life goes out with it."

Lucy looked at Mrs. Grey with wondering eyes; for she was the neatest and nattiest old lady you could see anywhere, and was held up as a pattern to all the young girls in the neighbourhood.

"I do not know now how it was, or when it began, but we often forgot to read our Chapter: my husband did not continue as good-humoured as he had been during our early days, and I did not see how much of that was my fault, for not making

him comfortable, as I had done at first. He was very fond of our baby, but the poor little fellow grew ill and peevish, he could not bear to hear it cry. When it began to cry he would take up his hat to go out; the very thing which ought to have sent us on our knees in supplication that our infant might be restored to health seemed to break in upon our prayers, and instead of the hymn—except, indeed, on Sunday evenings—my husband, who had, as I told you, a beautiful voice, would bring home a new song which he wished to learn, so that he might sing it at the tradesman's Club at the 'Blue Lobster.'

"Slowly but surely he began, instead of returning home in the evenings, to attend these Club meetings. Then I saw my danger, and how foolishly, if not wickedly, I had acted in not attending to my first earthly duty.

"One morning—I never shall forget it!—I rose determined to get my washing over, and dried out of the way, as he had promised to return early. There is nothing—except a scolding wife—more miserable to a poor man than finding the fire, from which he expected warmth and comfort, hung round with steaming or damp clothes, that a brisk, good manager would get dried and folded before his return.

"I had made such good resolutions; but, darling," said Granny, after a pause, "I trusted to my own strength: I did not then, as I do now, entreat *God's* help—ask for God's help—to enable me to keep them. I was too fond, in my young, proud days, of trusting entirely to myself, to my own will. Well, dear, I suffered one small matter or another to call me away, and an old gossiping woman and her daughter came and wasted my time; and when I heard the church clock strike, and knew my husband would be in in less than half-an-hour, and nothing ready to make him comfortable, though he had had a hard day's work at the saw-pit in wet weather, I could have cried with shame and vexation. My resolve had been

so strong—in what? In my own poor weak strength! Well, I hurried; but it is hard racing after misspent time. My husband came in dripping wet about five minutes before his usual hour. He looked at me, and at the clothes line that was stretched in front of the fire, and, with a small chopper that he had in his hand, he cut the line, and down went my half-dried clothes on the not over clean sanded floor. 'A soft answer turneth away wrath,' saith the proverb; but I did *not* give the soft answer, and the wrath was *not* turned away.

"'Very well, Katey,' he said, 'there is no place here for me to sit and rest, and no supper ready; but I can get sitting, resting, and supper, at the "Blue Lobster," where many a fellow is driven by an ill-managing wife;' and with that he turned out of the door. It was in my heart to follow him, to lock my arms round his neck, and, begging his pardon, bring him back. But I was vexed about the clothes, and forgot the provocation. That was his first night, all out, at the 'Blue Lobster;' *but it was not his last.* I saw my error, and I prayed then for strength to do my duty; but somehow my husband had got a taste for the popularity that grows out of a good story, and a fine voice, and he had felt that woeful night what it was to be warmed—when he was cold—by the fire of brandy, instead of sea coal! Days passed; our little boy, our Willy, grew worse and worse. Time had been when Mr. Grey would walk the night with him on his bosom to soothe him to sleep; but now, if the poor child wailed ever so heavily, he could not hear it. Another child had been given to us, but she only added to our difficulties; then, indeed, I laboured continuously to recall what I had lost, but drink had got the mastery. We were backward with our rent, my poor husband lost his customers, for he neglected his business, and both clothing

and furniture went to satisfy our creditors and that craving which cries for more the more it gets. I could not bear the sympathy of my neighbours, for they pitied me as a suffering angel; while every hour of my life I recalled the time when neglect of my wifely duties first drove my husband to the public-house.

"When sober, my poor dear was full of sorrow; but he had not the strength to avoid temptation. He never used any violence towards me, though if I attempted to hold anything back he wished to turn into drink, he would become furious, and tear and rend whatever he could lay his hands on.

"One terrible night he broke every remnant of glass and china that remained of what once, for a tradesman's wife, I had such a store; everything was shattered, everything trampled on and broken—everything but *that one cup!*"

"And how did that escape?" questioned Lucy.

"It contained the infant's supper," replied Mrs. Grey; "I saw his hand hover over it, and the same moment his poor bloodshot eyes rested on the baby, whose little outstretched arms craved for its food. Some silent message must have entered his heart. His arms fell down, and, without an effort to support himself, he sank into a heap upon the floor, in the midst of the destruction he had caused! I tried to get him on to where once a bed had been: we had still a mattress and a couple of blankets—"

Lucy did not speak, but her eyes were overflowing, and she stole her hand into that of Mrs. Grey. The good woman soon resumed her story:—

"I saw that even there sleep came to subdue and calm him. My poor child ate her supper and fell asleep, and my sick boy was certainly better, and also slept. I crept about, gathering up the broken pieces, and endeavouring to light the fire. A kind lady, to whom I had taken home some needlework that

morning (for several weeks I had been the only bread-winner), in addition to the eighteen-pence I earned, had given me a small quantity of tea and sugar; and an old pewter teapot that, however battered, would not break, seemed to me a comforter. He would awake, I knew, cold and shivering, but I hoped not until the 'Blue Lobster' and every house of the same description was closed, and then his thirst would compel him to take some tea. I heard the church clock strike one; it was a joyful sound; no open doors, even to old customers, then. I knelt down between the children's blankets and my poor shattered husband, and prayed as I never prayed before. I had managed sufficient fuel to boil the kettle and create some degree of warmth, and I waited patiently and prayerfully for the waking. It came at last; the anger and the violence that had been almost insanity were all gone; only the poor broken-down man was there.

"He asked what o'clock it was; I told him the church clock had gone half-past one. He then asked for water. I brought him a cupful, another and another, and then a cup of tea. After he had taken it he gathered himself up, and took the stool I moved towards him. I poured him out a fresh cup of tea. He looked for some little time vacantly at the table, and, not seeing another cup, he pushed that one towards me. I drank, half-filled it again, and moved it to his hand. 'My poor Katey,' he said, and kept repeating my name, 'has it come to this—only one cup between us all.'

"'And enough, too,' I answered, smiling as gaily as I could; 'enough to build a house and home on if we trusted to tea.'

"'What is your meaning?' he inquired.

"I was almost afraid to say what I meant, but I took courage while trembling. 'I mean, darling,' I answered, 'that if we could both be content with the refreshment of

tea, we'd soon have a better and a blither house than ever we had.'

"'I've been a bad father and a bad husband,' he said, for by this time he had nearly come to himself—'but all is gone, and it's too late to mend.'

"I made no answer, but just drew down the blanket from the faces of the sleeping children; there never was anything touched my husband like the little child.

"'Is *all* gone?' I asked, and with that he crushed his face down on his clasped hands as they lay on the table, and burst into tears. I knelt beside him, and thanked God for the tears in my heart; but I was so choked I could not speak, and we stayed that way ever so long, neither saying a word.

"Now it is strange what turns the mind will take; even while his face was wet with tears, my darling lifted it.

"'Katey,' he said—and it may seem to you nothing but a fond old woman's fancy, but I always thought there was no music in the world ever so sweet as the way my husband says 'Katey' unto this day—'Katey,' he says, 'let's turn the cup and see what it reads.' Like all youngsters, I believe, we had tossed many a cup in our boy and girl days just for laughter. He took it up quite serious like, and turned it, and as he looked into it he smiled. 'There's a clear road,' he went on, 'and a house at the top, and a wonderful lot of planks; they can't be ours, for there's not a plank in or near the pit now.'

"'But there will be,' I answered eagerly; 'it was only yesterday—down where the spinny overhangs the pool—I met Mrs. Grovelay; she gave me a blithe good morning, and asked if my good man was going to turn his leaf soon. "Tell him from me to make haste," she said, laughing like a sunbeam, "for he's too good a fellow to go on much longer as he's been going; there's goodness in him."'

"'Are you sure she said that?' whispered my husband.

"So I told him, 'Indeed she did, and more; she said she was waiting until you'd resolve to turn to, like a man, and cut down the small lot of timber that's waiting for your hatchet on the corner farm. "I'm determined," she continued, "no one but he shall fell those trees; as I shall want to use the planks in the spring, he has no time to lose." She said something not pleasant about the public-house, but I could not let that pass, so I up and told her that it was my carelessness and neglect that turned you from your own fireside.'

"'You should not have said that, Katey,' he answered. I've been a bad husband and a bad father, and I did not think there was one in the place now that would trust me with a day's work,' and his voice shook and faltered; but he got it out at last:

"'Even if I did take a turn, it's not likely you could forgive me!' and then I fell weeping at his feet, and laid bare my heart, and repeated that if I had been what I ought to have been, and kept the house he put over me fresh and clean, as I ought to have kept it, instead of spending the morning of my days in vanity and idleness, we need not have been two shivering sinners at that hour! I repeated again and again that it was my ways that drove him to find by the tap-room fire what he had lost at home; and then I lifted up my voice and called to my Saviour to look down and help us both. I, with my voice full of tears, promised my husband if he would try me—only try me—he would see what a home I would make for him! He was always one for a little joke; and even then he said, and twirled the cup, 'A well-plenished house in a tea-cup—one tea-cup between us.' 'Yes,' I said, 'if nothing stronger than tea ever flows into that cup, or wets our lips, out of that cup *we will build our house!*'

"We both kept long silence; and the break of that blessed

day, though it showed me my husband's once glowing and manly face, pale and haggard, and his hand trembling—so trembling, that he could not carry the tea-cup to his lips without spilling its contents—brought new life into our shattered home. Lucy, on that blessed day—this day eighteen years—strength was given us both to keep our promise to God and to each other; and somehow this text got stamped upon our hearts—

"'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

"My poor darling! he had hard lines at first. Never was there a drunkard who did not cast about to make others as bad as himself. As the day drew on he had not courage to face the street; but I went up to Grovelay Manor, and told the good lady that my husband would fell the trees; that he might be relied on, because he no longer trusted in his own strength; that he was a pledged teetotaller, and I was pledged to make his home happy; but that we did not trust in our own pledges, but in faith that we could do all things through Christ who strengthened us.

"Still the lines *were* hard. He had to bear up against the taunts and the sneers of his boon companions, and I had to struggle hard to give a desolate room the welcome home look, that would prevent his wishing for the lights, and the warmth, and the excitement, and the praise his songs were sure to obtain; but however scanty the furniture, a poor man's home can always be sweet and clean—*that* is in the power of the poorest. And though, when he returned from his first day's timbering there was but one tea-cup between us, the old darned cloth was clean, the teapot and fire bright, no lord's children could be cleaner, and he said it was as good as a nosegay to kiss their sweet cheeks. It was hideous to see how his old companions loomed in upon our poverty, and tempted—or tried to tempt—

him back; one terrible drunkard staggered in, and mockingly asked if I would give my husband leave to go out for an hour—just half-an-hour, even—and I rose and went into the little bedroom. I knew I could trust him.

"It is some time before neighbours, or once friends, can believe in a drunkard's reformation. The dear good lady who took the surest way to ensure his, lived to see our growing prosperity. 'Building a house with a tea-cup' she always called it, and my good man was not slow to declare the effect the clear, high-road pictured forth in the tea-grounds had upon his excited imagination on that memorable night. Our necessaries returned to us slowly—very slowly at first; though the neighbours, when they saw how hardly and earnestly my husband worked, offered us credit for what they thought we needed. But we resolved to abstain from all luxuries until we could pay for what we got. Some of our little valuables had been left at the public-house as security for scores, and the landlord thought himself a most injured man when my husband redeemed his one article of finery—a gold shirt-pin that had belonged to his father. We learned the happiness every Saturday night of adding to our comforts; and from that day to this my husband has always found his house swept and garnished, no damp linen hanging about, no buttonless shirts or holey stockings; the children are trained to neatness and good order, and the sound of discord and contradiction has never been since heard within those walls. The habits of our first months of marriage returned; a few verses of Holy Writ, a prayer, and a hymn, refreshed the memory of the bond with God and with each other. We feel those exercises far more impressive now than we did when we practised them as a cold ceremony rather than the result of a living faith.

"In less than six years my husband built this cottage—I may say with his own hands. We got the bit of land at a low

rate, and over-hours he worked at it as only a teetotaller can work. Our Willie has never been a strong lad, and the Doctor says if he had been even a trifle wild he would have been long ago in the churchyard. With all my love for his beautiful infancy, I did not do my duty the first two years of his life. A careless wife is never a careful mother, whatever she may think; but it pleased the Lord to let in his light upon us before the night came, and it was not folly to carry two things first into this house—our Bible, and the old tea-cup that attracted your curiosity. It is not too much to say that the cup often reminded us of our duties; and you can understand now I think, darling, why Goodman and Granny Grey value it before all the gay china that could come from beyond the seas: for I may rightly say that, by God's help and blessing, THIS HOUSE WAS BUILT OUT OF THAT TEA-CUP."

Dear friends, in this story I have drawn real characters and given you actual facts. I might easily have embellished them; but I prefer a simple statement of the simple truth, and have pictured the characters as they have existed, and now exist. They may recognise the tale, and so, perhaps, may some of their neighbours; but they will not object to my telling it as at once an encouragement and a warning.

After all, most husbands are what their wives make them. There are, no doubt, many good women wedded to half or whole brutes, and who, do what they will or can, entirely fail to wean the men to whom they are allied from the evil habits that engender want, degradation, misery, and ruin; but long observation convinces me that such cases are comparatively rare. I believe much of the wretchedness that arises from intemperance may be traced to the neglect of HOME INFLUENCE to procure ease, comfort, and respectability, and that often wives are responsible for the issue—to God, if not to man.

I do not refer to women who, by themselves accepting stimulants as luxuries, make the perilous custom venial in the eyes of their husbands, brothers, or friends; but to those minor sins of omission or commission that so generally lead to the practices that produce miserable homes. I could, indeed, relate many instances of the former; but it is against the latter, comparatively minor, that I desire to warn my readers.

Of the former, I have at this moment one sad instance in my mind's eye: it is that of a young man, whose wife is handsome, well educated, and capable of adding many comforts to their home. They have two children, and have had more than one position in which they might have achieved honourable ease and entire independence.

He is out all day at work, and almost every evening returns to find his room wretched, and his children neglected and hungry. His hard earnings have been so spent as to make his wife unfit to be his companion, utterly unworthy to be his friend, and incompetent to be his adviser.

I need not go further into details: many of my readers can fill up the picture of which I give an outline.

It is not to be supposed that this fearful vice is confined to what is usually termed the lower order. It is making frightful way among the upper classes, and there are not a few mansions in Belgravia subjected to the influence of the curse: made lonely, wretched, and desolate by the fell destroyer of peace, harmony, confidence, and comfort "at home."

My business, however, is at present to deal less with the great than with the minor acts of neglect which render women, not the remote, but the near, cause of drinking habits in men: it is by driving them out to seek for that, which they should, and might, find at home: it is by neglecting the small duties that induce happiness: it is by paying little or no attention to the needs, even the fancies, of those who must depend on

women for the comforts without which labour is a load, and a day of toil must end in discontent.

Is there, think you, one case in a hundred where all at home is cheerful and happy, from which the husband will retreat to seek enjoyment at the public-house? Are there, think you, many cases where the home is cheerless and uncomfortable, from which the husband will not withdraw to find relief in the society that exacts an after penalty indeed, but is for the time enlivening and exciting?

Has care been taken to lighten toil by the minute but numberless thoughts by which sunshine may be brought into the humblest and poorest household? Have the clothes been mended so as to keep out the rain when at work? Is the small fireplace bright, although rigid economy may be needful?

Are the slippers ready to replace the boots which will mount the staircase muddied? while the wife will say with the poet

> "There's music in his very step
> As he comes up the stair!"

Were the children tidy and clean before they were put to rest? Is the kettle singing on the hob? Has the wife a word of greeting and a smile of welcome? Is there a book beside the table—is "*the Book*" there?

Into such a household be sure the demon of drink will not enter! From such a household evil spirits will have no power to wile away the husband; the wife will have him to herself; he will be all her own.

> "'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
> Our coming, and look brighter when we come."

As sweet to the poor as to the rich; wealth acts deleteriously rather than otherwise on the sensations of the heart, and it is a libel to say that poverty drives love from the door.

I am not describing duties difficult or hard to achieve.

Those I refer to, and others of a like kind that appertain to them, are simple and easy to every wife—whether in comparative poverty, or in comfortable circumstances. There is no woman, no matter how limited be her means, who cannot practise and discharge them. GREAT WILL BE HER REWARD!

In sickness and in health, in prosperity and in occasional reverses, she will not only be cheered by a knowledge that she has, according to the homely phrase, "done her best," in the certainty that God's blessing will be her encouragement and reward, but she will largely share in the comforts and true pleasures of which she is the minister, and in a thankful and prayerful spirit abide whatever may come.

Let us for a moment, dear friends, contemplate the reverse of the picture. Do you not know houses where the wife is a slattern: who seldom mends her clothes, and does not often use water; who is rarely occupied in any household duties; who spends her time in gossip, and wastes the day from sunrise to sunset, doing only what *must* be done; who hears her husband stalk up the stairs, and has no loving welcome for him—nothing to cheer him after his hard day's work but the bare food that has not the condiments of pleasant words and sweet smiles? The wet towels are on the broken chair before the dull fire; there is no dry coat to replace that which the rain has soddened; no change of shoes in the stead of those that are heavy with the mud of labour; if the children are yet awake they are peevish and fretful; and hard sentences, or perhaps hard blows, are the anodyne that sends them to sleep.

What is the husband to do? At the public-house he will, at all events, obtain warmth, without and within—deadly indeed in its results, but for the moment exhilarating; he will be greeted with a cordial and hearty welcome, treacherous indeed, but for a time pleasant as a grateful luxury; and he will postpone as long as he can the return to a home where all is the

other way—where a grumble and a growl will be in his ear, and a comfortless bed his means of recruiting strength for the toils of the morrow.

Dear women friends, low and high, humble or elevated—for the lesson I desire you to read applies to the one just as much as it does to the other, to the mansion as to the cottage, to the costly "suite" as to the single room—ponder over these things. Think how much is in your power to wile the husband from the club and the beershop. How terrible is your responsibility, for soul and for body, if you neglect such duties as make men sober, steady, domestic, industrious, and religious, and encourage habits, the inevitable consequences of which will be, to send men out of their homes to seek enjoyment in which you not only have no share, but which deprive you of those you might have, and peril all that most contributes to the good of society, the happiness of mankind, and the high and holy purposes of God!



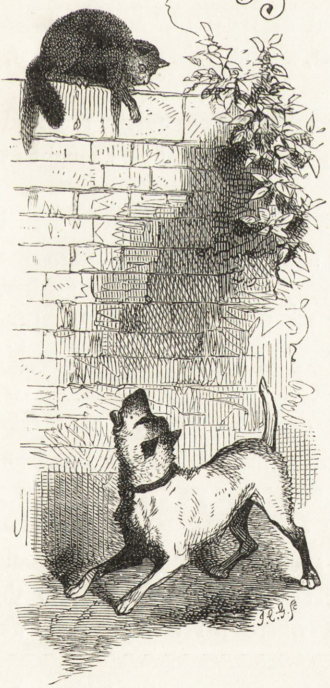


E. Sherard Kennedy.] [Dalziel Brothers.

PEPPER AND HER FOES.—THE ACROBATS.

PEPPER AND HER FOES.

CHAPTER I.



"TRUE; dogs are temperate," you will say. True—they do not drink intemperate beverages; but my two examples were "temperate" in another way. I will tell you how.

The first was a lovely black curly retriever, called "Rover," one of our own particular "breed." My grandmother gave him, in his puppyhood, to our village dressmaker, who was everybody's favourite, yet not spoiled,—a woman of remarkable beauty, whose memory was so stored with legends that her visits to us, to make or alter, were anticipated by me with childish delight; and many a legend I owe to her; for the twilight hour when it was too early to light candles, and too late to see to work without them, was invariably spent on the deep window-seat

of the so-called "nursery," where curled up like a kitten I listened while Mrs. Bow, seated in her "working chair," repeated to me tale after tale, or sung, in her soft mezzo-soprano voice, long-ago ballads, while the dash of the distant waves against the rocky shore formed a fitting accompaniment. I listened to legends I never forgot, little dreaming that hereafter they would be found in a printed book.

This village "lady," for so nature had made her, had the fate to be married to the village vulcan, an honest, burly man, swarthy and black-browed as a gipsy, with a passion for tooth-drawing, as well as shoeing horses. He was considered the safest dentist and best smith "out of Wexford," and his forge was a lounge for some of the best, and also some of the worst, "fellows" on our side of the "Scar."

Mr. Bow patronised literature, taking in not only a Wexford but a Waterford paper, and reading aloud what he thought fit to be read to his customers.

Mr. Bow would have been a model man, as well as a model smith, but for one unfortunate fact: he was too fond of the "mountain dew," and on Saturday nights was seldom sober. Next to his patient, loving, and lovely wife, his little daughter Biddy, and his stalwart sons, the dog Rover was dear to his heart and home! He was fond of Rover—proud of Rover, and if a stranger admired the dog's beauty he would take his head between his hands, draw the dog's ebon lips from off his teeth, and exclaim, "There! did ye ever see such a mouth of teeth as that! every one as strong as iron, and as white as a pearl;" and after such inspection, Rover would give a sober wag to his flounced tail, and withdraw to the more agreeable dwelling-room where his fair mistress was busied with her stitchery.

Rover was fond of, and faithful to, his master, as long as that master was sober; but when he came home either "straight

or staggering," having imbibed more alcohol than was good for him, or indeed any alcohol at all, the dog's displeasure knew no bounds, and his mistress invariably shut him up in a cupboard when Bow's uncertain footing on the causeway told too truly of his state; but that did not prevent Rover's protestations against his master's habit, and he never ceased snarling and growling until the smith retired to bed. Sometimes he would grow enraged at the dog's manifestations, and threaten to break open the door and "do for him;" but the louder he talked, the more violent the dog became; the morning brought a truce, and dog and master fondled each other at breakfast.

After a time the smith gloried in his dog's sobriety, and would even bring in a friend who had only taken a *dropeen* of whisky, to prove Rover's decided temperance principles, who, the moment the "smell" entered the room, erected his mane, displayed his white teeth, and evinced such a determination that there should be no indulgence in spirituous liquors in his presence, that the "friend" felt the better part of valour was discretion, and retreated.

I was informed that Rover was introduced to Father Mathew when a very, very old dog, and had the honour of having his paw shaken by that true-hearted leader of THE GOOD CAUSE.

CHAPTER II.

My next example is a dog I knew more intimately than Rover: her name was "Pepper:" she was worthy of the name.

Fond, indeed, I am of dogs, which (cunning things!) they know so well, that many a homeless cur, of low degree, has followed me home, while the more aristocratic dogs, who never go abroad without an escort, sniff and wag their tails, while regarding me for a minute or so with their deep-brown or grey-green eyes, which seem to say with mute eloquence, "We

know you, you love us and we love you." Yet frequently as I passed the door of Jonson (our greengrocer), and was tempted to order some pretty pot of mignonette, or fine hyacinth (for Jonson dabbled in flowers), the sight of a fiendish-looking dog, perched on a potato-basket, scared me away. I did not mind her torn ears, nor her ugly, yellowish, bandy legs, nor that horrid broken-down nose peculiar to her family. I pitied her poor blind eye, which, half closed, had a penitential look, and gave an expression of gentleness to that side of her face, at once tender and touching. If that side happened to be turned to the street I felt as if I could order whatever I pleased; but the other side might have belonged to another dog. There was a split in her upper lip, directly over one of the whitest and most determined-looking fangs I ever saw in a dog's head; *that* was the side of her bright keen eye, and when it "eyed" any one intently, the lip moved and twitched in a nervous disagreeable manner, so that the ugly "gap" closed and unclosed, as if it sneered "Ah, ah! do you understand: I'd like to bite you." Her coat was jet black, and shone like satin; it was a coat any dog might be proud to wear. I suppose everybody has heard of the Irishman who said "the most eloquent feature in a dog's *face* was its *tail*." Now Pepper's tail could hardly be called "eloquent," but it was determined? it stuck out stiff and curveless, nearly on a line with her back; is seemed too stern and too sturdy to wag; there was no wag in it, it might have been made of cast iron. Pepper disdained conventionalities, she would not wag her tail because other dogs wagged theirs. No, she stiffened it into perfect indifference, neither elevating nor lowering it, but let it be, a firm and independent tail. The first time I saw her on the potato-basket, she looked very different from what she did when on guard in her master's cart.

Once, I happened to be at her blind side when the cart stopped at our gate, and I asked Jonson "how his poor dog lost her eye." I shall never forget the alarmed look he cast on the dog, as he advanced close to me, and said in a very low tone, "Madam, don't ask before her: she can't bear it, it hurts her feelings so: I'm glad she didn't hear you; she'd tear the Queen on her throne in pieces, if she heard her Majesty talking about her eye!"

On the potato-basket I saw frequently the reverse of the medal—the split lip quivering over the white fang, the keenly fiery eye, darting its arrows here and there from beneath its "tan" eyebrow, the blunt upturned nose, the bandy fore leg, and above all the sturdy tail, strong, muscular, and inflexible. Experience had taught me in time two peculiarities in this queer dog: she never picked a quarrel with another dog; she held herself above her species; if attacked by any combative lady, she would prove her breeding, and fight as became her bull-blood, but a dog-quarrel must be forced on her, and she was never uncivil to well-dressed or commonly respectable customers. One morning I wanted to order some pink Asters, and walked over to Jonson's for the purpose. Pepper was on the top of the potato-basket as usual, and as usual I spoke to her; the only reply she ever made to a salutation to a *good* customer was to draw up her lip and wink. She did so with more graciousness than common, indeed she winked twice, and I felt almost inclined to pat her, when I perceived two boys peeping at her through the vegetables piled behind where she sat (the shop was double-fronted).

"I have never got so much as one cabbage-leaf for my rabbits since she took to the shop," said one rosy-cheeked fellow; "the governor says I may have the trimmings, but if we only look at them, she's out upon us. I wish she was dead."

"Oh, my eye! Isn't she ugly though?" observed the other

urchin. Now whether Pepper caught the offensive exclamation or not, I cannot tell, but she sprang from her elevation, and would certainly have punished the author of the obnoxious sound, if both boys had not managed to bolt into the tailor's shop, next door, and shut themselves in.

But Pepper had good reason to hate the boys that congregated in Stewart's Grove. Where the legions came from I never understood; unkempt ragamuffins some of them, whose clothes hung together by a miracle, and whose lungs were as strong as a brass trumpet: others were better dressed, but to the full as mischievous, with demure-looking slates and satchels, intent, I am sorry to say, on upsetting Jonson's baskets, and in the *mêlée* stealing his apples and oranges. One fellow more daring than the rest would "shy" (I believe that is the term) a piece of wood or a stone at Pepper, and run away, certain that she would pursue him, and then as Jonson was unwilling to move quickly, the other lads would assault the nuts or apples, or whatever they could get at. The poor dog had as many bumps and scars as ought to have won her a medal, for those marks were indications of her guard over her master's property. Pepper had no worse foes than the mischievous boys of Stewart's Grove.

But the cats! It was generally believed that a cat, whose kittens Pepper had disposed of in a summary manner, had scratched her eye out; that, added to the natural antipathy of terriers of all kinds to the feline race, engendered in Pepper the most deadly hatred of cats, and every cat in the neighbourhood knew it. As long as Jonson combined the sale of coke with greengroceries, and was owner of a yard and a shed only a little distance from his shop—Pepper had charge of the yard, and it was no uncommon thing to see a dozen cats ranged on the top of the shed, with their hair on end, and their tails like bottle-brushes, all yelling and spitting in

chorus, Pepper in a state of insanity, now running along on two legs, then on three, then springing in the air in the hope of catching even the tip of a cat's tail. It was curious to observe how the different cattish dispositions manifested themselves. One grimalkin might be seen standing with arched back, elevated tail, and nails sticking into the mortar; another crouching like a tiger, with wildly-staring eyes, as if waiting for an opportunity to spring on its foe; another moving with a crab-like movement, sly and sidling; another rocking backwards and forwards; but all animated by the same antagonistic feeling towards Pepper. At her bark in Stewart's Grove (supposing it only the bark of "kindly welcome" to her master, for she was too determined a dog to be noisy), every cat left off washing her face, or lapping her milk, or caressing her kittens, or even watching the sparrows on the wall, and bristled up into a state of warfare. If the poor dog ever had peaceful desires, if she was ever inclined to doze in the sun, she was sure to have her combativeness called into action by the butcher's boy stopping and exclaiming, "Ah! there you are! Let me catch you near our shop again, and then I'll make you remember who stole the sheep's head;" or by the baker exclaiming, "Mr. Jonson, I'll give you sixpence if you'll give me a fair throw at your dog, and I'll forgive her (after the throw) for the rolls she stole." Ay, Pepper had plenty of foes, and I really believe her only *true* friend was our cook! "Why?" you will say, and in reply I say, "Patience!"

Knowing how valuable this queer animal was to our worthy greengrocer, I was much astonished when my cook informed me one morning, after the ceremony of inspecting the larder, and ordering dinner had been gone through, that Mr. Jonson had been over to offer me Pepper, as "the mistress" and her

could not agree, and he thought we wanted just such a dog in our stable-yard.

"Want that fierce ugly brute in our yard!" I exclaimed; "surely we have plenty of dogs!"

The cook shook her head.

"There are dogs and dogs, ma'am: some for this and some for that. Ours are quite wonderful for beauty, but there is no use in putting it off any longer, ma'am; the upshot of it will be, we shall be murdered if we don't get a yard-dog:—those skelping, keeking, flying here and there, 'talian greyhounds—poor shivering 'atomies, I call 'em—all legs and no body—such shadders as *them* are no more use for watch-dogs, no, not so much as that little hairy-walker Weazel, with a head so like a dandelion, that if I blowed it hard enough, I could tell what's o'clock."

There was a pause; cook noted the unconvinced expression of my face, and resumed—

"So exposed as the place is, ma'am!—standing in a corner, and not a hap'orth to hinder the stable and all belonging to it.—Oh, ma'am dear, what are ye saying about the Po-leese? I'd take an oath this blessed minute on all the books that ever war shut or opened, that the last of them blue-bottles that ever rounded the corner of the Gloucester-road, was this day week. You know, ma'am we have two of them 'talian greyhounds, and you yourself calls them Ninon the Wise and Folly the Foolish,—well, I opened the gate to see if I could see the milk coming down the road, and to keep Folly in, I lifts her in my arms, when she takes a flying leap after the tollman's magpie, when up he sidles——"

"What? the magpie, cook?"

"No, ma'am, the Poleese; 'Don't agitate yourself, good woman,' he says, 'the weather's too warm for agitation, stand still, and call the little beast: you'll never catch her.' 'Do

your duty,' I says, 'you're long and lane enough to catch a dragon-fly, let alone a 'talian greyhound,—"baste," indeed!—I only wish I had the basting of you! and how dare you call me "good woman"?' I says, for I was struck dumb by his impidence, and hadn't a word in my head; and with that, before I could draw my breath, he takes off his hat, that isn't a hat, but a 'shiney,' and says, 'I ask your pardon, I did not intend to call you out of your name.' Oh, didn't I wish for a stone in a stocking, and him and me on the fair green of Ballynatrent!"

Now that was a hasty admission, on the part of our excellent cook, which she would not have made in cold blood. It is by no means an uncommon thing to find *Irishmen* in that, or indeed I am sorry to say, in any class of life, stammer and fidget, and look confused, when you intimate that they are natives of the Green Isle; and I am ashamed to confess that I often meet with Irish gentlemen, who, if they do not deny their country, are too ready to deal it a vigorous kick, as if by spurning the land of their birth they elevate themselves; but not so with *Irish-women:* their eyes sparkle, and their cheeks flush, and their sweet voices (none the less sweet for the intoning their un-friends call "brogue") speak out frankly what they feel and believe—that with all its faults, there is no country in the world to be compared to their own "darling Ireland." I reverence that love of native land. I need not tell my readers, young or old, to what country our cook belonged; you could not hear the sound of her voice, you could not look into her soft grey eyes fringed by long black lashes, you could not experience her desire to oblige, no matter at what personal sacrifice, without knowing at once that she was a daughter of the "Emerald Isle." Every one said she was too handsome for a cook, but what was better, she was a grateful and affectionate servant, ready, as she declared, at any time "to go to

the world's end through fire and water to serve me or mine." That I did not require, but I should have been glad if she had put things in their right places, and did not make a flat-iron do duty as a door-weight, and oblige the door-weight to act as a coal-hammer: the housemaid once declared she made her bed with the fire-shovel—that was a libel. But the remarkable thing about our cook was her stoutly denying she was Irish:—"Irish! she had no call to them, her grandfather indeed might have been born there, or her grandmother, but that did not make *her* Irish, she hated the very sound of the brogue!" After such a declaration, she was particularly careful to call plates "pleets," lisping her words as finely as her own mincing-machine minced meat: it was very sad and very wrong to tell that untruth, more especially as the genuine love of her country would break forth naturally. Sometimes she would come to me with a tale of Irish distress which brought tears into her fine grey eyes, and apologise in this way:—"Sure, the craythurs are in such misery, that my heart aches fit to brakeing, at the way they're in; and you, madam, are so fond of *your own country people*, that though *I* have no call to the Irish, I thought *you* would like to know the trouble that's on them." There is a strong prejudice against Irish servants in England, but that was no excuse for cook's untruth; it was *the* blot in her character.

I was always glad to catch her tripping on this subject, and the allusion to the mode of warfare practised on "the fair green of Ballynatrent," was evidence of country so decided, that, very maliciously, I asked her to tell me "where the fair green of Ballynatrent was situated," upon which she blushed, and turning away answered,—

"It's a place I heard tell of *once*, ma'am dear—a place, and its ways, my grandmother often discoorsed about; but sure any place would do, if I could only get a good throw at him,

the lazy sneering scamp;" adding "and now, if you plase, I'll go on with my trouble:—

"All the time, Folly was leaping her heart out after that ugly Mag., that kept on whistling with its eye cocked on the top of the great toll-board. Ninon the Wise, who well knew the differ between her master's whistle and the whistle of a Brompton magpie, stood as grave as a judge inside the rails. At the minute, a cart came out of the grate gate at Eagle Lodge, and my heart was in my mouth, for I saw no escape for Folly, and I could have spitted the *polees*man as I would a goose, and he standing twisting a straw in his mouth.

"'Can't you run?' I says, 'and not see the dog massacreed in the sight of your eyes? what's the like of you for?' I says; I could not stir, for all the breath was gone out of my body, and my heart leaping like a fish after a fly. Well! the words were taken out of my mouth as much as the breath, I may say, by seeing Ninon, the stately crature, make one bound like a stag across the road, and seize Folly by the 'scruff' of her neck, from among the horses' feet, and drop her inside the gate, and the magpie whistling all the time, not caring if the poor foolish dumb animal had been scrunched under the cart wheels; and if she had, I'd have wrung the head off her, or my name's not Mary Ogreman!"

Here was a tangle! Mary Ogreman, our rosy cook, two Italian greyhounds, a magpie, and a policeman, all about a yard-dog!

"And what did the policeman say to Ninon's sagacity?"

"Well, I don't know, ma'am; I don't think he understood it; only his two eyes grew like the bull's-eye of his own lantern, and he standin' in the middle of the road, until the carter cries, 'Lave the way, will ye, or I'll be over you as well as the dog,' and he not over the dog at all! who was squealing and grumbling at her presarver, like many a one else in the

world, who don't know when they are sarved or saved. But what put me past myself intirely, was that more than two hours after, as I was hindering the white sauce from coming to a *bile*, a tattering ring shakes the back gate. I thought it was the Wenham Lake, which runs to waste before you can look round you, so I takes my sauce in my fist, and makes a rush at the gate, and sorra a thing was there, but that aggravating poleeseman. 'I beg your pardon, madam' (that was his word), 'madam' he says, 'but I am curious to know if the big thin dog is mother to the little thin one.' I don't know how I kept the sauce off him, the great omadawn, and me so busy!"

"What a good, wise creature that Ninon is," I exclaimed; "another reason, Mary, why we should not have a yard-dog."

"Oh, as you plase, ma'am," said cook, exchanging the air narrative, for the air dignified, and preparing to pass from the verandah to the kitchen; "as you plase, ma'am, of course; it's just as you and the master plazes; only if all I've said this very half-minute don't prove what cruel want we are in of a yard-dog, why it don't, that's all! I suppose I must lose mee bits of clothes, and the little property in mee box, the caddy spoon, and punch-ladle that belonged to me grate grandfather, who *was* a man! As sure as the sun shines, we shall be all murdered; the dark nights too, and the end of the world so nigh."

I made no answer. Cook lingered, twisting up a refractory honeysuckle, still anxious to carry her point.

"I really do not want any more dogs, cook; it was only yesterday you said 'the house was poisoned with them.'"

"Oh, then, ma'am dear, sure I don't want another *in* the house, only outside, to purtect the property. Sure, I've shown you this very minute, how exposed the corner and stable is, and the *poleese* dear at a brass farthing apiece! and that whistling magpie, distracting one's mind with its nonsense,

and the carts going the road, as if it belonged to them, and that poor darlin' Ninon obleeged to take police duty on herself, or see her comrade massacreed."

"And is a yard-dog to cure all these unpleasantnesses, cook?"

"Oh, ma'am, if it's laughing at me ye are, I'm done; I'll say to Jonson, 'Don't talk to me about your dog, sir, if *you* plaze, though you have been so good as to offer her to my mistress, and she such a wonderful watch.'"

"No, Mary," I interrupted with admirable gravity, "I am by no means a good watch."

"*You*, ma'am! oh, ma'am dear, sure I never evened the like of that to you,—you indeed?"

"You have just said I was a wonderful watch."

"I'd not contradict you, ma'am, but if the words came out of my mouth, it was not me that said them; it was Jonson's dog Pepper, the baste, I meant was the watch, and a wonderful watch intirely she certainly is—by all accounts."

"I am very glad to hear it."

"Just the sort of dog we want, that will stand no nonsense, want no looking after; not all as one as our dogs, ma'am, that crave as much attention as babies; sure if Ninon only wets her feet, she'll come to me to dry 'em before she goes into the drawing-room! and if an insect bothers her too much, and she can't get him, by reason of his earning his bread on the back of her neck, or right under her chin, she'll give me no rest or pace till I take down her comb and brush, to have a hunt for him, and she knows the sight of the comb as well as myself! Now Pepper is altogether different from that: she's a pure-blooded, smooth-coated bull-tarrier; that's what *she* is; her grip is the grip of a vice, her legs are bandy with strength, and though she has lost one eye, and her ears are riddled—indeed one is as good as gone—through tearing by the cats, rats,

and things, she do be after day and night, in shores, and out of shores; known she is to all rat-catchers, that would give their eyes for her, and though she'll do them a good turn now and agin, when they're hard up for a dog, she wouldn't, Jonson says, call one of them master—not she. She wouldn't stay here, poor Pepper, the baste! only she has got a liking for me —Jonson is certain sure of *that*."

There was a pause: cook returned to the charge.

"Talking of cats, ma'am, sure anything that would circumnavigate them cats, that destroy the garden, would be a blessing unspoken: the walls are as thick with cats, as an ould kitchen with beetles. Why, the cats flick their tails and grin at our dogs: it's heart-brakeing, so it is, to see the voilets and everything else scuffled about through them:—but there, ma'am, I have done my duty honest; if we're all robbed and murdered, it's no business or fault of mine. I could swear the lock of the back gate had a nail in it on Sunday morning: and I'd be glad to know how the coke-box, two trowels, and a blacking-brush were spirited off the bottle-rack in the yard. If Pepper, the baste,—but I'm done!"

Whenever cook's suggestions were set aside, she assumed an air of pathetic, yet offended, dignity, that was highly amusing, and after the passion, whined out a running accompaniment.

"I know my place, I'm only a plain cook, roast and boiled ("biled" she pronounced it), soup, fish, poultry or game, bread or mint sauce, lobsters and crabs, and vegetables in all dressings, could undertake a cow and butter, feed pigs, hatch chickens, and bring out the red heads of turkeys, agin the world; *I* never blazens *myself*, I'm only a plain cook, but scorn baking, ever since them dirty Germans set up their yaste aginst honest barm! I'm only a cook, and a woman, and know I'm of no account beyond my kitchen, and as clane a

scullery as ever *mortial* entered! I'd never have mentioned the dog, ma'am, only you have a *laning* towards animals, and Jonson says, he'll 'tice her into a bag somehow, and drown the poor faithful crature if you don't have her."

"Drown Pepper!" (she had long been of my acquaintance, though by no means one of my dog friends). "Drown Pepper! why, if she is so valuable, why drown her?"

Mary O'Gorman—or, as I am ashamed to say, Mary Ogreman, as she chose to anglicise her name—stumbled a great deal over the "rasons" her friend Jonson had for wishing to get rid of this ugly paragon of canine intelligence; but the "rasons" were cogent: since he had given up his yard, he had no place "convanient" to chain Pepper in. She was an ugly customer in his shop, where, seated on the top of a potato-basket, she was ever ready to do battle with any one.

CHAPTER III.

After some conversation I determined to walk to Jonson's, and ascertain *why* he was so anxious to get rid of the dog, which he had often told me was of more use to him than "Mrs. Jonson, or any two boys he ever employed." And though cook was an excellent creature in many ways, and an admirable cook, yet the fact of her denying her country kept me in continual doubt as to her veracity; whatever cook said, I *felt* the question, "Is that true?"

Mr. Jonson, however, in reply to my statement of what I had heard, said,—"Yes, it was so exactly, and sorry he was for it; he did want to find a good home for poor Pepper. Somehow Mrs. J. J. and Pepper had got on bad terms. Mrs. J. J. was a good woman, and a good wife, though as crooked as a bad *parsnup* about anything that crossed her brain, and

Pepper had crossed her brain very often, and she said true, he could not afford to keep the dog any longer."

I could not help smiling at this, for I believed that Pepper had a way of keeping herself. Jonson understood my smile, and continued :—

"Yes, ma'am, so long as I had the shed and yard, which Pepper considered her own, having brought up two litters there, she stayed there, because also she was chained, which I did out of mercy to the neighbours' cats, and if she did not like the dinner Mrs. J. J. gave her, why she got no other ; but since I gave up the yard, when Mrs. J. J. does not please her in the cooking, she goes straight to our butcher's and walks off with whatever piece of meat pleases her best, and takes it into Brompton churchyard to eat it quietly. She's as fleet as a roe, and once in the churchyard, she knows the boys dare not follow her ; and indeed they don't bother much about catching her, for they know, sooner than have her badly used, I'd pay for the meat, and that's what Mrs. J. J. can't stand. Last week there was three shillings in the week's bill against Pepper, for sheep's head and trotters. I gave in to the *head*, but 'trotters' is what I know the dog's above—Pepper is above trotters!—and the butcher and I had words about it, and Mrs. J. J. put in her word as well, and she said Pepper or she must leave the house. Now ma'am, I think it would not be the thing to let Mrs. J. J. go, and keep Pepper ; so, if I don't get a home for the poor animal——" Jonson was obliged to leave the sentence unfinished, as Pepper had attacked a small boy who was vainly attempting to get at her blind side, which was turned towards a basket of oranges.

"The greatest little thief in Chelsea," Jonson called him, and when he saw that Pepper had bruised one of his poor red shanks, without however breaking the skin, the good-natured greengrocer gave him an apple not to cry.

"Please, sir," stammered out young impudence, "I'll hold the other leg to her, if ye'll give me an orange!"

"There never was such a watch," continued Jonson, after dismissing the imp, with the threat of a sound thrashing; "never! Your yard is too well walled for her to escape, so she could not get into trouble with any of the butchers, and she's equal to any three policemen, by day or night. The corner is very much exposed: poor Pepper, poor brute, she's worth her bit any day."

Convinced of Pepper's admirable qualities as a watch-dog, I returned home, and cook answered the gate bell. There was an inquiring expression in her face. I went round to the greenhouse; she followed me, with the huge watering-pot full of water; she could not continue to restrain her curiosity, so she asked, "Beg pardon for the liberty, but have you seen Jonson, ma'am?"

"Yes; I have seen Jonson."

"Did he tell you the rason—the *rale* rason of his partin' with Pepper? But I don't think he could, and it's troubled to the heart's core I am; a good honest-hearted dog like that, and a sound teetotaller. If she wasn't so firm to her principles she might keep a good roof over her head." She laid down the watering-can, and we looked at each other.

"You must tell me what you mean, cook."

"I don't like saying a word agin my neighbours. I never was a backbiter, and none of my seed or breed ever got a fellow cratur into trouble; but, ma'am, I'm sure you won't let the wind of the word pass the Rosery gate, and it's just this: Mr. Jonson is a worthy man as ever broke the world's bread, and so is his wife, when the drop's not in her. Yes, that's just it. *He* looks it over, and would never heed the green bottle that she hides behind the big saucepan under the dresser; but not so Pepper. I'm thinking she took the pledge from the

acrobats I'll tell you about ; but anyhow she'll give no pace to any one, not even her mistress, that has the smell of spirits about them, and that's just it. Mrs. Jonson thinks she might have many a *drop on the sly,* but for Pepper, who howls and growls, and tells as plainly as dog can spake that the mistress is agin on the spree ; and when Mrs. Jonson prevailed on one of her comrades to bring her some gin a while ago, though she had as good as taken her oath against it to her husband, Pepper scented it as it passed through the shop, and overturned the woman on the praytee baskets, and tore the pocket off of her side, and broke the gin-bottle, and went ramping to the master ; and the mistress would have murdered her, there and then, only that the master swore (and he's a quiet Christian man, is poor Jonson, but when he is up, why he *is* up, and that's the whole of it) that as long as he'd a roof over his head it should shelter his dog ; and it's the cause of such disturbance, that every time I go to the shop, I quite expect I shall hear the dog is missing. Poor honest Pepper ! "

It was quite two years, she told me, and before Mrs. Jonson had yielded to the evil habit that made her home miserable, that cook went with them to visit a friend residing in the neighbourhood of Richmond. Turning down a lane leading to Ham Common, they came upon a party of acrobats, who, though weary and footsore, toiled up some rising ground, and threw themselves on the sward, while a kindly village girl had drawn from a dilapidated well a pitcher of water, which the eldest of the wanderers gratefully received on his knees. "Mighty pretty it was to look at," said my servant, who had that natural love of the beautiful by no means uncommon in her countrywomen, "and I never forgot it because of this. There was a black-looking terrier among them, who came with a bound to me, standing on her hind legs, and making a fuss as if she knew me. I certainly did not remember her at the

time. I could not make it out, only a trembling came over me.

"'If the dog takes to you,' said the old man, who seemed to be the head of the party, and so devoutly thankful for the cold water, 'I wish you would take her; we have enough to do to keep ourselves, and she is a faithful thing, and hates the smell of spirits, so that no power would get her into a public-house: she took up with us one stormy night when we were camping out, and has been with us ever since.' The end of it was that Mr. Jonson, who wanted a dog at the time, gave the old man a couple of shillings and a share of our provisions, which were gratefully accepted, and washed down by another pitcher of water.

"When we were seated in the omnibus going home, the dog scrambled into my lap, and passing my hand over her head, I felt a slit in the under part of her ear, and, as I did, my heart gave a lep, as if it would jump out of my mouth. I knew her then, and who she was, and where she came from; and I could not help laying my cheek on her head, as a mother would on the head of her child, and I was glad it was too dark for my friends to see the tears that wet that dog's poor dusty head that night.

"You'll take in, ma'am, from what I've tould you, that there's a bit of a history between me and that poor animal, which you see is that dog that I've tormented your honour about, more shame for me, only I couldn't help it; and if it's plasing to you, some other time, I'll insense you into the whole of it. She'll be safe, out of the hands of her enemies, and if you take her you've got an honest dog—though no beauty—and I'll be as grateful to the day of my death, as if it was my own flesh and blood you protected."

Of course, the inevitable result followed.

CHAPTER IV.

So there was a bit of romance—a link between my handsome cook and the ugly dog—and another walk to Mr. Jonson's decided the matter, greatly to the satisfaction of all parties.

"Go to the lady, Pepper," said Jonson, "and be as faithful to her as you've been to me! Mrs. J. J. will see the loss before the month's out in apples and oranges, and want a dog in that time as badly as now she wants to get rid of one; but," he added, forgetting his usual politeness, "that's the way with the women,—leastways in green-grocery. She's turned as hard against the dog as a frozen turnip; she's shut her eyes against the good, and opened them on the bad, wider, and forgetting past services, is the worst foe the beast has,—worse than cats or boys. But don't mind it, Pepper, if the lady should turn against you, I'll give you as easy a death as if you'd been a lady's lap-dog all the days of your life."

Pepper looked up at her master's round, rubicund face, into which he was endeavouring to impart an expression of sentiment, as if she said in her hard, dry way—"Don't be a fool, Jonson," and with another wink at me, she curled herself round the top of the potato-basket, while her keen eye shone like a star above her determined tail.

"Please, ma'am, am I to send over the dog and the potato-basket?" inquired Jonson, as I was leaving the shop.

Now, whenever I am undecided about anything, I fall back with wifely meekness upon my superior, so I answered, "I must ask my husband, and will let you know."

"Oh!" said the greengrocer, while a bright smile illuminated his good-natured face, "it's only to tell him I'm going to drown the dog, and he'll have her, I know that. Pepper, you're sure of a good home now, old girl, for life."

Jonson was right.

The following day, the "good" dog Pepper and her favourite potato-basket were installed in comfortable shelter, and, lest she might escape through the coach-house or stable into the Gloucester Road, the communicating door was locked, the yard being considered by cook the weak point of our *premisees*, as she pronounced it.

The manner in which cook altered, and refined, and elongated the English language, in her desire to be considered *English*, would have been exceedingly amusing, if it had not in time, as I have already said, quite destroyed my belief in her veracity: that made me uncomfortable. If I used an Irish phrase, or relieved an Irish child (she was hard as steel against a full-grown pauper, but a ragged child melted her heart), she would turn away, muttering, "May the heavens be your bed when the time comes!" or, "The Lord blesses the dew that falls on the young corn." Tears would rush into her great grey eyes, at any tale of distress connected with Ireland. It was the time of the cruel famine which fell upon my poor country, and I received subscriptions, to assist in even a small way the good Samaritans who had come forward to help their fellow-creatures in their time of sore need. Our servants, and the servants of many of my friends, brought me their mites, and children, now grown to be brave men and good women, by rigid self-denial heaped their pennies together, and not only gave a donation great for their small means, but continued their halfpenny or penny a week despite all temptations, until there was no longer necessity for help. Cook's donation was very liberal, and she thus, so to say, *excused* it:—

"I'm sure I've no call to the country, or the country to me, only in memory of my dear grandmother. I ought to do my best, for it's no rest on my bed I'd get if I thought one of her people wanted anything I could send; you've no right, ma'am

dear, to be evenin' the country to me. I'd never have come to live with an Irish lady, if I'd a' thought she'd lay claim to me."

"Well, cook, it is very easy to remedy that now."

"Oh, don't! I beg your honour's pardon. I did not think you'd get that maning out of it, only I never could bear any one to take me for Irish, just out of my grandmother."

I do not think that Pepper enjoyed the security and tranquillity of her new quarters half as much as her more active life at the corner of Stewart's Grove. Not that she was forgotten by her foes; the greengrocer boys and butcher boys seldom passed the yard gate without drawing a stick across it, in a manner peculiar to boys, accompanied by "Hallo, Pepper, old girl! how's your sheep's head?" or, "Pepper, my beauty, how's your eye?" This Pepper found very hard to endure, and I have seen her tearing the wood of the gate with her sharp, strong teeth, anxious to revenge the cruel insult. The cats, too, found her out, and would sit on the wall aggravating her, so that cook had to spend a considerable portion of her time in dislodging them. Pepper and cook used to hold confidential communications together, in cooing sorts of whispers, and in what was an unknown tongue to all but me, who observed that whenever cook murmured to Pepper "Thurum pogue" the animal would stand on its hind legs, and endeavour to lick her face or hands. I spell the words perhaps not correctly, but as they are pronounced. "Thurum pogue" means in Irish "Give me a kiss." I would have asked in the most direct manner if Pepper was Irish born, but I knew cook would deny it, and the manner in which the dog pricked her ears at an Irish voice, and screamed and jumped with delight when a passing organ (patronised slyly by cook) ground out "St. Patrick's Day," told a tale poor cook would not have liked to tell. Dogs

are frequently affected by particular tunes. I had one of the beautiful dogs of Malta, who, after washing, looked like a heap of snow-flakes, and that creature, by name Tiny, recognised "God Save the Queen" with determined loyalty, joining in, if not in excellent tune, certainly in good time; she took no notice of other music. Even so did "St. Patrick's Day" excite the patriotism of "Pepper, the baste." Indeed, I once caught cook dancing a jig to this very tune, which she whistled *sotto voce*, to Pepper, snapping her fingers, "covering the buckle," "heeling and toeing" it, to perfection, while Pepper capered on her hind legs opposite to her, changing sides with marvellous dexterity. The other servants were out for a holiday, and cook thought I was in the greenhouse. She had brought Pepper in to tea, and after tea, doubtless wished for a little national exercise. It was a scene never to be forgotten, particularly the conclusion, when Pepper sprang from off the ground into cook's arms, and they hugged each other with every demonstration of affection. Pepper winked, and absolutely moved her tail in a near approach to a wag, and then there was such "cooing" and whining, and "cushla machreeing," as I never heard before!

After that, I felt that Pepper and cook were united by the memory of some early companionship or affection, which was kept a profound secret from me, though I half suspected it was known in a degree to Jonson.

Certainly the dog was a character. At first, she licked her lips at the Italian greyhounds, as she used to do at the cats, and they, pretty things! arched their necks and tossed their heads disdainfully, as they passed the trellised gate, which, though it prevented any assault, did not prevent their eyeing each other; but in a short time Pepper understood that they belonged to the *premisees*, and took them under her protection, a guardianship particularly ignored by Ninon, who believed

she could protect herself. Folly was a desperate little fool. I only wonder how she passed through life at all: she was always getting into difficulties. One day she sprang into the dripping-pan, and scalded her pretty feet with the hot grease; another time she ran up the steps, and jumped into the water-butt, where she would have been drowned but for Pepper, who having seen the accident through her trellis, got up a tremendous outcry, and when cook opened the gate to ascertain the cause, made a rush up the steps, dashed right into the butt, and effected an immediate rescue. Of course cook made the most of that piece of sagacity. Had it not been for Folly's delicate and exceeding beauty, I could not have tolerated her stupidity and absurdity so long as I did; but beauty cannot make a continued stand against real disadvantages; she was a most helpless anxiety, and was totally devoid of affection. I gave her away at last to a person who already possessed two pugs, a Skye, a Russian poodle, and a huge mongrel Newfoundland. I forget her name, but I remember she was always called "the dog lady," and very fond she was of Folly.

The untiring watchfulness and sagacity of Pepper interested us more and more: she declined our caresses, and was quite independent of sympathy, but whenever I whispered *Thurum pogue*, or *cushla machree*, or *avourneen*, she was on her hind legs in a moment, her rough nose thrust through the bars of the garden gate, and her red tongue extended to its full length, in the endeavour to lick my hand. If I went still farther, and sang a few bars of "St. Patrick's Day," her queer face shrivelled up into a grin, and she dodged about on her hind legs, evidently expecting me to do the same; until doubtless offended at my declining her as a partner in a jig, she would drop down suddenly, and shrink back to her refuge in the potato-basket. Despite her confinement, I really think this would have been

the most tranquil time of Pepper's life, if she had not been roused and irritated by the boys in the road and the cats on the stable-tiles; they tormented her terribly, and did so with impunity, as she could not get at them: she was well-fed, and many a time during the day, and especially in the twilight, cook stole into the yard to hold converse with her favourite.

So matters continued: until one morning as I was passing from the front to the back garden, a rough voice from the road called out without ceremony or introduction,—

"My lady, that's my dog!"

I went to the gate, and asked the man if he had spoken to me. The reply was:—

"Ay, indeed, my lady,—the dog in your yard is my dog,—I know her by her *vicious voice;* there isn't such another all over the world; and by the same token her name is Pepper."

I replied that the dog was ours; it was given to us by our greengrocer Jonson, who had a right to dispose of her as he pleased.

The man sturdily persisted "that the 'baste' was his, and he'd have it, if there was law or justice to be had in England," and he placed his hand resolutely on the gate, which, as usual, was locked inside.

I told him he should not have the dog unless he proved his right to it; just as I said so, cook, who had heard my voice and only seen a rabbit-skin cap above the rails, came from the kitchen, straight to the gate. Instantly, an exceedingly rough and dirty hand was thrust through the bars, exposing also a thick and bony wrist, accompanied by a shout so loud, that all the dogs barked, the tollman's magpie chattered, and the toll-man poked his head out of his sentry-box.

After a variety of ejaculations the voice subsided into words,—"Oh, Molly O'Gorman, and is it yourself that's in it? Molly, won't you give me a shake of the hand for the sake of

ould times,—though you did cast me off, and never thought it worth your while to inquire whether I was dead or alive. Oh, Molly dear, have you forgotten the babby-house I built you, in the grip of the dry ditch?—and the magpie I reared for you, that stole the priest's spectacles?—and the 'hide-and-seek,' and 'blind man's buff,' and the 'jig' we used to dance in the sweet summer evenings, on the fair green of Ballynatrent" (oh, cook! cook!!). "And didn't your mother send you that very puppy—when I was so broken-hearted that I thought I must follow you to England: and it's cruel hard you were, Molly my jewel,—and I that carried that pup that your mother sent you, I may say inside my skin, I took such care of it! Maybe it's the English air that's taken the sight out of your eyes, and the hearing out of your ears, and turned the tongue in your head, and the heart in your bosom into cowld stone, so that you won't see or hear or spake to the wild bird of your own mountain. Didn't I train that *baste* into all sorts of tricks,—and the time you broke your leg, what amusement had ye? Only the dog. And if I made a highwayman of myself, and if I did lose my character,—oh, Molly, it was you that did it, for you wouldn't spake the word that would save me, and you know, that at Ballynatrent, when you turned first against me, no one could say a thing to my disadvantage, that might not be said against twenty others, as well as myself,—and there you stand now, as stiff as the round tower on the Rock of Cashel, without a smile on your lip, or a tear in your eye, or a 'save you kindly,' to a poor craythur who,"—and then followed a recapitulation of the same story of their early knowledge of each other, mingled with protestations of regard, and the fact of his bringing Pepper over, a present from her mother, "under his skin," for "safety," though Pepper like the rest of the world deserted him, one stormy night, and he never could trace her, till he heard her *vicious voice* that very hour.

To this cook listened with forced calmness: the shame that she should stand before me a certified Irishwoman, after all her protestations to the contrary, overwhelmed her: then her pride received a terrible shock by such a ragged disreputable looking fellow having been at any time her friend and neighbour. I withdrew a little way from the storm I fancied was brewing (for I had never noted patience or forbearance among cook's virtues), observing in an undertone that "she had better speak to her friend inside, than outside, the house, for that the tollman and his magpie were listening to all that passed." But the poor woman was quite crushed. In a moment she was on her knees at my side, clinging to my dress, and struggling for words: at last she managed to say:—

"Send him away, oh, mistress dear, send him away. I wouldn't let the door of your house be darkened with the likes of him: oh, you don't know the pisoned drop that's in him—I'll give him my quarter's wages, ma'am, if he'll take an oath to the priest not to come near me, only don't let him have the dog my poor mother sent me: it's thrue he brought it, but it never was his, as I'd prove in a law coort, rather than let him have her, though I'd die alive with the shame to own him for my countryman, or to let on before the English that I'm Irish, and he to the fore! Oh, lady dear, save me from the liar's shame, and don't let him have the dog. She's dead now, my poor mother, ma'am, and that dog is the only thing belonging to her I can look at or touch. I know his wickedness; as I'll have nothing to say to him, he'd murder the dog before my eyes; he tried it once, and that's the way her lip was split. Send him away, ma'am dear, only don't, don't let him have Pepper."

I said, "For all this I am sorry, but what proof have I that you are telling truth now?"

She looked earnestly in my face, and the words came trem-

bling from her lips,—"I never told you but the one black lie, denying my country, and sure you didn't believe me, and what hurt was it to you?"

"Not to me, Mary, but to you; it prevented my believing in you."

"Believing in me!" she repeated, more than once: that was perhaps the first moment she felt the injury untruth does the untruthful. "And it was out of my denying my country, you got to doubt what I said?"

"Certainly."

"See that! It was he that made me ashamed of the country, and made me turn my tongue to spake fine English! Maybe you won't believe what a villain he is, because I say it; but oh, ma'am dear, if you'd take the stick from him, and let Pepper at him, you'd see what she thinks of him, and *she never told a lie in her whole life!*"

Then slowly rising she added, "But believe me or not, if he ever enters under the roof where I am, or touches that dog, which you sheltered, though it's my dog, I'll make a convict of myself." After expressing this determination she walked into the house, regardless alike of the man's entreaties and reproaches.

I told him in a few words that he must leave the gate, as it was evident my servant would hold no communication with him, and that from his own showing the dog was not *his* but hers.

This seemed to him a new reading of his claim. "Maybe I deserve her to seal her lips against me, my lady, but it's hard, so it is. We war neighbour's children close to the fair green of Ballynatrent, and I wish I had never left it: if she would only say 'I forgive, and God bless you!' but she was always mighty high in herself, and would make no more allowance for a boy like meeself, than she would for a girl who has

the grace of God in her heart an' her eyes from her cradle to her grave. Oh, lady, if you'd undertake my cause, I'd lave you to be judge and jury, and abide by yer law, and that would be the first law I ever stood to, you see, if your honour knew the rights."

I do not think I mentioned that Pepper, doubtless from her Celtic blood, had an intense hatred, not to one individual, but to the whole police force; despite the eight-foot wall that shut her in, she knew the step of a policeman the moment it crossed the road, and saluted the sound with a shrill, short, whistling sort of bark, different from her usual warnings; just as Rabbit-skin uttered the words, "if your honour knew the rights," Pepper gave tongue, sent forth her police bark, and the erect form of our Government protector turned the corner of the Gloucester Road. In an instant, the man started from the gate, and rushed off to the right, while the policeman advanced more rapidly than usual from the left.

He paused at the gate. "I beg your pardon, madam, but was that man begging?'

"No, he was not."

"He's just out, after his last three months; but we've all our eyes on him."

I thought within myself, that if Mary had heard the policeman confess that the eyes of the whole force were on her "playfellow of the fair green of Ballynatrent," it would rouse her sympathy far more than his eloquence. She thoroughly sympathised with Pepper in her dislike of the "peelers."

That evening, the housemaid told me cook was not well, she had gone to bed, but would not say what was the matter with her.

I found her door fastened on the inside, but she "hoped I would forgive her for shutting herself in, she would be all right in the morning."

I went to the yard, and invited Pepper to come and see cook; she pondered over the invitation for a minute, then winked, and followed me up stairs with much gravity, sniffed and scratched at the door, and was at once admitted. The usual "cooing" and "cushla machreeing" did not follow, but I heard heavy and bitter sobs, and more than one sympathetic whine from the poor dog.

CHAPTER V.

I WAS sorely perplexed between the real regard I entertained for Mary, and the fact that her residence having been discovered by this good-for-nothing man, it would be painful to her, and perhaps dangerous to us, if she remained in our service. I knew her pride, and the sensibility which is its invariable accompaniment. I believed she was sincerely attached to us, as Irish servants so frequently are to their employers. For some time she did not quite harmonise with the other servants, nor they with her, but that had died out. Though Mary denied her country, she never denied her creed, and I believe never missed an opportunity of standing up bravely for the Pope. My dear mother's maid (according to Mary) was a "black Protestant," and certainly *she* lost no opportunity of boasting that *she* went over to Ireland with the great and good King William, who "saved the country from popery, slavery, and wooden shoes;" *her* prime favourite among the animals was Ninon. There were two factions in the kitchen, but that of the cook was the most difficult to comprehend, for while she disclaimed her country she did battle for the Pope. At one time the war waxed so fast and furious, that I found Ninon decked in orange ribbons, and the kitchen cat (it was before Pepper's arrival) inconvenienced by a huge bow of green ribbon. I threw both emblems into the

fire, and declared that if there were any more party-quarrels, both servants should be discharged, a decision which I found gave the English housemaid great satisfaction.

But this new difficulty was far more perplexing, and after half-an-hour's mental weighing and measuring, I could only arrive at one conclusion, and that gave me a great deal of pain. Just as I was again weighing for and against, cook asked permission to come in; Pepper followed her, and curled herself round at the feet of her legitimate mistress. Mary looked shy and distressed, as she had never looked before, and was painfully at a loss for words; at length she said,—

"Your kind feeling for me, last night, mistress, saved the life of Pepper. That born villain threw poisoned food over the wall to the poor innocent dog, out of revenge on me, because I would not spake to him: the mane, cowardly *spalpeen*, to turn on the dumb innocent."

I was greatly shocked, and asked for proof.

She stated that one cat, who had been prowling in the yard, was dead, and another poor animal dying; she had herself taken a bone to the chemist's, and he said it was powdered with poison.

The act was so un-Irish, that I was slow to believe Rabbit-skin had been guilty of such cowardice and treachery. I told her so.

"May the Lord help your innocence!" she ejaculated; "but the nature of him ever and always was to go through fire and water for revenge. I know him to my sorrow, an' so I ought,—he's my husband!"

I could not help repeating the word "husband!"

"Not all out," she added, "though we war book-sworn to each other, an' we little more than childre; but just as I would have kep' my word to him it was the Lord's mercy that saved me. Sure I found he had another wife, a poor mother-

less girl, that he won to go to the priest with him, in less than six weeks after she first saw him !—more fool she, and she with a tidy trifle of money !"

"Then he has a real, living wife, Mary ?"

"If you please, ma'am, he has not."

"Why, you said just now, he had."

"*Had* isn't *has*, ma'am ; she's dead, happy for her ! it is the readiest way to get rid of a blackguard like that ! She sent for me to ask my pardon just before she was called. 'For what ?' I says.

"'For taking Mike from you,' she says, quite natural, 'who had the best right to him.'

"'Don't mention it,' I says, 'you did me the gratest kindness in life.'

"'But you'll have him now,' she says, 'and you'll be a far better wife than I have ever been,' she says, the poor, misguided craythur, who was a born slave to him, the dirty tyrant. So I knelt by her side, where there ought to have been a bed, and I swore to her that I never would have hand, act, or part in him, and with that a smile came like light over her poor, white face, and her eyes shone for a moment with a joy past telling.

"'Then,' she whispered, and they war her last words, 'then you won't come betwixt us in the next world.' As if she had not had enough of him in this ! Oh ! then, it put me in mind, though I don't know why, of 'Sim of the Stick,' as we called him, who beat his wife regular every week for forty years, and when he was dying ordered the shillala that did the work to be buried with him, that he might have it handy when he met her in the next world ! But what I'm wanting to say is this—I must lave you."

There was a long pause ; rivers of tears rushed from those great, grey eyes, and that dear, ugly dog stood on its hind legs,

gazing into her face with mute agony, until, at last, the woman sank down beside her, and laying her face against the dog, wept long and bitterly.

"I could not stand the place," she said; "why, this very morning, when I was washing the steps, the tollman's magpie kep' on screaming, 'Good-morrow, Paddy.'"

I reminded her that the bird had done so these two years.

"But I couldn't bear it now; moreover, I know that man will be hung, and I've had disgrace enough through him already. He'd never rest, either, till he had the dog's life or mine! He'd think as little of taking one as the other; sure, I know. So, ma'am dear, a cousin of my own sails with his family from Liverpool to Melbourne next week, and I and my dog will go with them; the bad thing is, laving you unprovided; but you have only to hould up your finger, and you'll have loads of cooks. I couldn't live here, and you knowing what you do about me! And every time the dog barked, or the bell rang, the terror of him would come over my heart, and I'd be like in a fog, or a dead woman, all out, and no heart in my work; not all as one as I used to be when I knew he was safe in prison; sure, I'd do nothing but watch for a ring of the bell day and night, and afeared to answer it; and not able to let the dog out of my sight, for if he wasn't hung for me, he'd be transported for her. I knew well how you hated black lies, but I committed no falsity about Pepper. I told the bare truth about her; the yard did want a watch, and she's as true as fire to flint. If you'd ask'd me was she my dog, I'd have said—I think I'd have said the truth; or, maybe I'd have thought it only a white lie. Oh, yes, I know what you're going to say, that no lie can be white. But God bless you, ma'am dear, for the shelter you gave her! and I hope the Lord and your honour will forgive me, and may the power above keep all young craythurs from even the *shadder* of a bad man, for the very

shadder stains the snow it rests on. I've seen the rose in June wither away from a blast, and drop leaf by leaf, until nothing was left but the poor mouldy heart: but that's nothing to the blight of the young living soul. Wasn't I ashamed to think that man and I war made out of the same sod, neighbour's children, with only one potato-garden betwixt us?"

"Then, it was not that you were ashamed of your country, Mary, that made you deny it, only you were ashamed of your countryman!"

Her face was illuminated in a moment, and she sprang from the ground where Pepper and she had crouched together.

"That's it—God bless you!—that's just it."

And then she recapitulated again, glancing at me occasionally, and saying,—"But maybe ye don't believe me, maybe it's thinking you are of the lies I tould."

Mary volunteered to make a "clane breast," but I saw it was impossible: like us all, in the hidden recesses of her poor heart, something was stowed away, known only to her own thoughts, that refused to come forth. She stumbled in her disclosures, though I asked no questions, but listened to what was told, wondering at the contradictions even in her nature, and seeing amid the chaos, how her devotion to her mother's memory strengthened all that was good within her.

The day soon came for her departure. Pepper's foes pursued her to the last; the morning she left, she did battle with a fierce cat, which so irritated her temper, that for some time it was impossible to get her into a cab, while the magpie kept croaking, "Poor Paddy, poor Paddy!"

At last, Pepper, encircled by her friend's arms, drove off, bestowing on me one of her most emphatic winks, while her lip trembled.

And so, both were gone.

CHAPTER VI.

FIFTEEN years elapsed, and the memory of "Pepper and her Foes," faded into the indistinct past. Cooks, in their varieties, came and went: not many, though, for I generally manage to obtain good servants, and mine have been fairly contented with a good service. But Mary's shadow, as it were, would sometimes arise, and I wondered how she had fared in her new country. I thought how delightful were her quaintness and originality, and then remembered how I had never believed in her, and how *that* of itself had always given me a painful sensation: yet, with time, even that memory grew dim! The dear old Rosery too became a thing of the past; young artists, in poetry as well as painting, who had met and talked over their future beneath the shadow of our grand old Mulberry, had grown into the glories of a present time, winning and wearing laurels that will be ever green in history. The greyhounds mouldered beneath the turf over which they had bounded; another race of cats sat on the stable roof, and defied the garden walls; another generation of boys swarmed in Stewart's Grove, and rubbed their sticks against the garden rails. The Rosery, alas! was ours no longer; we had found a home more fresh and tempting, twenty long miles from London, having a lawn without blacks, and trees and gardens fresh and fair, where, moreover, there was abundant space for pets of all kinds—pets, that increased in interest the longer they were known. To many people a dog is but a dog, and a cat a cat:—

"A primrose by the river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more!"

I pity those who can neither observe nor analyze the various shades of animal character. I have had dogs of all kinds; sometimes two or three born of the same parents, fed in the same way, equally caressed, and in like manner educated; yet each had its own peculiarities. The Italian greyhounds I have mentioned were as opposite in temper, disposition, and intelligence, as if they had been of separate and distinct species. Ninon was a grave, thoughtful, wise animal, gentle and attentive to every member of the family, but devoted to me, and to me only. She would remain in the library without motion during the five or six hours I spent over my desk. No one could tempt her from my side; even if a strange cat looked in at the window, Ninon remembered I was not to be disturbed. Her eyes would flash fire at the cat and her beautiful frame quiver with excitement; but she would neither stir nor bark, unless I whispered, "Up, and at her." That was enough; at one bound she cleared the intervening chair, and once she charged so violently against a closed window, that the broken glass wounded her head severely. But the moment I wiped my pen, or placed it in the little vase of water kept for the purpose, she knew that my morning's work was done, and sprang about the room with manifest joy. She welcomed my friends with stately approbation and as much cordiality as she considered it right to bestow on any one except her mistress; but she disliked strangers, and kept up a sort of undertoned remonstrance at their being admitted. She was very particular as to dress, sniffing at anything that was old or shabby, and rejoicing if I put on what was new and handsome. She always examined herself in the cheval glass, and twinkled her ears about, as if she desired to see whether they looked best in repose or in action. She would literally smirk and smile at herself in the glass, showing her teeth, that were even and perfect as a row of oriental pearls, with evident pleasure: she

would fetch and carry,—"die for the Queen,"—and take nothing out of the left hand. When spoken to, she held her head on one side with an air of consideration, and comprehended with wonderful sagacity whatever instructions were given. "Ninon, I am going to be very busy," sent her to her place on the rug;—and if I added, "When I have done, we shall go for a walk or a drive," she would look up with a peculiarly pleased expression. But the creature so perfectly understood my words, that if I said "drive," though several hours had elapsed, she would spring up when my task was done, and, instead of rushing out, would wait patiently until the brougham came round, to take her place in her own corner. If I had promised her "a walk," she would cry at the hall-door until it was opened, then leap and spring over the lawn, as greyhounds only can leap and spring,—never losing sight of the door out of which she knew I should come.

Folly and Jessy were lovely to look at, exquisitely formed, with large, luminous hazel eyes. Ninon was larger, of the colour which is called "blue:" she treated these two favourites with great kindness and consideration, but never with the respect she manifested for a dear wise dog named Rose: in fact, she considered the two little greyhounds as—what poor cook would have called "born naturals."

Ninon was such a noble creature that she was never displeased at any amount of caresses bestowed on her relatives; but she would not suffer them to accompany us in our road walk; the garden and the meadow—yes,—but not the road: she would look at me, and whine, and then drive them home. She knew as well as I did that they would spoil our walk, and that we could not enjoy anything, if we had to keep a perpetual watch on Folly's and Jessy's movements. There had been a time when Ninon did not object to their company in a drive; but once Jessy sprang out of the window, and, being

much hurt, yelled and screamed in my lap all the way home. I do not know what was Ninon's opinion of the accident, but she held down her head and looked ashamed and distressed, and she never would take another drive with Jessy. If Jessy went in, she went out; her resolution was made, and she adhered to it.*

There was no doubt that Folly was a greater fool than Jessy, for Jessy was sly: the latter had sufficient intelligence to be very cunning, stealing and hiding things she fancied, but Folly took what she desired openly, and never hid even a bone. They all differed from grand old Rose, a fine noble dog, such a dog as you make an out-door companion and friend of, in the country; who walks with you, sympathizes with you, and does all but talk, and gets through even a little of that, in its own way. She was a cross between a retriever and a Newfoundland. She would not kill rats herself, but she used to watch their haunts in the bank of the pond, and take a little, grubby, rat-catching terrier, whom she patronized (he was a visitor, not an inmate), to the holes, show them to him one after another, and leave him to do the dirty work himself. She loved her master dearly, and always endeavoured by her gentle, dignified caresses to attract his attention; but, like most of his sex, the knowledge of his power made him exercise it, and when he read under the shadow of our acacia trees, Rose would sit for ten or more minutes with her nose on his

* Dear old Ninon long ago went the way of all dogs; but her memory is a source of happiness to me even now. We buried her in a pretty and quiet nook, and carved these lines on a slab that covers her grave—

"What marvel if I shed some tears
Over the friend of fourteen years?
You will not blame the tears I shed—
Though nothing but a dog is dead."

knee looking at him with her small dark eyes, patient as Grizel, and then, in addition to her nose, would put up her paw, and wait again. When these arts failed to woo the notice she coveted, she would go behind him, place her two paws on the back of the iron seat, and then in a moment snatch off his hat, and gallop with it to the other end of the lawn. That was certain to commence the game of romps she loved so well.

Dear, faithful Rose! You ought to have passed your winters in the stable, with the horse you understood, or with the wee pony, who was not much bigger than your dear self: the winter kennel did not sufficiently protect you against the cold, and you became rheumatic, and died before your time; but we had happy days and happy rambles together, over Weybridge Common, and among the brushwood and hollows of St. George's blithe and pleasant hill. Other rambles we had nearer home, when the Italian greyhounds were taken for "change of air" to the Chertsey meadows, where the ruins of the fine old abbey can be traced beneath the waving grass, or up and about St. Anne's Hill, where I looked out for the proud castle of Windsor, while you tried hard to catch a hare, or even a rabbit; but they were too swift for you, my own old Rose! You grew fat and heavy while you ought to have continued slim and genteel. I loved you for the sake of her who gave you to us, and because you were like the friend of my childhood—black Charger. Charger was once dreadfully mauled by the butcher of Carrick's big dog—and we thought he must have died. I considered myself very ill-used because my mother would not let me sit up with Charger at night: I cried myself to sleep, curled up like a cat in the window-seat, and fancied the sea moaned in sympathy with my sorrow! But Charger recovered, and then his steady friend and firm ally, Neptune,—a colossal Newfoundland, as large and in general as dreamy as a calf, a

giant among dogs, who seldom barked, or ran, or wagged his tail, but lay "i' the sun in summer" on the square stone that topped the steps leading to the hall-door, and in winter, on his own particular mat in front of the old clock in the hall:—that great dog entertained the deepest feeling of revenge towards the dog that had so grievously ill-treated his friend, and when poor Charger was able to limp up the hill of Carrick, which was more than a mile from Graigue (the dear old home of my young days), Neptune accompanied him, cold and silent and stately as ever, step by step with his lame friend, and they soon discovered the great bull-dog, nodding in the sun before the butcher's house. Charger was a little in advance of Neptune, and when Bull saw him, he arose, and shook himself, and glared, advancing a step or two, as though to say, "Oh, it is you,—I will soon finish you, puppy!" But Neptune stood between them, not suffering the bull-dog to touch his friend, and meeting the charge like a hero. The bull-dog was fierce and active, but independent of his great strength, Neptune's throat was protected by a brass collar, and his thick, shaggy coat was a natural armour of defence. The dogs fought like tigers, the bull-blood was thoroughly heated, and the Newfoundland knew the value of his weight and size; yet the odds would, for all that, have been dead against Nep, who was aged, while his antagonist was in his prime, but for the protecting collar. The bull-dog held on to it like grim death, wondering, doubtless, that his opponent was not strangled: both dogs were punished, but Neptune would have certainly closed Bull's fighting calendar, only that the fight was put an end to by the butcher and the smith,—the butcher anxious for the safety of his dog, and Mr. Bow, the smith, determined that Neptune should not be "kilt intirely." Charger, we heard, stood calmly at a distance, looking on: now he was not a dog to do that when his friend was spilling his best blood in his cause, if it

had not been previously arranged between them that Charger should keep out of the fray: it was the more remarkable as Charger was generally pugnacious, hearing the sound of battle afar-off, and rushing into the combat in true Irish fashion, without waiting to investigate the question of right or wrong. Neptune must have had great influence to compel his remaining stationary. The dogs were away the entire day, and when Nep was discovered with unmistakable marks of recent combat on his person, and Charger in the very act of licking his wounds, the household surged into great commotion. "Where had he been? Who had dared to hurt him? Charger and he couldn't have fought?" "No, Charger was as smooth as satin." The arrival of the smith, who was also somewhat of a dog-doctor, solved the mystery: he related the whole affair with eloquence and emphasis, and gave a sorry account of the state of Bull's shoulder, which was supposed to have been broken. It was well known how the brute had fallen upon poor Charger, so he had very little sympathy from our household; and Neptune's health was drunk that night in the servants' hall, with I fear more than three times three, the sentiments which accompanied the toast being,—"May we all have as true a friend when needed!"

Generally speaking, if dogs are not sagacious, it is to be attributed to a defective education. Those who neglect to cultivate relations with the animal kingdom lose a great deal of what assists to cheer and invigorate life.

While my greyhounds and Rose, and a new importation, a lovely little white Lion dog of Malta (with various other beasts and birds), formed a very happy family at our country house, a puppy was given to me with the assurance that it was a beautiful Skye, a "Blue" Skye. Her rough little jacket was decidedly "foxy"—but my kind friend persisted in the assurance that she was a "Blue Skyë," all her relatives

were "Blue Skyës;" and *she* could not fail to be a "Blue Skyë."

It was hoping against fact. Every day I looked at her, I trusted in her turning "blue;" but no, the fox deepened, and the hair grew fast and furious, hard, sticking-out hair. She certainly had beautiful eyes, and a lovely little round head, but it was far nearer akin to a spaniel's than to a Skye's: there had been a *mésalliance* somewhere. The short-rounded nose told a history, and some went so far as to stigmatize my "blue" foxy Skye as a "cur." This was hard to bear, for I always prided myself on the respectability and purity of my different canine families. I know "curs" are wonderfully intelligent and affectionate; and I have sheltered many a one. I once carried off a cur triumphantly from a conclave of boys who had broken its leg, and were debating whether it should be "swum," or "danced:" "swum" I am told means drowned, and "danced," hung. I carried it across Hyde Park at three o'clock, until we (doggie and I) got a hackney coach: poor little, dirty, screaming thing! but when I laid it on my lap, and the creature looked up in my face, with such an appealing look, half agony and whole trust, I felt I could have carried half a dozen, if so rewarded. I cured that cur, but did not keep it: I found it a good home at our milkman's, and saw it frequently; and to confess the truth, the "blue" "foxy" Skye was a little like my long-ago cur of the "Long Water." I had not made up my mind what to do with her, when, with admirable sagacity, she placed herself! She adopted our excellent gardener Richard: she fixed her affections on him before she had quite shed her first teeth, and from that day to the present moment—and she is a very old dog now—Effie has never—I really may say never—left him day or night. She had two strong passions: she loved her master, and hated donkeys. In the middle of the darkest December night, if a donkey, for whom

its gipsy master opened the gate, trespassed on field or lawn, that dog would insist on her master's uprising and going forth in the darkness to eject the intruder. With wonderful instinct she would lead the gardener to where poor Long-ears was enjoying a late supper, and, had her strength but equalled her inclination, she would have torn him limb from limb. I must say the gardener returned her devotion, for a more indulgent master never lived; she grew handsome as she grew up, and her eyes were wonderful, so large and bright, but she never became "blue."

We passed seven happy years in that sweet valley of the Thames, and there is not a shadow on its memory! Latterly, Effie ceased to be annoyed by the donkeys; it so chanced that we did an act of kindness to a poor gipsy-woman, who had been stabbed (she said accidentally) while sleeping in her tent. The young surgeon of our village, with the tenderness and benevolence that belonged to his nature, saw her, and finding how much she required, came to us to help her. When she recovered, and before her party struck tents for other quarters, the gipsy woman, with her little brown baby in her arms, went round to those who had been kind to her, to thank them.

When she came to me, her great luminous eyes filled with tears, she kissed my hand repeatedly while kneeling at my feet,—

"The pretty lady," she said, "won't believe what the poor gipsy could tell her of the lines on this palm, which are so filmed over, hard though some are, and crossed too, my pretty lady, but *filmed* over, by God's blessing. Sleep sweet on your pillow, you and the good master, you have never lost hammer or nail, berry or brush, since you passed under your own oak-tree at the great gate, and you never shall, lady, nor pigeon or chick, duck or hen, no, not so much as a flower, my pretty

lady: and more, neither mare nor foal, nor even the great ass with the mark of the Christian, my pretty madam, on its shoulders, will ever open your gate again to taste the sweet grass: so the little sharp dog and its big master may rest by moonlight, or starlight, or no light. Never again;—for your gifts to the poor gipsy woman, and your care, and the sunshine you brought into her poor tent, have circled round your house, and you need never turn key or bolt door, while here you bide."

Whenever that woman—Myra Stanley—and her tribe visited the green lanes of Addlestone, she always paid me a visit, as one lady would to another, not to tell fortunes or to beg, and certainly not to steal, though I think my poultry-pens were a great temptation to her; she always regarded them with wistful looks, and then as she turned away invariably said—"But you never lose anything, and never will, never will, my pretty madam!" and we never did. After Myra Stanley's recovery Effie and her master rested in peace. No "donkey, mare, or foal" attempted to "crop the sweet grass by starlight, moonlight, or in the dark."

The memory of sweet and happy years has taken me away from my story.

We had been at Firfield more than five years, when, rather at an early hour for visitors (though some, I confess, are wickedly inconsiderate, and think far less of breaking up a morning's pen-work than they would of breaking a teacup), the servant brought a large card into the library, "MRS. SMITH" engraved on it in large letters, amid a foliage of flourishes; there it was, "Mrs. Smith,"—plain Smith, without the aristocratic "y." The name is by no means uncommon; I heard the other day there are 407 "Mrs. Smiths" in Brighton!

"The lady told me to say," observed the servant, with the becoming gravity of a well-bred domestic, who never evinces

sympathy with, or for, anything—"the lady told me to say it was Mrs. Smith and a box."

"Mrs. Smith and a box!" I repeated.

"Yes, ma'am, that was the message."

Mrs. Smith, a well-developed female, handsomely dressed, but with a greater variety of colour in her garments than I considered good taste, stood in the middle of the drawing-room; a large square box with a prominent brass handle on the top by her side.

She looked at me, and I at her.

"Ah then," she exclaimed at last, "don't you know me, ma'am? Sure I'd know you among a thousand. God for ever bless you, me lady!"

The unmitigated brogue, the soft voice, the loving expression of those large grey eyes, told me who it was, though the form was so increased in size and portliness.

"Ah, you know me now, ma'am, and you'll know her too, though she's not in it,—that is, the whole of her,—and quiet enough now, poor thing! only she has her foes still; the moths and the cockroaches stir her up, though I'm watching them constantly, bad luck to them!"

She pressed a spring, and down went the front and sides of the box, and there sat Pepper within the rim of her potato-basket, stuffed, poor animal, not with sheep's-heads, as of old, but with—I know not what! and certainly to great perfection: the split remained above the white tooth,—one eye was closed.

"Yes," I said, "if that open eye could but wink, it would indeed be Pepper to the life."

"She had a long life, and a happy death according to her kind, ma'am," said my ci-devant cook, while turning the box into a better light,—"and might have been alive now, only she hated niggers worse than rats or cats. I told her often they

war her fellow crayshures, but she wouldn't mind me, and one day, she tried to take a bite out of a little nigger's leg, who was stealing yams—if she'd had a tooth in her head to do it with, he'd have remembered it—but, poor thing, she couldn't hould her grip, and he slipped away, and grinned at her, the little aggravating blackamoor! And the disappointment and the passion choked her; but her time was up, and she died, as she had lived, in the cause of duty. Still she was, though only a dog, off the same sod as myself,—my mother's (the heavens be her bed!) present to me, when she was a fractious puppy, —but I didn't mind that,—she was made of the clay of the ould country! me own faithful friend! Often on the rowling sea, I thought of this day, when I should let you see the remains of her, bring her to you, ma'am dear, to have a last look at her, just out of gratitude."

She stooped to pat the dog's head, and muttered the "cushla machree" over it, so tenderly: it was strange to hear such a radiantly dressed woman speaking with such an accent: it was all natural and right for "Mary" to have the brogue, but I was perplexed when I looked at "Mrs. Smith," while her words rolled out in the richest Munster!

"The rats," she said, "the villains, they found her out on the passage; there's nothing escapes them murderin' ruffians of rats; one would think they had a spite aginst her; I don't know how they got into the cabin, but they did, and many a long night have I sat on the box, with a soda-water bottle in my stocking ready for them" (oh memory of the "fair green of Ballynatrent!"). I shouldn't have saved a hair of her, if I had not watched over her day and night.

"I've been grately blessed, ma'am; I'm married to as good a man, and as kind, as ever stepped in two shoes; an independent gentleman he is now, and I've been able to send new

vestments to the priest of Ballynatrent, and had a tombstone put above my dear mother, that as long as a shamrock springs from the sod will tell what she was, and where she is, for I never rested until she *was prayed out.** And I heard the end of *him* you knew about three years ago come Candlemas. So I could come back without fear or trembling, and my master longed for the ould country."

There was a pause; it was difficult to realize the transformation. Mrs. Smith busied herself with crumbling camphor on the remnant of the dog's tail, which stuck out as usual, "quite natural,"—the voice, the sweet, loving eyes! yes, it was a reality, but not without romance. I do believe she had put on all the finery she possessed in the very exuberance of her desire to do me and herself honour. *Could* that enlarged woman, glittering in chains from which depended such "knobby nuggets" as it would have been dangerous to show in a crowded thoroughfare, in bracelets of astounding size, ear-rings of wreathed ferns, and in that unmistakable Australian brooch, composed of a palm-tree, and a tuft of such foliage at its base as would have driven a botanist insane—could that woman, surrounded by such an atmosphere of wealth, and looking so solidly happy, and fresh, and rich, have been the cook who denied her country! It was more like a trick in a pantomime than the revival of old times. Yes, her position was evidently changed, and why should I quarrel with her accent?—her warm, earnest heart was clinging to the associations of her early poverty and struggles, cherishing the very skin of that battered old dog, and believing (God bless her for her belief in human sympathy!) that I should enjoy seeing the glitter of her prosperity, and the moth-eaten skin of what she certainly loved best in the world.

* Out of Purgatory.

I was too bewildered for some minutes to ask questions. At last I said, "We should be happy to see Mr. Smith, if at any time he visited the neighbourhood," and then I admired Pepper, and stroked her coat, and said how well the character of the dog had been preserved.

"Aye, sure,—but she'd have grown out of your knowledge without the white tooth. I had *that* put in,—and indeed Mr. Smith has great patience entirely on account—" but at that moment Mrs. Smith caught sight of a juvenile cockroach, who was seated on the top of Pepper's very shiny nose.

"There's one of them!" she exclaimed, while making a plunge at the doomed insect, "to think of her foes keeping it up that way, when I may say she has no body, and no breath. You used to say, ma'am," she added reproachfully, "that Pepper made foes by her bad temper:—sure, there's no temper in her now, and they won't let her alone!"

It was a treat to look at Mrs. Smith's face; there might be a little assumption of dignity, yes, *dignity* in her manner, carried out by her handsome presence, but the happiness, the simple, womanly happiness of seeing a friend, and being able to open her full, national heart to one who she knew would understand her, swept away all her pomposity. Looking earnestly into my face, and laying her solid fingers, cased in mauve kid, on my arm, she said,—"Ah, do now, ma'am, please to call me Mary, it would sound so sweet! there's no one calls me that now. Mr. Smith is so anxious to keep up my dignity, he always calls me Mrs. S."

Then she told me about her servants, and what her jewels cost, and dwelt lovingly and proudly on her husband's goodness and station; yet I saw she had something to say about him that hung fire, something that she could not quite frame words to disclose,—at last out it came,—"*he hated the Irish!*" Yes, it was quite true, "he hated them;

he always said he'd never marry an Irishwoman; he told her so often."

"But," I said, "he *did* marry an Irishwoman."

A queer expression came over her face. "He does not know it," said Mrs. Smith.

"Not know it?" I repeated.

"Sorra a bit," was the reply.

I thought it perfectly unnecessary, yet I said, "Oh, Mary, you should have told him."

It was now her turn to repeat, and she did so. "Told him! I shouted it at him, till I was a'most black in the face, —and plenty besides me did the same: good-natured mothers, who wanted him for their own girls."

"And he did not believe it!"

"He never heard it: he's stone-deaf, hasn't heard a sound these twenty years, poor dear man. He often says—'Mrs. S.,' he says, 'I'd die happy, if I could hear the sound of your sweet English tongue,—only once't,' he says, the dear, kind, innocent, good man."

"But you should have made it known to him somehow."

"Don't I know that? He should know it, but he doesn't, there's neither a black nor a white lie in it. I tould him hard and fast, and often enough, both before and since we were married. His cousin once't, out of a spite to me, wrote it down on paper that I was Irish, and Mr. Smith ordered him out of the house there and then!"

"But could not you write it?"

She crimsoned over cheek and brow in a moment.

"Oh, ma'am, sure if you'll remember you know I couldn't. Sure you might think of the milk-tallies, and the marks I made on the wall of the larder against the butcher's book. Sure, if I could write, wouldn't *you* have got a letter to tell you about poor Pepper? and the good fortune the Lord laid out for me,

a poor, ignorant, half heart-broken girl! and it all came about through the fever Mr. Smith had, and none of his servants would go near him but me. I tended him for weeks, and when he got to be himself again, he made me Mrs. Smith, and taught me to talk on my fingers. Sure, I hear it's the fashion now for ladies and gentlemen to read, write, talk, and spell, every language in life except their own, and that's the cause (as I hear) of all the bad English that do be in books. They'll all have to be sent to Ireland, I'm thinking, to learn *raal* English; that is, the people that do be making the books;—and sure," she added with one of her sly smiles, "I wouldn't wonder if *you* made one out of

'PEPPER AND HER FOES.'"





F. D. Hardy.] [J. & G. P. Nicholls.

THE TWO FRIENDS.—HELPING MOTHER.

THE TWO FRIENDS.



"YOU stand there—I stand here," said Harold Douglas to his friend Augustus Saile.

"You stand there, certainly," he repeated, "but how long you will stand *there* or anywhere else, if you have not strength to persevere in a resolution, which you confess is good for your health of mind and body, is more than any one can tell."

"I confess, frankly," replied his young friend, "that my mind is clearer, and my body less feverish, when I follow your example."

"Nay," interrupted Harold, "it was your own example, both as to precept and practice, for many months. You not only took the pledge yourself, but you induced all within your sphere to take it. You were so far consistent; then you practised what you preached; you stood forth boldly and bravely against the drinking usages of society; you proved that your

body and mind worked well and wisely, without *stimulant* in any shape, and you could do so, because the excitability of your nature requires to be tempered by nutrition, not wrought on by stimulants."

"Really!" exclaimed Augustus, pettishly, "I do not know what you desire; have you ever seen me the worse for what I take?"

"Have I ever seen you the better?"

"Yes, when I was ill, and was ordered a couple of glasses of Sherry every day."

"It was ordered you as a medicine."

"Certainly; and I took it as such, and got well."

"And then you left it off, as you would Quinine, or any other temporary strengthener!"

"No! I did not."

"Nor did you keep to the two glasses."

"Pretty nearly."

"No; not to two—nor to three—nor to four; in fact, the inconsiderateness of your nature, the unconscious craving when the 'little stimulant' requires a little more—the *thoughtlessness begotten by one* glass, *increased by two*, and so on, until your spirit would rise against any one who presumed, at such times, to dictate to you! If wine is ordered as a medicine, *take it as a medicine*—but do not insult the Cause which has the power to regenerate thousands; do not insult that good Cause, *second* only, as you know it to be, to GODLINESS,—by returning to what even if not a *positive* evil in moderation, leads to certain evil in excess; it is not, so to say, the intoxicating effect that alcohol has, that is its *sole* danger, it mingles with the blood, it heats the brain, it renders man insensible to much, that were he cool and rational—he would call *impure:* to the very old—the feeble—*wine as a medicine*, may, *possibly*, in some cases, be necessary, but let

it be used *as a medicine*, and not insinuated into the kindly and blessed hospitalities of life, with the danger that it may blight and blacken, where those infatuated by its spell, fancied it would cheer and enliven. I dare not ask a man to take a glass of wine at my table; *how can I tell to what it might lead?*"

"You never see me excited by it."

"I see you so constantly excited, apparently without it, that I can easily imagine what you are with it. You have avoided me much of late, Augustus; and I know it is because you are *at heart* ashamed of your *back-sliding*. You have said I never see you excited by stimulants, but when you take a glass too much—or even the quantity you call 'usual' at night —*how do you feel in the morning?* Do you spring from your bed eager to meet the first sunbeam that penetrates our London atmosphere? Do you, after the refreshing, but rapid bath, sit down to write a friendly letter, or to read or make a sketch, or snatch a walk before your breakfast, and then to business with a clear head—a bright eye—an even pulse—and a thankful, though, it may be, unexpressed, gratitude to GOD, that you have done *nothing* to weigh your eyelids down, when you have to look out upon the world, or to cause your pulse to flutter, or your head to ache—that you have not suffered the artificial man to war against the natural man? I tell you that intoxication is only *one* of the phases of a disorganized habit. No man can habitually take spirits, or wine or beer, without eventually upsetting his system—creating new wants, and increasing his constitutional weaknesses. Nay, I am right; the foolish become more foolish—the wise forget their wisdom; those who would have you like themselves, congratulate you on your apostacy; and those who reverence consistency and desire your *real* freedom—freedom for your brain and your blood — freedom for the strong pulse — freedom from the thraldom of evil custom—mourn over your stumbling."

Augustus Saile started, and repeated "stumbling"—

"Yes, stumbling. No man who abandons a powerful principle from fancy or fashion; no man who avoids those he loves and respects; no man who is ashamed of what he does, because he cannot justify his actions, and having deserted a good cause, halts over his future—but must be accused of 'stumbling.' I am sorry you do not like the word; but, my friend, there is a Scripture which says, 'Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall'—how much more must those who know that they *have* 'stumbled' take heed of what the next move may be; if the firm of foot fall, what danger does not await the infirm?"

Augustus Saile drew himself up with an air of injured innocence.

"You have been preaching to me a sermon, Harold!" he said haughtily; "and I really do not know how I have deserved it. I have never been intoxicated. I spend very little time or money on wine, or in the society of wine-drinkers. My friends are decidedly temperate men."

"Sandy Kennedy, however," interrupted his friend, "was 'had up,' as it is called, not long ago, in consequence of a drunken frolic; and indeed, I was as much astonished as grieved at that, for I always thought Sandy a prudent fellow."

"You are right!" exclaimed Augustus, with an air of triumph. "Sandy *is* a prudent fellow—most careful; but the best fellow in the world may be induced, unconsciously, to take a glass too much; he is remarkably careful—so very temperate—but, I suppose, talking about the war, and one thing and another, he got excited, and then we drank the Fall of Sebastopol and the brave Allies, and sung 'Cheer, Boys, Cheer,' and Sandy (he has a weak head, poor fellow) forgot his two-glass rule, and when he began, he went on—I am so sorry! He got into bad company coming home, and his pocket

(as you saw in the Police Report) was picked, and some of the money was his employer's, and that was called for next day, and, of course, it was not forthcoming—and he lost his situation ; it was very hard, because he had been so exact for years,—and then, his pretty little wife—you remember Susan Ashley — well, she never reproached him by words, but fretted and fretted, *very* foolishly, for it did no good—until her trouble came before its time, and the baby was dead, and she died too, poor little Susan! and her mother says, the shock of seeing her husband brought home drunk killed her."

"Very likely ; now you have acknowledged 'that the best fellow in the world may be induced, unconsciously, to take a glass too much ;' those are your own words ; and by so doing, 'the best fellow in the world' gets into a row—is robbed—and robs his employer."

"No ! no ! *he* did not rob him."

"His employer's money was in his care ; *by his own act—of his own free will*—he rendered himself incapable of taking care of that money—he *violated a trust*."

"No ! no ! my dear friend—why any man may be overtaken in that way."

"Granted ; *any man who partakes of the drinking usages of society*—and just consider what followed !—Exposure—loss of character—a dead child — a dead wife—and this, I repeat, may happen to *any* 'moderate drinker.' The state of the atmosphere—the state of a man's stomach—the goodness, or the *peculiar* badness, of *what* he drinks—the excitement he labours under *when* he drinks—self-confidence—all lead to the result, or all *may* lead to the result of intoxication, and its consequences—and who can foresee what those consequences may be."

"Well, Harold, make yourself easy about me—I never can be disgraced like poor Kennedy : my head is as hard as a rock ;

I could drink half-a-dozen fellows under the table, and remain sober."

"Indeed! then how do you account for your misunderstanding with Gerald Smith?"

That was a hard blow to Augustus Saile. Gerald Smith had been to him as a brother in heart and spirit, for years, and now they never spoke one to the other.

In an altered voice he murmured, "You might have spared me *that*."

"I said it, because I wish to spare you *worse*."

"I was heated and irritable"—there was a sufficient pause to enable Harold to enquire—

"And what made you heated and irritable?"

"Why, if you will have it, I suppose the wine did; that is, *because I mixed it*, Sherry and Claret, or something of that kind, and my brain fired—and there was a secret, known only to Gerald and myself, and he said something, God knows what—that vexed me; and then, I taunted him with the secret, and he dared me to tell it, and I did. I shall never forget his look! I could have fallen at his feet and craved his pardon like a slave, the moment the words were spoken. I would have cut off my right hand at any other time, rather than have done it."

"It lost you a promised situation."

"No, Harold. Gerald was too noble for that—he kept his word—he got me the appointment—but he refused to see me. I declined the appointment—and—and—"

"Yes, I know. HER father broke off your intended marriage—trace back the cause of *that*, and tell me frankly, if you can believe that no evil results from *moderate drinking*, or if you can say frankly, with manhood's truth, that the drinking usages of society are not calculated to sap the foundation of all that should render society a social heaven upon

earth! Look facts in the face, and call things by their right names, I beseech you! Kennedy murdered his wife, as certainly as if he had cut her throat in a drunken tempest—you—lost both friend and bride."

"Harold!"

"My dear fellow, there is time and power for you to regain both; and I should not be your friend unless I warred with your weakness!"

"With my weakness! It is I who am strong—*you* who are weak; you dare not trust yourself without a '*pledge*.'"

"Nay, *that* is my strength: whatever we hold as faith, is strengthened by a promise. What is our baptism but a *pledge*? Is a man weak, because at the table of our blessed Lord he renews his *pledge* to continue the Christian he was *pledged* to become at his baptism? Is a statesman weak when he takes the oath of allegiance to his QUEEN? And what is that oath but a '*pledge*?' Is the soldier weak when he kisses the hilt of his sword, and devotes himself to his country? Is not *that* a '*pledge*?' Is the lover weak, when at the altar he becomes a husband? Does he not there give a '*pledge*?' Every home devotion, every great movement since the world began, is ratified by a '*pledge*.' The '*pledge*' is the evidence of our faith—of our loyalty—of our bravery—of our love—of our strength—it is the outward sign of our belief, in each, and all things I have named: we think upon our '*pledge*,' and 'our strength is renewed within us!'"

Augustus confessed that he had not considered the "pledge" in its old and social, as well as in its higher Christian bearing. "I have been so laughed at," he said, "for my weakness in needing a '*pledge*,' that I desired to show my strength by breaking it! and then the *custom* enchained me again. I really do not care about wine, I know it does not do me good; after the fillip it gives, I sink and fever; it certainly

does not permanently strengthen my body, and I am not as cool, or capable of work, as when I was true to my pledge. I certainly never saw so clearly before, that a PLEDGE is the evidence of a firm purpose, not the dread of a weakness; but were I to take it again, I might break it again."

"Then take it again," rejoined his friend, hopefully; the bright, cheerful hopefulness in a good cause, which is the result of perfect faith. "Renew your strength; the very consciousness of weakness leads you to seek strength; renewed strength—the very *rest* given to your constitution when free from the fever, the restlessness, the fault-finding, the depression, induced by alcohol—is a blessing; and IF the temporary insanity returns, why the sooner you again free yourself from it the better. When I hear men declaring they do not *like* wine, that they know every glass is a nail in their coffins, and confess at the same time, that they would be richer in health and pocket if they never touched it—I always think them insane, or *devilish*."

"Oh, my friend!"

"I cannot retract; Satan can devise no surer means to increase the population of his dominions, than drunkenness. *The moderate drinker is the drunkard's cupbearer;* he *could* save his fellow-creature if he would; it seems but a small thing to set aside the wine-cup to serve a fellow-creature, and if we forbore for the sake of that fellow-creature only, as an example, it would be no great sacrifice; but look at the reward of this forbearance! We save our health! We save our money! There is another consideration; to enable us to give help to our needy we have been obliged in our homes to dispense with many small luxuries."

"Stop, Harold, I assure you I have not drank wine *at home* for some weeks."

"Your friends have a right to be grateful for your considera-

tion, certainly! That is mean—you tax your friends for your abstinence! The moderate drinker by abstaining can save the drunkard. I have known instances of this over and over again; we can all, rich and poor, set a *good example;* every human being is a teacher, unconsciously, but still a *teacher*, either for good or bad—it is not his wish to teach—it is not her wish to instruct—and mind, I did not say we all instructed, though I did say we are all *teachers;* every man, woman, and child influences somebody—think then of the power for good or bad in example; and, I had almost said—the honour of England was at stake in this matter. To the '*pledge*' then—THE PLEDGE TO THE RESCUE OF ENGLAND FROM DISHONOUR AND FROM DEATH!"

Happily my story is not ended; I have to add of Harold Douglas that

> "Consideration, like an angel, came
> And whipt the offending Adam out of him."

He had been for so long a time an abstainer from all intoxicating drinks, that the lady of his love married him.

It is, as I have elsewhere shown, always a dangerous experiment to trust a whole future here, and it may be hereafter, to the keeping of one who cannot practise self-control—but far be it from me to say that the Drunkard cannot be reclaimed. I have known, indeed, many instances to the contrary; and I *know* that among the best and "sturdiest" upholders of Temperance are those who have known the miseries of Intemperance.

It is a tranquilly joyous scene that which the excellent artist, Mr. F. D. Hardy, has pictured: it was one that greeted the good man of the house when he entered his happy home.

The little maid, their first-born, was HELPING MOTHER: her

life of love had begun early; the lesson thus taught kept its influence for ever.

It was a cheerful voice that hailed them both as the husband-father paced rapidly through the pretty garden that graced his house—one of the many gifts given him by Temperance, that always brings with it perseverance and forethought, in addition to higher boons.

There was no self-reproach now; the cheeks were never flushed, the step was never feeble; the hand never shook. Worldly prosperity is never far apart from Temperance; but that is a small advantage compared with the holier blessings that result from a consciousness of doing right from right motives, upheld by Faith and strengthened by Prayer.

The two friends often met: on the one side there was no fear of a lecture; on the other, there was the knowledge that a lecture was not needed.





Alfred Elmore, R.A.] [Butterworth & Heath.

IT'S ONLY A DROP.—LADY STACY.

"IT'S ONLY A DROP!"

THERE is no subject that so deeply interests the friends of Temperance as that of which I shall briefly treat as a preface to this next sketch; notwithstanding that the tale has but little to do with the main topic of it. In Ireland, not less than in England, it is of the highest magnitude; for, to teach Temperance as the first, happiest, and holiest duty of the very young, is of paramount importance to every class and order of society. And I rejoice to know, that in both countries the organization of Bands of Hope, founded on holy Christian principles, is so enormously increasing, that hundreds of thousands of children are now enrolled under the banners of Total Abstinence in these "BANDS OF HOPE."

These children are truly our great FUTURE: taught from their very cradles to avoid drink as the chiefest danger to life, young or old, the VIRTUE will be to them easy: total abstinence will become, so to speak, a part of their nature; and they will grow up, whatever their condition or position may be, useful members of society, loyal subjects of the Queen, faithful

abiders of the law, fertile producers of national wealth, true servants of God—to do His will for the good of man.

It is impossible, indeed, to exaggerate the value of this vast organization: there is not a town, hardly a village, in these Kingdoms, that has not its "Band of Hope"—healthful, happy, and even industrious children, who are, according to the simple words of the wise king, "trained up in the way they should go;" when they are old they will not depart from it.

There are many admirably conducted and very useful publications specially constructed for them; their good friend, Mr. T. B. Smithies, is perhaps the most effective of all their caterers, for he brings not only good and sound literature, but pure art, to their aid. All his productions, indeed, are as sound teachers in the one way as in the other: the engravings that illustrate and adorn his periodical issues are so excellent that those contained in the costliest works do not surpass them: he is thus a teacher of art while instructing in religion, morality, and social duties.

It will be easy for those who would know more about this matter to obtain information; the depots of these publications are sufficiently known: but, in fact, live where the enquirer may, he and she will readily obtain access to the statistics that show what a mighty work has been in this way already done, while every day adds to "the noble army of children" recruited by the servants of God—whose labours God, of a surety, has blessed, and will bless.

I might greatly enlarge on this topic, but others have done that work better than I can do it.

It was a cold winter's night, and though the cottage where Ellen and Michael, the two surviving children of old Ben Murphy, lived, was always neat and comfortable, still there was a cloud over the brow of both brother and sister, as they sat

before the cheerful fire; it was obviously the birth not of anger, but of sorrow. The silence had continued long, though it was not bitter. At last Michael drew away from his sister's eyes the checked apron she had applied to them, and taking her hand affectionately within his own, said, "It isn't for my own sake, Ellen, though the Lord knows I shall be lonesome enough the long winter nights and the long summer days without your wise saying, and your sweet song, and your merry laugh, that I can so well remember—ay, since the time when our poor mother used to seat us on the new rick, and then, in the innocent pride of her heart, call our father to look at us, and preach to us against being conceited, at the very time she was making us as proud as peacocks by calling us her blossoms of beauty, and her heart's blood, and her king and queen."

"God and the blessed Virgin make her bed in heaven now and for evermore, amen," said Ellen, at the same time drawing out her beads, and repeating an avé with inconceivable rapidity. "Ah, Mike," she added, "that *was* the mother, and the father too, full of grace and godliness."

"True for ye, Ellen; but *that's* not what I'm afther now, as you well know, you blushing little rogue of the world; and sorra a word I'll say against it in the end, though it's lonesome I'll be on my own hearthstone, with no one to keep me company but the ould black cat, that can't see, let alone hear, the craythur!"

"Now," said Ellen, wiping her eyes, and smiling her own bright smile, "lave off; ye're just like all the men, purtending to one thing whin they mane another; there's a dale of desate about them—all—every one of them—and so my mother often said. Now, you'd better have done, or maybe I'll say something that will bring, if not the colour to your brown cheek, a dale more warmth to yer warm heart than would be convanient,

just by the mention of one Mary—Mary! What a purty name Mary it is, isn't it?—it's a common name too, and yet you like it none the worse for that. Do you mind the ould rhyme?—

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary."

Well, I'm not going to say she is contrary—I'm sure she's anything but *that* to you, anyway, brother Mike. Can't you sit still, and don't be pulling the hairs out of Pusheen cat's tail; it isn't many there's in it; and I'd thank you not to unravel the beautiful English cotton stocking I'm knitting; lave off your tricks, or I'll make common talk of it, I will, and be more than even with you, my fine fellow! Indeed, poor ould Pusheen," she continued, addressing the cat with great gravity, "never heed what he says to you; he has no notion to make *you* either head or tail to the house—not he; he won't let you be without a misthress to give you yer sup of milk or yer bit of sop; he won't let you be lonesome, my poor puss; he's glad enough to swop an Ellen for a Mary, so he is; but that's a sacret, avourneen; don't tell it to any one."

"Anything for your happiness," replied the brother somewhat sulkily; "but your bachelor has a worse fault than ever I had, notwithstanding all the lecturing you kept on to me: he has a turn for the drop, Ellen; you know he has."

"How spitefully you said that!" replied Ellen; "and it isn't generous to spake of it when he's not here to defend himself."

"You'll not let a word go against him," said Michael.

"No," she said, "I will never let ill be spoken of an absent friend. I know he has a turn for the drop, but I'll cure him."

"After he's married," observed Michael not very good-naturedly.

"No," she answered, "*before*." I think a girl's chance of happiness is not worth much who trusts to *after*-marriage

reformation. *I won't.* Didn't I reform you, Mike, of the shocking habit you had of putting everything off to the last? and after reforming a brother, who knows what I may do with a lover! Do you think that Larry's heart is harder than *yours*, Mike? Look what fine vegetables we have in our garden now, all planted by yer own hands when you come home from work—planted during the very time you used to spend in leaning against the door-cheek, or smoking your pipe, or sleeping over the fire. Look at the money you got from the Agricultural Society."

"That's yours, Ellen," said the generous-hearted Mike; "I'll never touch a penny of it; but for you, I never should have had it; I'll never touch it."

"You never shall," she answered; "I've laid it every penny out, so that when the young bride comes home, she'll have such a house of comforts as are not to be found in the parish —white tablecloths for Sunday, a little store of tay and sugar, soap, candles, starch, everything good, and plenty of it."

"My own dear generous sister!" exclaimed the young man.

"I shall ever be your sister," she replied, "and hers too. She's a good *colleen*, and worthy my own Mike, and that's more than I would say to 'ere another in the parish. I wasn't in earnest when I said you'd be glad to get rid of me; so put the pouch, every bit of it, off yer handsome face. And hush! —whisht! will ye? there's the sound of Larry's footstep in the bawn—hand me the needles, Mike." She braided back her hair with both hands, arranged the red ribbon that confined its luxuriance in the little glass that hung upon a nail on the dresser, and after composing her arch laughing features into an expression of great gravity, sat down, and applied herself with singular industry to take up the stitches her brother had dropped, and put on a look of right maidenly astonishment

when the door opened, and Larry's good-humoured face entered with the salutation of "God save all here!" He "popped" his head in first, and after gazing round, presented his goodly person to their view; and a pleasant view it was, for he was of genuine Irish bearing and beauty—frank, and manly, and fearless-looking. Ellen, the wicked one, looked up with well-feigned astonishment, and exclaimed, "Oh, Larry, is it you; and who would have thought of seeing you this blessed night? Ye're lucky—just in time for a bit of supper afther your walk across the moor. I cannot think what in the world makes you walk over that moor so often; you'll get wet feet, and yer mother 'ill be forced to nurse you. Of all the walks in the county, the walk across that moor's the dreariest, and yet ye're always going it! I wonder ye haven't better sense; ye're not such a chicken now."

"Well," interrupted Mike, "it's the women that bates the world for desaving. Sure she heard yer step when nobody else could; its echo struck on her heart, Larry—let her deny it; she'll twist you, and twirl you, and turn you about, so that you won't know whether it's on your head or your heels ye're standing. She'll tossicate yer brains in no time, and be as composed herself as a dove on her nest in a storm. But ask her, Larry, the straightforward question, whether she heard you or not. She'll tell no lie—she never does."

Ellen shook her head at her brother and laughed. And immediately after the happy trio sat down to a cheerful supper.

Larry was a good tradesman, blithe, and "well-to-do" in the world; and had it not been for the one great fault—an inclination to take the "least taste in life more" when he had already taken quite enough—there could not have been found a better match for good, excellent Ellen Murphy, in all Ireland. When supper was finished, the ever-

lasting whisky bottle was produced, and Ellen resumed her knitting. After a time, Larry pressed his suit to Michael for the industrious hand of his sister, thinking, doubtless, with the natural self-conceit of all *man*kind, that he was perfectly secure with Ellen; but though Ellen loved, like all my fair countrywomen, *well*, she loved, I am compelled to say, *un*like the generality of my fair countrywomen, *wisely*, and reminded her lover that she had seen him intoxicated at the last fair of Rathcoolin.

"Dear Ellen!" he exclaimed, "it was 'only a drop,' the least taste in life that overcame me. It overtook me unknownst, quite against my will."

"Who poured it down yer throat, Larry?"

"Who poured it down my throat, is it? why, myself, to be sure; but are you going to put me to a three months' penance for that?"

"Larry, will you listen to me, and remember that the man I marry must be converted before we stand before the priest. I have no faith whatever in conversions after——"

"Oh, Ellen!" interrupted her lover.

"It's no use oh Ellen—ing me," she answered quickly; "I have made my resolution, and I'll stick to it."

"She's as obstinate as ten women!" said her brother. "There's no use in attempting to contradict her; she always has had her own way."

"It's very cruel of you, Ellen, not to listen to raison. I tell you a tablespoonful will often upset me."

"If you know that, Larry, why do you take the tablespoonful?"

Larry could not reply to this question. He could only plead that the drop got the better of him, and the *temptation* and the *overcomingness* of the thing, and it was very hard to be at him so about a trifle.

"I can never think a thing a trifle," she observed, "that makes you so unlike yourself. I should wish to respect you always, Larry, and in my heart I believe no woman ever could respect a drunkard. I don't want to make you angry; God forbid you should ever be one, and I *know* you are not one yet; but sin grows mighty strong upon us without our knowledge. And no matter what indulgence leads to bad; we've a right to think anything that *does* lead to it sinful in the prospect, if not in the present."

"You'd have made a fine priest, Ellen," said the young man, determined, if he could not reason, to laugh her out of her resolve.

"I don't think," she replied archly, "if I was a priest, that either of you would have liked to come to me to confession."

"But, Ellen, dear Ellen, sure it's not in positive downright *earnest* you are: you can't think of putting me off on account of that unlucky drop, *the least taste in life* I took at the fair—you could not find it in your heart. Speak for me, Michael; speak for me. But I see it's joking you are. Why, Lent 'ill be on us in no time, and then we must wait till Easter—it's easy talking——"

"Larry," interrupted Ellen, "do not you talk yourself into a passion; it will do no good; none in the world. I am sure you love me, and I confess before my brother it will be the delight of my heart to return that love, and make myself worthy of you, if you will only break yourself of that one habit, which you qualify to your own undoing, by fancying, because it is the *least taste in life* makes you what you ought not to be, that you may still take it."

"I'll take an oath against the whisky, if that will plase ye, —till Christmas."

"And when Christmas comes, get twice as tipsy as ever, with joy to think your oath is out. No!"

"I'll swear anything you plase."

"I don't want you to swear at all; there is no use in a man's taking an oath he is anxious to have a chance of breaking. I want your reason to be convinced."

"My darling Ellen, all the reason I ever had in my life is convinced."

"Prove it by abstaining from taking even a drop, even *the least drop* in life, if that drop can make you ashamed to look your poor Ellen in the face."

"I'll give it up altogether."

"I hope you will one of these days, from a conviction that it is really bad in every way: but not from cowardice, not because you dar'n't trust yourself."

"Ellen, I'm sure ye've some English blood in yer veins, ye're such a raisoner. Irish women don't often throw a boy off because of a drop: if they did, it's not many marriage dues his Reverence would have, winter or summer."

"Listen to me, Larry, and believe that, though I spake this way, I regard you truly: and if I did not, I'd not take the throuble to tell you my mind."

"Like Mick Brady's wife, who, whenever she thrashed him, cried over the blows, and said they were all for his good," observed her brother slyly.

"Nonsense!—listen to me, I say, and I'll tell you why I am so resolute. It's many a long day since, going to school, I used to meet—Michael minds her too, I'm sure—an old bent woman; they used to call her the Witch of Ballaghton. Stacy was, as I have said, very old intirely, withered and white-headed, bent nearly double with age, and she used to be ever and always muddling about the strames and ditches, gathering herbs and plants, the girls said to work charms with; and at first they used to watch, rather far off, and if they thought they had a good chance of escaping her tongue, and

the stones she flung at them, they'd call her an ill name or two; and sometimes, old as she was, she'd make a spring at them sideways like a crab, and howl, and hoot, and scrame, and then they'd be off like a flock of pigeons from a hawk, and she'd go on disturbing the green-coated waters with her crooked stick, and muttering words which none, if they heard, could understand. Stacy had been a well-reared woman, and knew a dale more than any of us: when not tormented by the children, she was mighty well spoken, and the gentry thought a dale about her more than she did about them; for she'd say there was not one in the country fit to tie her shoe, and tell them so, too, if they'd call her anything but Lady Stacy, which the *rale* gentry of the place all humoured her in; but the upstarts, who think every civil word to an inferior is a pulling down of their own dignity, would turn up their noses as they passed her; and maybe she didn't bless them for it!

"One day Mike had gone home before me, and coming down the back bohreen, who should I see moving along it but Lady Stacy; and on she came muttering and mumbling to herself till she got near me, and as she did, I heard Master Nixon (the dog man*)'s hound in full cry, and seen him at her heels, and he over the hedge encouraging the baste to tear her in pieces. The dog soon was up with her, and then she kept him off as well as she could with her crutch, cursing the entire time; and I was very frightened; but I darted to her side, and with a wattle I pulled out of the hedge, did my best to keep him off her.

"Master Nixon cursed at me with all his heart; but I wasn't to be turned off that way. Stacy herself laid about

* Tax-gatherers were so called some time ago in Ireland, because they collected the duty on dogs.

with her staff, but the ugly brute would have finished her, only for me. I don't suppose Nixon meant that; but the dog was savage, and some men, like him, delight in cruelty. Well, I bate the dog off; and then I had to help the poor fainting woman, for she was both faint and hurt. I didn't much like bringing her here, for the people said she wasn't lucky; however, she wanted help, and I gave it. When I got her on the floor,* I thought a drop of whisky would revive her, and accordingly I offered her a glass. I shall never forget the venom with which she dashed it on the ground.

"'Do you want to poison me,' she shouted, 'after saving my life?' When she came to herself a little, she made me sit down by her side, and fixing her large gray eyes upon my face, she kept rocking her body backwards and forwards while she spoke, as well as I can remember—what I'll try to tell you—but I can't tell it as she did—that wouldn't be in nature. 'Ellen,' she said, and her eyes fixed in my face, 'I wasn't always a poor lone creature, that every ruffian who walks the country dare set his cur at. There was full and plenty in my father's house when I was young, but before I grew to womanly estate, its walls were bare and roofless. What made them so? Drink!—whisky! My father was in debt; to kill thought, he tried to keep himself so that he could not think; he wanted the courage of a man to look his danger and difficulty in the face, and overcome it; for, Ellen, mind my words—the man that will look debt and danger steadily in the face, and resolve to overcome them, *can do so.* He had no means, he said, to educate his children as became them: he grew not to have means to find them or their poor patient mother the proper necessaries of life; yet he found the means to keep the whisky cask flowing, and to

* In the house.

answer the bailiffs' knocks for admission by the loud roar of drunkenness—mad, as it was wicked. They got in at last, in spite of the care taken to keep them out, and there was much fighting, ay, and blood spilt, but not to death; and while the riot was a-foot, and we were crying round the death-bed of a dying mother, where was he!—they had raised a ten-gallon cask of whisky on the table in the parlour, and astride on it sat my father, flourishing the huge pewter funnel in one hand, and the black jack streaming with whisky in the other; and amid the fumes of hot punch that flowed over the room, and the cries and oaths of the fighting drunken company, his voice was heard swearing "he had lived like a king, and WOULD die like a king!"'

"'And your poor mother?' I asked.

"'Thank God! she died that night—she died before worse came; she died on the bed that, before her corpse was cold, was dragged from under her—through the strong drink—through the badness of him who ought to have saved her; not that he was a bad man either, when the whisky had no power over him, but he could not bear his own reflections. And his end soon came. He didn't die like a king; he died smothered in a ditch, where he fell; he died, and was in the presence of God—how? Oh, there are things that have had whisky as their beginning and their end, that make me as mad as ever it made him! The man takes a drop, and forgets his starving family; the woman takes it, and forgets she is a mother and a wife. It's the curse of Ireland—a bitterer, blacker, deeper curse than ever was put on it by foreign power or hard-made laws!'"

"God bless us!" was Larry's half-breathed ejaculation.

"I only repeat ould Stacy's words," said Ellen; "you see I never forgot them. 'You might think,' she continued,' 'that I had had warning enough to keep me from having anything

to say to those who war too fond of drink; and I thought I had; but somehow Edward Lambert got round me with his sweet words, and I was lone and unprotected. I knew he had a little fondness for the drop; but in him, young, handsome, and gay-hearted, with bright eyes and sunny hair, it did not seem like the horrid thing which *had made me shed no tear over my father's grave.* Think of that, young girl: the drink doesn't make a man a beast *at first*, but it will do so before it's done with him—it will do so before it's done with him. I had enough power over Edward, and enough memory of the past, to make him swear against it, except so much at such and such a time; and for a while he was very particular; but one used to entice him, and another used to entice him, and I am not going to say but I might have managed him differently: I might have got him off it—gently maybe; but the pride got the better of me, and I thought of the line I came of, and how I had married him who wasn't my equal, and such nonsense, which always breeds disturbance betwixt married people; and I used to rave, when, maybe, it would have been wiser if I had reasoned. Anyway, things didn't go smooth: not that he neglected his employment: he was industrious, and sorry enough when the fault was done; still he would come home often the worse for drink—and now that he's dead and gone, and no finger is stretched to me but in scorn or hatred, I think maybe I might have done better; but, God defend me, the *last* was hard to bear.'

"Oh, boys!" said Ellen, "if you had only heard her voice when she said *that*, and seen her face: poor ould Lady Stacy, no wonder she hated the drop—no wonder she dashed down the whisky!"

"You kept this mighty close, Ellen," said Mike; "I never heard it before."

"I did not like coming over it," she replied; "the last is

hard to tell." The girl turned pale while she spoke, and Lawrence gave her a cup of water. "It must be told," she said; "the death of her father proved the effects of deliberate drunkenness. What I have to say, shows what may happen from being even once unable to think or act.

"'I had one child,' said Stacy; 'one—a darlint, blue-eyed laughing child. I never saw any so handsome, never knew any so good. She was almost three years ould, and he was fond of her—he said he was, but it's a quare fondness that destroys what it ought to save. It was the Pattern of Lady-day, and well I knew that Edward would not return as he went: he said he would; he *almost* swore he would; but the promise of a man given to drink has no more strength in it than a rope of sand. I took sulky, and wouldn't go; if I had, maybe it would not have ended so. The evening came on, and I thought my baby breathed hard in her cradle; I took the candle, and went over to look at her: her little face was red; and when I laid my cheek close to her lips so as not to touch them, but to feel her breath, it was hot—very hot; she tossed her arms, and they were dry and burning. The measles were about the country, and I was frightened for my child. It was only half a mile to the doctor's; I knew every foot of the road; and so, leaving the door on the latch, I resolved to tell him how my darlint was, and thought I should be back before my husband's return. Grass, you may be sure, didn't grow under my feet. I ran with all speed, and wasn't kept long, the doctor said, though it seemed long to me. The moon was down when I came home, though the night was fine. The cabin we lived in was in a hollow; but when I was on the hill, and looked down where I knew it stood a dark mass, I thought I saw a white light fog coming out of it; I rubbed my eyes, and darted forward as a wild bird flies to its nest when it hears the scream of the hawk in the heavens. When I reached the door, I saw

it was open; the flame cloud came out of it, sure enough, white and thick. Blind with that and terror together, I rushed to my child's cradle. I found my way to *that*, in spite of the burning and the smothering. But, Ellen—Ellen Murphy, my child, the rosy child whose breath had been hot on my cheek only a little while before, she was nothing but a cinder. Mad as I felt, I saw how it was in a minute. The father had come home, as I expected; he had gone to the cradle to look at his child, had dropt the candle into the straw, and, unable to speak or stand, had fallen down and lay asleep on the floor not two yards from my child. Oh! how I flew to the doctor's with *what* had been my baby; I tore across the country like a banshee; I laid it in his arms; I told him if he didn't put life in it I'd destroy him in his house. He thought me mad; for there was no breath, either cowld or hot, coming from its lips *then*. I couldn't kiss it in death; *there was nothing left of my child to kiss*—think of that! I snatched it from where the doctor had laid it; I cursed him, for he looked with disgust at my purty child. The whole night long I wandered in the woods of Newtownbarry with that burden at my heart.'"

"But her husband, her husband!" inquired Larry in accents of horror; "what became of him; did she leave him in the burning without calling him to himself?"

"No," answered Ellen; "I asked her, and she told me that her shrieks, she supposed, roused him from the suffocation in which he must, but for them, have perished. He staggered out of the place, and was found soon after by the neighbours, and lived long after, but only to be a poor heart-broken man, for she was mad for years through the country; and many a day after she told me that story, my heart trembled like a willow leaf.

"'And now, Ellen Murphy,' she added, 'do ye wonder I

threw from yer hand the poison in the glass you offered me? Ellen, let no drunkard become your lover, and don't trust to promises; try them, prove them all, *before* you marry.'"

"Ellen, that's enough," interrupted Larry. "I have heard enough—the two proofs are enough without words. Now hear me. What length of punishment am I to have? I won't say that, for, Nelly, there's a tear in your eye that says more than words. Look—I'll make no promises—but you shall see; I'll wait yer time; name it; I'll stand the trial."

And I am happy to say, for the honour and credit of the country, that Larry did stand the trial—his resolve was fixed; he never so much as tasted whisky from that time, and Ellen had the proud satisfaction of knowing she had saved him from destruction. They were not, however, married till *after* Easter. I wish all Irish maidens would follow Ellen's example. Women could do a great deal to prove that "*the least taste in life*" is a great taste too much!—that "ONLY A DROP" is a temptation fatal if unresisted.





Erskine Nicol, A.R.A.] [Butterworth & Heath.

BRIDGET LARKINS.—THE MOUNTAIN LASS.

BRIDGET LARKINS.

AN IRISH SKETCH.

SOME years ago, Bridget Larkins, or Mrs. Bridget, as she was called in courtesy, exercised imperial sway, not only over all the fish wives of the maritime town of Wexford, but over the gentry who frequented the market. Bridget was a large and singularly handsome woman, vigorous in body and mind; sometimes —always indeed, when not under the influence of ardent spirits—a kind and generous person, fair and honest in her dealings, and ready to assist the poor to the utmost of her power; but unfortunately, I never met any one who could call to mind the time when Bridget did not drink. In the early morning she was always sufficiently sober to bargain with the boats, and so good a judge of fish, that she was certain to have the "pick of the market;" but as the day advanced, poor Bridget's infirmity increased—glass upon glass of whisky was swallowed until she became half maniac, half demon. She would stand

at her stall, which was covered with the finest fish, inviting her customers in a thickened voice; and if they refused to purchase, or attempted to buy from any one else, she would utter the most violent imprecations, and hurl fish after fish against any one who interfered with her business.

Many would visit the market on purpose—and a sinful purpose it was—"to get a rise out of Biddy." She was frequently committed for acts of violence; so frequently, that it was suggested to her that continuing business at all was useless, for she was no sooner out of jail than she was in again. Bridget would certainly have been more severely punished for several of her assaults, had she not, despite this one most miserable habit, maintained a hold over her companions as well as over the upper classes, by her frank, brave, and generous nature. She had plunged off the quay several times to save the lives of persons who had fallen into the water; and once, when more than half tipsy, and encumbered by her clothes, she swam several yards, tossing in the waves like a porpoise, and at last diving after the child of a rival fish-wife, who, more intoxicated than herself, had suffered her infant to fall from her bosom into the sea. She saved it, however; and the remembrance of this heroic deed frequently got Bridget "only a week," when any one else would have had a "month."

When in prison, she was a perfect treasure to the turnkeys and prisoners; *there* she could not obtain whisky; and her energy and kindness found an ample field for exercise. Bridget, humble as she was in her sober moments, had one cause of exultation.

"Well," she would say, "I know I'm bad enough—sorra a worse you'd find when the drop's in me, in all Wexford, and that's a *bould* word; for I've heard say that in all Ireland, Wexford's the greatest place for drink; high and low, rich and poor, ever and always fond of the drop. It was the whisky,

God help us! drove them all mad in the time of their troubles: I'm not going to deny it—it was the drink! And I'm not going to give it a good word—there's no one hates it worse than myself when it is out of my sight; and yet it's my life, my comfort!—it has turned off my best friends—left me without a cloak to my shoulders—a shoe to my foot—a dacent roof to cover me—a bit of fish on my stall—a friend to my back—often taken the blessing from my door—and turned my hand against my neighbour!—and yet," she would add, while a bitter smile played on her lips, "and yet, as I've nothing left but the glass, why I must keep to it. I could not do without it—I never want to eat a bit while I've the whisky; and as I lived, so I'll die. So here goes my last penny for half a naggin; sure the publicans won't give me credit any longer."

Poor Bridget! the very boys who used to tremble at the shake of her finger, now taunted and insulted her as she staggered along the streets.

"I've done wicked things in my time," she said, "but though greatly provoked, I never riz my hand to a child." Even this solitary congratulation, this remnant of self-respect, was destroyed; for in a fit of intoxication, she hurled a stone at one of her tormentors, which nearly deprived him of life. When consciousness returned, the unfortunate woman's agony was fearful to witness; she flew again to the source of her misery, and became more degraded than ever, even amid a congregation of drunkards.

Bridget's home, if so may be termed the wretched cabin in which she lived, was under the shelter of one of the "three rocks" in my own dear county of Wexford: and circumstances, which it is needless to explain, led me to visit her there when I was but a young girl; not, indeed, needing, but receiving, a warning from the misery, I witnessed pervading everything in that dismal household. If a drunkard's house in the

town is bad, in the country it is worse. There it is more especially an outrage on Nature. The very air seems full of warnings and the rushing rivers or trickling streams that run from the mountain-tops into the valleys, protest against liquid poisons. They had, however, no such influence on Biddy Larkins; she was born and reared among such scenes: but their tranquil lines had never made way into her heart.

I can recall the day of that visit: my own remembered and beloved home—the home of my infancy, my childhood, and my girlhood—was not far off; but it was not often that the carriage was ordered to drive to the neighbourbood of the cluster of cabins, in one of which Biddy Larkins lived.

Yet it is not altogether a painful memory of "the long ago:" for my sight was naturally directed to incidents more cheerful and happier than the mud hut of the woman we sought. Such huts were very rare in Wexford: then, indeed, my native county, if not perfect in that way, was a very model for all Ireland, and I rejoice to say is so still—in some respects; for the demon drink, that was laid some forty years ago, has, I am told, revived; and the curse is blighting and mildewing much that was essentially good in the richest, if not the most picturesque of Irish shires. Its people are descendants of the English, or rather the Welsh, the earliest of the many conquerors of the ancient Irish.

Yes; I can well recall that visit; mainly, perhaps, because of the singular contrast that impressed the scene on my memory; for I well remember that while we were talking with the degraded crone by her hovel door, the music of a merry voice came down from the hill-side to the vale, and following it was one of those "merry mountain lasses," who seem to share with all who see them the health and innocence which are God's special gifts to the young. She was descending the hill to obtain the "creel" of turf to carry to her home far up the moun-

tain ; bare-footed (as, by the way, few of the Wexford girls are or where), and loosely, yet modestly, clad. And as she sung her merry song, I could not, young though I then was, help reflecting if Bridget Larkins could ever have been fair, joyous, innocent, and happy as was now that maid of the mountain ; and if it were possible *she* could become as degraded—as loathsome, indeed—as the woman who now grovelled in that miserable hut. The answer was plain and clear—the same causes would produce the same result : and though more than half a century has since passed, I well remember uttering a prayer that God would avert from her so dismal a fate.

Some years afterwards, Father Mathew visited Wexford. At first Bridget shook her head, and said, "it was too late ;" but those who felt it never could be too late to reform, urged her to take "THE PLEDGE." Others said, "Do not, for you will never keep it." Bridget, however, knew herself better, for she declared, "If I *take* it I will *keep* it." And she did both. In a week, she had resumed her old post in the market place. Worn and tattered she looked ; and her stall, instead of the display of turbot and lobster of former times, only boasted "fine haddock and black sole." But those were quickly disposed of; and in less than three months, old customers crowded round her ; her eyes regained some portion of their brightness ; her dress improved her appearance ; she looked the gentry in the face ; while the medal Father Mathew had given her was hung round her neck.

"What ! Bridget, still true to the pledge ?" was the frequent question. And Bridget's reply was, "Yes, thank God, your honor, *till death*."

And so she was ; each year increased her prosperity—each year added to her wealth. The temperance movement overcame its defamers even in Wexford ; and Bridget flourished in a sort of shop, where she was principally assisted by a youth,

whose halting walk proved that he suffered from an injury inflicted—all but Bridget had forgotten by whom. Much of this rescued woman's energy was devoted to the promotion of the cause to which she owed all she possessed. She was not, like too many persons similarly circumstanced, content to reap the advantage without extending the blessings of temperance to others. She was instant in season and out of season; and when she died, she left nearly a hundred pounds to various persons and charities—a singular and valuable proof of what temperance, unconditional and perfect, can effect.

Her funeral might have been considered a triumph over old prejudices, for neither whisky nor tobacco appeared there, and numbers took the pledge at its conclusion. This is one instance out of many, where persons reclaimed at the eleventh hour have redeemed their characters, and been blessings to all within their sphere.





G. H. Boughton.] [Butterworth & Heath.

THE TRUE TEMPERANCE CORDIAL.—PURE WATER.

THE

TRUE "TEMPERANCE CORDIAL."



THE friends of Temperance have a rational dread of people taking what are called "Temperance Cordials;" I am induced, therefore, to illustrate the subject by relating an incident, in the humble but fervent hope of being useful in preventing persons from laying down one bad habit, only to take up another. Though the heroes of my story were Irishmen, the scene and circumstances I describe took place in England, in one of the quaintest and prettiest of English villages; romantic enough, indeed, to justify a far more exciting tale than that I have to tell.

Early in the morning, my attention had been directed to a circumstance of everyday occurrence: in itself it was nothing; but I described it to an artist—an artist who already occupies rank among the highest in his profession—and he has painted it to illustrate my book.

There was a picturesque well by the way-side, among trees and grass, with wild foliage and wild flowers: a stout and healthy girl was drawing water for the household, and a handsome shepherd lad, leading or guiding the sheep through a neighbouring gap, stopped there to drink. Nothing more:

but it induced thought. "Surely," I said, "there is no cordial that God gives to man, or suffers him to make, better than that which costs nothing—pure water."

And my mind naturally reverted to those mighty boons that now so frequently grace and bless our towns and cities everywhere, or nearly so, throughout the length and breadth of the Kingdom, and in almost all its dependencies—erected and "supported by voluntary contributions." Even the young among us can recall the time when, in the Metropolis, at all events, beer was far more easily to be obtained than water: the thirsty wayfarer and the wearied workman had then a better excuse for entering a public house than they have now: in most of our public thoroughfares there is a fountain to supply pure water to all who need it: there are few of my readers who would not be interested in stopping for a few minutes beside one of these and watching the many persons of various classes who go there to drink.

Not only will they see men and women grateful for the blessed beverage; the toiling horses have been thought of, and the dogs have not been forgotten. The cab-drivers of London have not far to go out of their way who desire to refresh their toiling horses; and I hope that few of them do so without breathing a prayer for the good Society and the merciful men and women by whom those fountains have been erected. I can fancy I hear the dog do so, as he wags his tail, laps up the drink, and wends his way on his mission. I pray with all my heart that God will bless them: truly they have been doing His work, adding to the enjoyments and diminishing the sufferings, not only of humanity, but of the lower world.

The theme is worthy of an essay and a long story—of many essays and many long stories. It has had them, indeed: several such will be found in that useful and valuable publication, *The Animal's Friend;* and long before that was

issued, Mr. T. B. Smithies had paved the way to help "the brute,"—a pioneer, indeed, he was, who has, happily, lived to see a large portion of his hopes accomplished; and it would be difficult to over estimate the value of the services rendered to all animals, to the dog more especially, by my friend Harrison Weir. But this is a long introduction to a very simple tale.

"Well," said Andrew Furlong to James Lacey, "that ginger cordial, of all things I ever tasted, is the nicest and warmest. It's beautiful stuff, and so cheap."

"What good does it do ye, Andrew, and what want have you of it?" inquired James Lacey.

"What good does it do me?" repeated Andrew, rubbing his forehead in a manner that showed he was perplexed by the question, "why no great good to be sure, and I can't say I've any want of it; for, since I became a member of the total abstinence society, I've lost the megrim in my head. I'm as strong and hearty in myself as any one can be, God be praised, and sure, James, neither of us could turn out in such a coat as this, this time twelvemonth."

"And that's true," replied James; "but we must remember, that, if leaving off whisky enables us to show a good habit, taking to 'ginger cordial,' or anything of that kind, will soon wear a hole in it."

"You are always fond of your fun; how can you prove that?"

"Easy enough," said James; "intoxication was the worst part of a whisky drinking habit; but it was not the only bad part; it spent time, and it spent what well-managed time always gives, money. Now, though they do say—mind, I'm not quite sure about it, for they may put things in it they don't own to and your eyes look brighter, and your cheek more flushed, than if you had been drinking nothing stronger than milk or water—but they do say that ginger cordials, and other kinds of

cordials, do not intoxicate; I will grant this; but you cannot deny that they waste both time and money."

"Oh, bother!" exclaimed Andrew, "I only went with two or three other boys to have a glass, and I don't think we spent more than half an hour. There's no great harm in laying out a penny or twopence that way, now and again."

"Half an hour, even, breaks a day," said James, "and, what is worse, it unsettles the mind for work: and we ought to be very careful of any return to the old habit that has destroyed many of us, body and soul, and made the name of an Irishman a by-word and reproach, instead of a glory and an honour. A penny, Andrew, breaks the silver shilling into coppers; and twopence will buy half a stone of potatoes—that's a consideration. If we don't manage to keep things comfortable at home, the woman won't have the heart to mend the coat. Not," added James, with a sly smile, "that I can deny having taken to temperance cordials myself."

"You!" shouted Andrew. "You! a pretty fellow you are, to be blaming me, and forced to confess you have taken to them yourself; but, I suppose, they'll wear no hole in your coat? Oh, no, you are such a good manager!"

"Indeed," answered James, "I was anything but a good manager eighteen months ago; as you well know; I was in rags, never at my work on a Monday, and seldom on a Tuesday. My poor wife, my gentle, patient Mary, often bore hard words, and, though she will not own it, I fear still harder blows when I had driven away my senses. My children were pale, half-starved, naked creatures, disputing a potato with the pig my wife tried to keep, to pay the rent, well knowing I would never do it. Now——."

"But the cordial, my boy!" interrupted Andrew, "the cordial!—sure, I believe every word of what you have been telling me is as true as gospel! Ain't there hundreds, ay, thousands, at

this moment, on Ireland's blessed ground, that can tell the same story? But the cordial!—and to think of your never owning to it before; is it ginger, or aniseed, or peppermint?'

"None of these; and yet it is the rale thing, my boy."

"Well, then," persisted Andrew, "let's have a drop of it; you're not going, I'm sure, to drink by yourself; and as I have broken the afternoon"——

A heavy shadow passed over James's face, for he saw there must have been something hotter than ginger in the "temperance cordial," as it is falsely called, that Andrew had taken; else he would have endeavoured to redeem lost time, not to waste more; and he thought how much better "the real temperance cordial" was—that, instead of exciting the brain, only warms the heart.

"No," he replied after a pause, "I must go and finish what I was about; but this evening, at seven o'clock, meet me at the end of our lane, and then I'll be very happy of your company."

Andrew was sorely puzzled to discover what James's cordial could be, and was forced to confess to himself, he hoped it would be different from what he had taken that afternoon, which certainly made him feel confused and inactive. At the appointed hour the friends met in the lane.

"Which way do we go?" inquired Andrew.

"Home," was James's brief reply.

"Oh, you take it at home?" said Andrew.

"I make it at home," answered James.

"Well," observed Andrew, "that's very good of the woman that owns ye. Now, mine takes on so about a drop of anything, that she's almost as hard on the cordials as she used to be on the whisky."

"My Mary helps to make mine," observed James.

"And do you bottle it or keep it on draught?" inquired Andrew, very much interested in the cordial question.

James laughed very heartily at this, and answered—

"Oh, I keep mine on draught—always on draught; there's nothing like having plenty of a good thing, so I keep mine always on draught," and then James laughed again and heartily. James's cottage door was open, and, as they approached, they saw a good deal of what was going forward within. A square table, placed in the centre of the little kitchen, was covered with a clean white cloth; knives, forks, and plates for the whole family, were ranged upon it in excellent order; the tea-pot stood triumphant in the centre, the hearth had been swept, the house was clean; the children, rosy, well dressed, and all doing something. "Mary," whom her husband had characterised as "the patient," was busy and bustling, in the very act of adding to the tea, which was steaming on the table, with the substantial accompaniments of fried eggs and bacon, and a large dish of potatoes. When the children saw their father, they ran to meet him with a great shout, and clung round him to tell him all they had done that day. The eldest girl declared she had achieved the heel of a stocking; one boy wanted his father to come and see how straight he had planted the cabbages, while another avowed his proficiency in addition, and volunteered to do a sum instanter upon a slate he had just cleaned. Happiness in a cottage seems always more real than it does in a gorgeous dwelling. It is not wasted in large rooms; it is concentrated; a great deal of love in a small space, a great deal of joy and hope within narrow walls, and compressed, as it were, by a low roof. Is it not a blessed thing, that the most moderate means become enlarged by the affections?—that the love of a peasant within his sphere, is as deep, as fervent, as true, as lasting, as sweet, as the love of a prince?—that all our best and purest affections will grow and expand in the poorest

soil, and that we need not be rich to be happy. James felt all this and more, when he entered his cottage, and was thankful to God, who had opened his eyes, and taught him what a number of this world's gifts were within his humble reach, to be enjoyed without sin. He stood a poor but happy father, within the sacred temple of his home, and Andrew had the warm heart of an Irishman beating in his bosom, and consequently shared his joy.

Ah! the poor can teach many things to, as well as learn from, the rich. God does not always give the power with the will; nor does He, at all times, bestow the will with the power. But what is desired to be done, for a high and holy purpose, He considers as done: in nothing have the words greater force than in that sense: of a surety God accepts

"THE WILL FOR THE DEED."

Yes, it is very frequently a beautiful and, at the same time, an instructive sight, to see love, trust, and confidence in the poor man's cottage; and it will be well and wise to borrow thence a lesson that may bear fruit in the stateliest mansion of the realm. Happily, we may learn such lessons in the very loftiest of all our Palaces, where the rule of love is paramount, and on which the blessing of God rests because it is humbly and earnestly prayed for.

"I told you," said James, "I had the true temperance cordial at home. Do you not see it in the simple prosperity by which, owing to the blessing of temperance, I am surrounded? Do you not see it in the rosy cheeks of my children—in the smiling eyes of my wife? Did I not say truly that she helped to make it? Is not this a true cordial?" he continued, while his own eyes glistened with manly tears; "Is not the prosperity of this cottage a true temperance cordial? and is it not always on draught, flowing from an ever-filling fountain? am I not right,

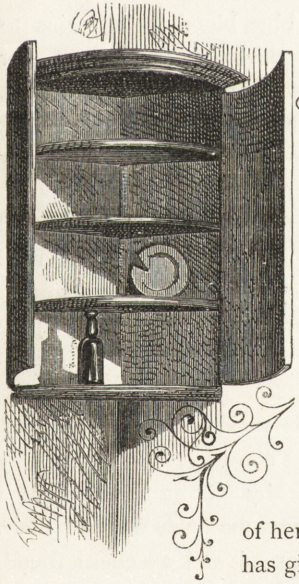
Andrew; and will you not forthwith take my receipt, and make it for yourself? you will never wish for any other—it is warmer than ginger, and sweeter than aniseed. I'm sure you will agree with me, that a loving wife, in the enjoyment of the humble comforts which an industrious, sober husband can bestow, smiling, healthy, well-clad children, and a clean cottage, where the fear of God banishes all other fears—make

"THE TRUE TEMPERANCE CORDIAL."



MRS. GRANT'S PERPLEXITIES.

PART I.



MRS. GRANT and I are very old friends. She loves, and lives in, the country, and her husband loves the country as dearly as she does: but not in the same way, or for the same reasons. She loves it because of its perpetual employment—never giving her a moment she can honestly call her own. He loves it because of the quiet and leisure it affords him to pursue his favourite tastes.

She takes great interest in the education and "improvement" of her cottage neighbours; and, latterly, has given her allegiance, heart and mind, to the Temperance Movement. Several of her rich and influential neighbours consider her over-zealous, perhaps a little crazy, on that particular subject; and I am sorry to say, one of the county magistrates has publicly stated that taking the pledge is doing away with

man's free agency; so that being at liberty to get drunk, and be drawn into sin thereby, is better than being protected by a resolve that preserves both mind and body from destruction: in this he is borne out by three branches of one family, who severally bought the three lots into which the Doddington estate had been divided. Two of the family built suburban-looking villas on their lots; while an aunt, Miss Copel, a peculiar and wonderfully dressy old lady, inhabits the manor house, which is still decorated by the family pictures of the Doddingtons. She is fond of talking of "our family canvas."

Mrs. Grant, who has sufficient blue blood in her veins to neutralise a little manufacturing thickness in that of her husband—but is too wise and too kind to show, except, now and then, she is aware of the mixture—was somewhat severe on this very grand old lady in a room-full of company on one occasion, when she was stuffing the ears of the groundlings with explanations of the portraits of Lady Di this, and Lord George the other—faded representations of members of the Doddington family which had been sold with the mansion. "Could you not," Mrs. Grant meekly inquired, "employ some of your family varnish to restore the faded glories of your race?"

The relatives residing among the ancient oaks of Doddington, on their several "lots," are not considered to be on very good terms with each other; but Mrs. Grant rejoices not a little that they are far and away from the fields of her labour. I say "her" advisedly, for my learned and excellent friend, Mr. Grant, could have been talked over both by the magistrate and his friends, who considered even resolute temperance an interference with man's liberty; the Copels, held it was a waste of time to cultivate the "lower orders:" not that one of the trio occupied time with anything particular;

but Mrs. Grant succeeded in bringing her husband out from among them by devoting the best rooms in the house to his museum, for Mr. Grant is an archeologist, a conchologist, a mineralogist—every thing of that kind. He has collected and arranged a very extensive museum. His society is sought, and his opinions are quoted, at scientific meetings all over England, and he has received more than one medal from Paris and Vienna. His wife is very proud of his reputation, and does all she can to increase his happiness; and, being left in undisturbed possession of his "hobby," with encouragement to whip, drive, and spur it, when and wherever he pleases, he, in gratitude, gives Mrs. Grant permission to cultivate her surroundings according to her own plans. One particular gathering of cottages he points out to the inquiring eyes of his scientific friends, when they visit him, as "Mrs. Grant's preserve." They seldom leave home together, except when Mr. Grant, at stated times, renews his allegiance to the various scientific institutions, where young ladies trot about on high-heeled shoes—their frizzed and puffed-out heads having small articles of covering—from "section" to "section;" while sheafs of note-books and long papers tremble in their taper fingers or stuff their satchels, "making believe" they are in pursuit of every species of knowledge, which Mrs. Grant and I consider will little profit them, either here or hereafter.

During one of these excursions poor Mr. Grant, encumbered with some geological specimens, fell, and fractured his leg very badly, and my friend was called away from her happy duties just after she had achieved several small victories over the magistrate, and the dwellers in Doddington Park: for instance, the postman, won over to take the pledge, steadily refused a "glass of something hot," which the justice offered him with his own hand, when the wiry little man was

literally blue with cold; and the keeper of his own gate-lodge still hung the well-cured bacon in his kitchen, but no longer gave room under the stairs to the keg of ale, though it was proffered to him by the magistrate his master. These were victories, and Mrs. Grant was thankful that the influence of the temperance movement had extended so far; but of course they *were* victories, and Mrs. Grant earnestly prayed that the power of temperance would spread still farther from her own immediate locality. She was enjoying the formation of a juvenile Band of Hope, and had gifted with an harmonium the school she had got into excellent order, and many far-off-dwelling cottagers and farmer wives and daughters would come to the parish church, attracted quite as much by the soft singing of the infant choir as by the sermon; and then she had organized temperance meetings, and mothers' meetings, where she herself presided, and cut out, and made infant frocks look so pretty that great nut-brown fathers, rough-headed and coarse-handed men, would play and toy with the little ones whom, formerly, they never heeded; then she read to those mothers—not absolute sermons—but books that interested and amused, though the perfume of godliness seasoned each page, and all was wound up with a hymn and a short prayer, and oftentimes, in the moonlight, she had heard the hymn, perhaps not very tunefully repeated, but still recalled by the mothers, as they passed along the valley or up the hill to the "homes" "their lady"—as they called her—had rendered productive of fruitful happiness by her precept, her example, and her help.

Never was a woman endowed with greater faith in the will and sacrifice of her Divine Master, or in the lovingness and help which it is the duty of every Christian to exercise towards her fellow creatures: she felt and practised that as the first

great law of Christian life. She stood firm in her adherence to the temperance cause, believing it to be, next to our Christian faith, the HOLD FAST to give strength to every weaker vessel. When she quitted her home and, I may almost say her disciples, to attend to her husband, she knew there were pirates abroad, who would take advantage of her absence to overthrow what she had laboured to erect; and, unfortunately, the curate, who was so faithful in his labours, was also away; but she prayed and hoped. Both were able to return in what each called "working order," Mr. Grant's collection enriched by his wife's admirable management, who covered first his bed and then his couch with some curious shells and petrifactions rooted out of a cliff in the neighbourhood of his disaster; these kept him quiet, interested him, and tended greatly to his recovery. The reports from home had not been very cheering; she had been too much occupied by her husband's accident, and the low fever that succeeded, to write as fully as she had intended, from time to time, instructions to the school-mistress, and some few others, whom she had won to aid her work. I knew she would be greatly distressed by the introduction of a beer-shop, into what, as I have said, Mr. Grant called, "her preserve;" and it was an act of most unneighbourly unkindness on the part of the hostile magistrate granting a license to a rabbit-poaching broom-cutter, who was personally obnoxious to the Grants, and planting him almost in view of their house, just at the entrance to their happy valley. My friend invited me to meet her on their return. I found her servants faithful and over-boiling with indignation at the introduction of the beer-shop, and the consequent triumph of some adverse persons who belonged to an adjoining parish.

Several of Mr. and Mrs. Grant's fashionable neighbours complained of her having sacrificed her "reception-rooms"

to her husband's "hobby," only reserving for "company" a sort of saloon or long morning-room that led into the conservatory; but she did not heed their remonstrances; the house was always sunny and cheerful.

It was a great privilege to be treated by Mrs. Grant as a second self, and she imparted to me her plans, and her vexations, with the freedom that is the result of long and faithful friendship.

She had gone out, to find a messenger for a letter she had written that evening. What follows is what she told me.

PART II.

"It was very provoking. Two of the women-servants were gone holiday-making, and the third—our cook—had suffered the gridiron to fall on her foot; and I must say it served her right—it was the old gridiron that was loose in the handle, and she seized it to inflict punishment on the gardener's dog, who had entered the larder surreptitiously, and run away with a delicate leg of Welsh mutton. She intended to fling the gridiron at Bolus, and it might have killed the poor dog, but as she swung it the handle gave way, and the gridiron fell on her foot, so that she could only hop on one leg. I wanted to send a letter to a friend more than two miles over the hill: the gardener had gone home, for it was past six; cook was comforting her foot with vinegar and brown paper, and groaning so loudly that the parrot screamed more harshly than usual—I suppose from sympathy.

"The back door opened on the common, and I could count five cottages, nestling in their little gardens, the grey and green tints brightened up here and there by a clump of hollyhocks or trailing nasturtiums: other cottages were also within sight

—clay-built and straw-thatched—stiff and independent as gipsies, the furze and heather growing up to the doors and single-paned windows. The spire of our village church and the gable of the school-house, crowned a knoll partly overshadowed by a couple of noble elms, and I knew the parsonage was at the other side.

"'What shall I do, cook?' I exclaimed. 'I have just written this very important letter, that must go—indeed, I came down to send you with it—it is to Homeleet, nearly two miles. Oh, cook, I wish you had not been so spiteful to that poor hungry dog.'

"'Ma'am, he'd eat the living flesh off our bones, if he'd only the chance,' was the reply.

"'It's very provoking! such a number of cottages, and next to impossible to find any cottager, big or little, to go a message on Saturday afternoon.'

"'The men are in the public-house,' said cook, 'and more than is good of the women too; or, if not, they're gossiping—lolling against the doorposts.'

"'Perhaps Mrs. Barry would let Johnny go?'

"'It's no use going to Mrs. Barry's, ma'am,' replied cook. 'I saw her this morning crying her eyes out over the *tatas* she was wetting, not washing—poor slamucking thing!—and she told me that husband of hers had pledged even the children's shoes for drink. She had decent bringing up, and has not quite forgotten it, and would not like Johnny to be seen barefoot. She can't send the children to school, poor things, half-naked as they are.'

"'Perhaps old Matthew, the broom-cutter, is at home; if so, he would be glad of the shilling I would give him.'

"'Ugh!' growled cook, 'he would be glad enough of the shilling, but, of late, he is never sober after sunset. I always know when he's what they call "tight" by the way he beats his

donkey. I heard him swearing at the poor animal an hour ago; and in the morning he'll cry salt tears over the wheals he had given it in the evening. Drat that dog! To think of its taking away the use of my limbs, just when I wanted them most particular. But it's worse and worse it's growing.'

"'Oh!' I exclaimed, cheered by a sudden thought; 'I'll go to James Pyne, he is certain to be at home.'

"'I hope so,' grumbled the cook, 'but, somehow, the best of men get ruinated; I think, more by that new beershop down the dell, seated as innocent as new milk under the hawthorn bush, than by the old stiff and sturdy public-house. When the men walk towards the old "public" every one knows what they're after; but at The Sweet Hawthorn—drat their impudence,' said cook viciously, 'sweet indeed! some says it's for a song, or a game at bowls, or to meet a friend, any reason but the true one—good, sober, steadyish lads get the taint. It's as catching as cholera or the small-pox, ma'am,' added cook after another vinegar application. 'Some mere boys, by the time they are men, are what I call staggards. I can never be too thankful I am what I am. I wouldn't marry the best man that ever stept in shoe-leather,' and as she caressed her foot she made most deplorable faces.

"'Nevertheless,' I said, 'I am sure I shall find James Pyne at home—he is always at home in the evenings.'

"I drew my shawl over my head, and thought, as I ran along the path leading to my favourite cottage, I had never inhaled fresher or more fragrant air. I saw a man with bowed head and rapid step striding down a bank, where the hawthorn grew that sheltered the beershop cook had mentioned. Suddenly he paused, and turned a flushed and angry face towards me, and, to my dismay, I saw it was James Pyne! I called to him; although he heard me, he hesitated whether or not he should

attend my summons. I repeated the call, and held up my letter, and then he came slowly towards me.

"Now James Pyne's cottage was on the left of where I stood: a pretty little nest of three rooms, the walls covered by climbers, and fenced from the common by a half-hedge, half-paling. His little boy, an urchin of some four years old, hung on the gate, and I could hear the soft infant voice repeating, 'Daddy, daddy, come home—mammy's crying:' but the appeal had not reached the father's heart.

"I explained what I wanted, and James agreed to take the letter; but his manner and looks were so different from his usual bearing that I asked him what was the matter.

"'Not much, ma'am,' he answered, 'only Jane wants to have her own way, and denies me every bit of comfort. If a poor fellow slaves all day as I do, it's the least he may have—a warm clean hearth and a quiet spot to sit in; and if he can't have it at home, why, he must seek it abroad.'

"'But James,' I said, 'I have been in your cottage early and late, and I always saw it neat and cheerful. I have often found you reading to your wife while she worked.'

"'Yes, ma'am, but that's not the way of it now. Will you please to walk in to our little place, and see if a man can be blamed who seeks a quiet hour after a hard day's work.'

"I entered the cottage. Several pieces of string were crossed over the kitchen from side to side, and from these depended various recently washed articles of clothing, so that it was impossible to move without receiving a dab from something wet. Jane was up to her elbows in dirty suds, her nut-brown hair was hanging over her flushed and tear-stained face; the little boy, evidently intent on peace-making, had grasped his father's middle finger, and was endeavouring to drag him to his mother. Jane rinsed her arms, and wiped them in her apron, which was too wet to dry anything. She curtsied,

and advanced a chair, and said she was happy I was come home.

"'There's nothing wet over this corner, ma'am, though James said just now there was no place for him to stop in.'

"'Ask this lady,' said James, 'if, after working since six this morning, a man could find it pleasant to sit under dripping water while he eats the dry crust and drinks the cold tea left for his supper. According to nature he must seek peace and warmth somewhere. Why can't Jane do as she did before you left, ma'am?'

"'We had only one child then,' said Jane; 'now I have two to see to, and one's in the measles.'

"'I walked the house with it half the night last night, to let her get some rest,' quoth James, 'and here's my thanks! Not a spot to sit in, and ill-words when I complain! I'll take your letter, ma'am, and, if there's an answer, I'll bring it; but I'll not come *here* for comfort.'

"'Don't go to the public or beershop, James,' sobbed his wife. 'Don't dear. It shall all be dry and tidy by the time you're back.'

"'Don't make mammy cry—or hit her,' said the child.

"'Hit her!' I repeated. 'Oh, James!' James' face flushed scarlet—he turned rapidly away and went off at a swinging pace down the hill.

"'How is this Jane?' I inquired, for I could hardly credit the change that had taken place in what I had considered my model cottage.

"'He's taken to the public-house or the beershop of an evening, ma'am, and brings home but small share of his wages to keep us.'

"'But, Jane, how is it that he is changed? Do you make his home as comfortable as it used to be? Surely you could manage to get the washing done and dry in the early part of

the day, and the little room clean and bright by the evening. Oh, Jane, the bread-winner has a right to a cheerful fireside. And he said he was up half the night with baby.'

"Jane had once been in my service, and I could speak freely to her.

"'Yes, ma'am,' was the reply. 'Baby is his as well as mine, and it's fair he should have his turn.' There was a hardness in the reply and in the manner I did not like.

"'I always thought James very fond of his children. But you have not told me how it is that you drive off your washing until the evening, instead of finishing it as you used to do in the morning.'

"Jane fidgetted, and looked uncomfortable.

"'Mrs. Bethune, ma'am, and Mary Raddock, and one or two of the neighbours, have had little talks together, and agreed that wives have too much put on them; and they have asked me to hear to them, and it's in the morning, because the husbands are sometimes home in the evening; and that's the injustice of it—we, toiling all the day, and not having a bit of liberty after a day's work, only laying out everything to make the man comfortable.'

"'It is well known, Jane, that, between her temper and her drinking, Mrs. Bethune drove her husband first to the public-house, and—the jail followed.'

"'And serve him right; he'd have murdered her, if she had not shut him up.'

"'But do you think the opinions or advice of such a woman likely to increase your happiness—have they done so? I do not for a moment take Bethune's part, I could do nothing with either him or his wife; and you, Mary, remember I warned you against both Mary Raddock and Mrs. Bethune before your marriage. Bethune had become a fierce drunkard, and it was a benefit to the neighbourhood when he was imprisoned;

but I am deeply distressed that you should neglect your domestic duties, and listen to the unchristian arguments of women who, in their wicked weakness, endeavour to overthrow the laws of God and nature.'

"'I'm sure, madam,' whimpered Jane, 'you used to praise the cottage and everything I did, and no man, according to his knowledge, was ever better than James, only somehow he got a little fidgetty and grumbled before Mrs. Bethune, and she flouted his words, and he took fire, and said I must not companion her, and I was hurt and said I would; and, when next we met, she asked me if I was going to be trampled on, and told me women had their rights as well as men. And I took it up, and James grew loud and angry, and I did not care to please him as I used to do; and then he went to the public-house instead of coming home, and faulted the food, and the fire; and I own it, ma'am, I took no pains to please him—I've provoked him. Oh, mistress!' she continued, clasping her hands, 'if you persuade him to be as he used to be, I'll swear to you, on my two bended knees, I'll be as I was. I'll never go near one of those women who are getting up new laws. He used to take the little lad to church when I was ill, or the babby, as she couldn't be left; but the last blessed Sunday that ever shone when I tried to come over him to take Steve, he' (she burst into a flood of tears, the boy clambered round her, 'Don't mammy, don't cry mammy! Daddy'll never do it again. It don't hurt now, mammy.') 'he never struck me before, nor wouldn't then, only that he had some of that poison in the cupboard, and was tempted to take it instead of his breakfast.'

"'But what *was* his breakfast?' I inquired.

"'It might have been better; the working-men look for some little difference on the Sunday morning, and he used to have it so—until—oh, mistress, I know I listened to bad advice:

they said I was spoiling him: but if he would come home as he used to do, I'd swear, as I have just said, to be as I used to be, and try to be better.'

"'Jane,' I replied, looking steadily into her poor tear-stained face, 'there must be no "if" in the matter; the marriage contract is not conditional. It is not—if you do and are so-and-so, I'll do and be so-and-so. It is—I will so promise and perform, whether he keeps his promise or not. Do as you used to do a year ago, and fulfil your duty, making no bargain, and pray for the result.'

"'But you'll speak a word for me, mistress, won't you? I always was happy when I lived with you, and I always call you "mistress;" though the women now, and even the bits of girls, won't listen to that, but call their master and mistress Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so. My husband respects you, and if you would only tell him that if he would give up the public-house I would go back to the ways he liked—'

"'No, Jane, I'll not make a bargain for you: do *your* duty exactly as if *he* was performing *his*, and wait patiently for the result. I never heard of a matrimonial bargain, and if I did I would not believe in it: fix your mind on the performance of your own duties, and pray to God that your husband may be taught his.'

"'He need not be taught them, ma'am,' she answered doggedly, 'he knows them well enough.'

"'And so do you, Jane; do you remember the evening before you left my service to take upon you the more important duties of matrimony?'

"'Yes, ma'am, I remember it well.'

"'You sat at my feet on the square stool, and I read you the marriage ceremony, and I paused at one or two passages and said, "Jane, are you certain you will not find these a little hard?" and you lifted up your bonny face—it *was* a bright

bonny face then, for you had found no hardship in service—and you smiled and shook your head, and—but perhaps you remember the answer you gave?'

"'I do, ma'am.'

"'Repeat it.'

"'I said, "he told me there could be no hardship in married life where each loved the other, and where they lived honestly and—and—"' poor Jane's bosom heaved, but at last she got it out; "soberly—that was it—soberly, truthworkers, and truthtellers, in the sight of God and man."'

"'Yes, that was it, it was a beautiful reply, and from it I augured much happiness to you both, and I rejoiced in the happiness that flourished around and over your cottage like a green bay-tree. I saw no diminution of love, no decrease of modest prosperity, and I could not have believed such fair prospects were blighted in so short a time. I observed you also frequently; you must have got into bad company quite as much as your husband. Bad women are as dangerous as bad men, and this danger has frightfully increased during our absence from our home.'

"'Ah!' sobbed poor Jane, 'had you been here, ma'am, I should not have been beguiled as I was, or if the master had been here, he'd have had an eye to my poor husband.'

"'Well,' I said, 'do all you can to retrieve the past—let the cottage resume its former looks, and you your old habits; let all the washing be done and dried before the husband comes home from his hard day's work, and let his supper be as it used to be.'

"She shook her head. 'How can I do that, mistress, when he does not bring home the money to buy the food? I don't mind going supperless to bed myself, but that child before now has cried himself to sleep with hunger.'

"'If you had represented that properly to your husband, he must be strangely changed indeed to suffer it to continue.'

"'It's rather hard, mistress,' sobbed poor Jane, 'to turn all the blame on me; but that's what the women say who take up women's cause, that the weaker are driven to the wall, and the men have it all their own way.'

"'You never heard me argue after that fashion, Jane.'

"'No, mistress,' said poor Jane, 'when I was in one house with you there was no such thing thought about, there was no arguing, we did our work and the men-servants did theirs, and I never heard tell of what seems driving the country upside down—strikes; but I'll turn on, if you please, and clean the house up as well as I can—I'll take your advice, and I never took it that it did not turn for good. I'll do my part without thinking how he does his.'

"'That is it, Jane, that is the only true way to produce domestic happiness from the cottage to the palace—let each member of a household perform his or her own especial duty, not heeding how others discharge theirs,' and then I left her, determined to watch for her husband's return.

PART III.

"I SAUNTERED along the path leading from the road to the garden, as it was called, and unlatched the gate; there is a seat that commands a view of our domestic offices, as well as of part of the common, where Jane's cottage and other rustic dwellings formed different points of interest. I sat down and my thoughts dwelt on the rapidity with which changes are effected in the minds and habits of our fellow-creatures.

"How hard it is to count on the stability of any one—there was Jane! I thought her a most reliable creature; I believed she loved her husband with the true faith of a nature I had always believed to be faithful; it was only fifteen months

ago, when we were leaving home, that James carried a basket full of muslins Jane had been busied on (she had an absolute genius for clear starching), from their cottage to my house, because he thought it was 'too cumbrous for her, poor thing.' How bright, and clean, and happy he looked, and when, returning, he put the very small boy, who had crept after him, into the basket, the happy music of his whistling, and the boy's shouting, and the high pitched song of an early nightingale from the Hawthorn valley mingled in such a rural chorus of sounds that its 'ring' was one of the harmonies of my memory.

"What poison had been diffused among the cottage women? What doctrine to make them forget their duties? How had my gentle Jane been induced to remove lovingness from her hearthstone, and neglect the habits I had imagined so firmly engrafted in her nature? As to her husband, like many of the other village men, I was at no loss to account for the change in him. Drink had done that; but how had he been won over to it? it seemed plain enough to me that there was a terrible falling off in those 'cottage comforts' which every married workman has a right to look for, as the crown of his day's work.

"But whose fault was it that such a dreary change had been permitted to bewilder these people in whom I trusted as examples to the village? I would inquire of the rector; but he had been ill, I heard, and away for three months before our return.

"The woman whom Jane confessed had become her companion and adviser, had been held in such bad repute when we left, that very few, even of the cottagers, would deal with her. She was a sort of female costermonger, who sometimes sold flowers, and roots, and herbs—sometimes fish, or fruit, according to her capabilities to purchase, or to—steal.

"I could see through the pantry-window that cook was still

engaged in pickling her foot, and, as her features and movements were more gentle and composed than when I left her, I thought I would make some inquiries as to how Jane and James Pyne had fallen from their good habits. My cook is truth-telling, upright, honest, and sober; a teetotaller in practice, though she never took a pledge!—and most determined in her denunciations against beer, and her declaration that she could not 'abide' the smell of it; but she is hard-judging, not given to showing mercy. I wondered why she had established herself in the pantry, instead of in her large kitchen; and wondered the more when I saw she had got one of my husband's sticks by her side.

"'Drat that dog, ma'am,' she exclaimed; 'since you've been gone to the Pynes' he's been twice more than half through the hedge at the far corner; he's the craftiest ruffian of a dog I ever knew! for, when he saw me watching him from the kitchen window, he slunk back; he can't see me from where I am now, and I hope to get a good throw at him with the master's stick. The gardener ought to keep him at home; only, half the village dogs live by picking and stealing, as many masters do; they are more knowing than many a Christian, they give a snap and a bark to each other, to tell where they can pillage; but Smith's dog beats them all for 'cuteness; besides which, he's so ugly. I've nothing to say against a well-bred, well-behaved dog——'

"I interrupted the dog story. 'I want you to tell me,' I said, 'how such a change has come about in Pyne's cottage.'

"Cook shook her head. 'As to Jane, she is not like the same creature, madam. You remember when she married. Yes, ma'am; and I can't take any blame to myself, for I warned her—as I warns them all—parcel of young fools! wanting to be missesses—while they quite forget they're to have masters—as soon as they leave the church.'

"'Well, cook,' I replied, 'it's well, if they can find sensible masters.'

"'Sensible masters, ma'am!' quoth the cook contemptuously; when she despises any one she has a peculiar way of twisting her nose, which is drooping and flexible like the nose of a turkey. 'Sensible men! I'd walk a mile with this foot, bad as it is, to see one! Why, ma'am, before you left to go to poor master I could count, at least, forty of the men who were as temperate and steady and money-making as men could be! They were boasting of their health and strength; and their houses were clean; and their wives holding up their heads, and proud of their masters, poor things! the poor fools! and the children—quite a little Band of Hope! But as soon as you were out of sight—and shame on them who stuck up that Holly-tree beershop on the morsel of land he refused to sell to master the minute he had the opportunity, and had it opened—as I know you heard—though I am thankful you did not see the goings-on of that miserable day. I only wish,' added the cook, with another determined vinegar application, 'that I was in the House of Lords or Commons—I would not much care which—and wouldn't I strip that Justice of the Peace of his wig and gown, if he has one, in double quick time! A justice, indeed; an *in*justice, I call him. But he'll have his reward. And that fussy old madam from Doddington preaching a sermon at the last harvest home on her own thrashing-floor, in the big stone chair that she had carted out of the church porch, for the curate would not lend her the reading-desk out of the church, which she had the assurance to ask for; so the old chair was made a pulpit of, to please her, and covered with red cloth—a perfect scarlet woman of Babylon she was; only, to be sure, one good thing, she turned some of the men against her—talking of the rights of women, and what they ought not to submit to, and how to stand up

for themselves and be poor-law guardians, and men's trades, and I don't know what! And what was the upshot? Why, going home in the sweet shine of the harvest moon, some of the women turned uproarious, and they used bad language, such as was never heard before, and who could tell where they got it? and there was a sort of a scrambling fight, at first in cat and dog play, and then in earnest; and in it poor little Jane Boyle got thrown down and walked over, and her leg broke, poor thing; and she'll go a cripple to her grave; and not a farthing would Madame Copel give her. No; not to help her to get to the hospital even! And yet—— Well, mistress, no need to be vexing you. You'll get them right, ma'am, now you're in it. And old Miss Copel, by a merciful dispensation, has got rheumatic gout in her feet; and something wrong with her tongue prevents her speaking; and the other two lots are gone to some far-off country or another after pleasure. So there's none of the worst of the lot at home now but the magistrate, a purtey magistrate he is! I wish, ma'am,' continued the cook, 'you'd find a nice, teatotal, Christian wife for Mr. Franks—a curate is only half a churchman without a wife. I told him so, and he said he would speak to you and the master about it when you came home. He's such a nice gentleman,' quoth cook, smiling a rare smile. 'So wonderful good, only he was wore out; they did worrit him so when you had gone; it was just as if his backbone was drawed out of him. And if he had such a wife as you are to master, ma'am, why they dare not have got on as they did. When I heard the old lady wanted to borrow the reading-desk, I made myself tidy and went up to the rectory, and made bold to ask to see the Rev. Mr. Franks; and I heard his soft voice, that of late had got such a wearied ring in it, asking who it was, and she answered "a woman, sir;" and the impudent thing added, "the *old* cook from Mrs. Grant's." Old, indeed,'

she repeated, and at that moment she let fly the stick that had been waiting at the dog ; who escaped scot free, but there was a crash of glass or flower-pots. Cook got quite red. 'No harm done, ma'am ; and surely my age was nothing to her. But I told him honestly that I heard Mrs. Copel would want the reading-desk for her own preaching at harvest home. But I saw it was all right ; *she* would never put her foot in *his* reading-desk ! And then I lamented to him his want of a wife, as there was no one to hold the mothers' meetings in your absence, which, you know, ma'am, there would be if *he* was married. And, from all I hear, the poor old rector will never be able to do duty again.'

" However, I interrupted her flow of words to return to my text, and inquire how it had been possible to pervert those in whom I had such especial faith. Both the Pynes had been so faithful to the Temperance cause. Jane, so sweet and trusting, and her husband so dependable.

" 'I beg your pardon, ma'am,' interrupted cook, 'but that did the mischief with James. You held him up so long, that he thought he had the strength of the oak when he was but a bit of a lath ! '

" ' I'm sure,' I said, ' I often and often quoted to him that valuable sacred precept, " Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." '

" 'Then his beautiful voice,' she continued, ' they ought to be thankful who don't know the scream of a peacock from the song of the nightingale ; every one praised his beautiful voice, and you know, ma'am, *you* were full of it at all times, and even got him up to the house, when you had strangers, to make him sing one particular holy song.' "

My dear friend groaned in the spirit and in the flesh when relating this circumstance—she confessed she had fostered his musical vanity ; for that music being her own weakness she

could not help loving a fine voice, or even an indication of its possible growth.

"'James was proud of it; and his comrades at work told the other fellows of it; and *that*, as much as anything, 'ticed him to the public house. At first, I have heard, he refused the drink; but just about the same time Jane was fallen on by that bad woman. And Jane, ma'am, is soft; and one thing or another somehow got the better of them, and then they fell to words, and, some say—they do say he has given her one very bad blow. God help him if it is so! She does not complain, poor girl; but when I have gone for a breath of fresh air out of the hot kitchen, and strayed by the cottages when she did not know any one was looking, I've seen her place her hand here, and tears gather, if not roll down her cheek!'

"I inquired if she had not asked her about it.

"'No, Jane had been distant with her of late—never changed a word with her, only to ask when I heard from you, ma'am, and how the master was going on.' By this time Pyne was coming up the valley with the answer to my letter. The spirit-flush," continued my friend, "had faded from his cheek, but the brow, and, indeed, the whole complexion, had a seamed and soddened expression: the eyes were dull and heavy. Where had the bright blue and the light gone? I had long known how painful and useless it was to reprove a sinner of his sin before a third person, but I had, in my own mind, set a little trap for him. He was a joiner by trade, and had made some insect cases—indeed, cases for stuffed specimens of various kinds for my husband—and succeeded in pleasing him better than any of the country workmen. I told him that one or two of Mr. Grant's cases were warped, and asked him to look at them. He twirled his cap, and said he would in the morning, but that there was a resolution not

to work over hours. I had seen him turn his head, not towards his own cottage, but towards the Holly Bush, and also observed a couple of rabbit-skin caps and a red face peeping through the openings in the hedge: and presently came a low whistle. Those poor misguided fellows harbouring in that beershop were lying in wait for him—absolutely set on by their evil spiritual master to draw him more and more into their own evil ways!" Tears welled up into my dear friend's eloquent eyes while she spoke. "There are no snares so dangerous as those concealed by the habitually intemperate to wile their escaping brethren back. Of course, our return had spread an alarm among them, and watchers were set to entangle still more to their destruction those who had taken, yet forsaken, the pledge. Wherever my influence had before triumphed the strongest snares were set, and, backed in the adjoining parish by the magistrate you know of, and where, I am almost ashamed to add, the clergyman, one of the old school, crowns his cup with 'priestly port' even on the Sabbath day, and those half-breeds—forgive my bitterness," she added, "but my flock of converts, especially those innocents of the Band of Hope, were so grown into my heart, that, even when my dear husband's protracted illness claimed all my personal attendance, my thoughts would dwell on the perplexities that I knew would crop up in this defenceless district, though I did not think to such an extent. And I could not avoid agreeing mentally with my servant that if our excellent curate had a wife who would feel and work with us, there would not have been such up-hill labour for me to begin again. The evil women who have introduced such pernicious doctrines among those who only imperfectly understand their duties have introduced another evil into my valley. But to return to Pyne," said Mrs. Grant. "I felt assured his poor wife was doing her best to make the cottage

something like what it used to be, and so I wanted to give her time, and then to get him to go there, instead of to the beer-shop, and hoped to interest him in my husband's cases that he had made and which now needed enlarging, while he followed me sullenly towards Mr. Grant's museum. I said, we shall not want you to break any new law, Pyne; only to see what is wanted, so that you may set about it to-morrow. He hardly thanked me, but touched his forehead when I paid him for the message. I resolved not to breathe a word that should approach reproof. My dear husband looked up with his usual sweet smile that no one ever could withstand.

"'Oh Pyne, I am so glad to see you,' he said; 'and I know you are glad to have us back.'

"He had been trying to move a case much too heavy for him. He wiped the heat from his beautiful pale brow, and Pyne's naturally kind nature awoke at once. 'I'll do that, sir,' and in a moment his coat was off, and he set to his task with a will.

"'I rang and rang,' said my husband, 'but I suppose the gardener is gone home, and the coachman at his stables—but where are the womenkind?'

"I told him those he particularly wanted had gone for a little holiday, and that cook, in attacking the gardener's dog, had, woman-like, let her weapon recoil upon herself, and was now immersed in the curative mysteries of vinegar and brown paper. Mr. Grant wanted a shelf placed in safety, and then sat down before a huge sheet of foolscap, pencil in hand, and described to Pyne an almost incomprehensible 'something' which at once riveted his attention. I knew my husband was as greatly indignant as I was at that horrid beer-shop having been smuggled into the heart of our 'happy valley,' but I did not want him to say a word about it

just then. Pyne was in his old element now, and I was certain my little plot would fructify if my husband would confine himself to 'his case!' Suddenly I heard a repetition of the low whistle that had attracted the attention of Pyne just as he had given me the letter, and I felt as assured as if I had seen them, that the two rabbit-skins, and more than one scarlet face, were peering through the pure and beautiful hawthorn—it was quite a clump—that sheltered that poisonous den. I saw a sort of shiver agitate Pyne's frame, and he looked up; but fortunately the window in front did not command a view of the valley, the sound came through what I used to call my 'spy window.' Mr. Grant was too intent on his plan to notice Pyne's emotion, but continued his explanation. What great mercies spring from what we consider little means," continued my friend; whose chief pleasure was in tracing the Lord's paths in the tumult and in the storm, and seeing the rays of his redemption penetrate the darkness of all earthly gloom. "I looked at the changed expression of James Pyne's face—a healthier hue had returned to his complexion, and his interest in my dear innocent husband's proposed plan for the exclusion of dust, even of the minutest kind, from his cherished insects, appealed more strongly to him than did the whistle from his half-drunken comrades. Pyne even ventured to offer an opinion: 'I did not know, sir, you took an interest in such small deer (unconsciously quoting Shakspere) as these-like, but in stones, and hard things, and monuments.' And then my husband told him that those minute creatures formed stones and the like, and that he was about to trace the history of the little creator up to the wonders it created. By this time the moon had risen, and threw its beams absolutely on Pyne's own cottage, which we could see from the front window; and there was tiny Jim, hanging on to the gate, watching for

father; and one or two wood flashes that shone on the lattice convinced me there was a fire in the grate. And as I looked, Jane herself came out; and her bonny hair was wound up, and her neat little figure was tidy. She looked down the hill, not conscious that he for whom she watched had returned, and at that very moment was taking an order for work from 'the master.' I went rapidly to the larder, and emptied the contents of a tureen into a covered jug, which I placed on one of the hall tables, and sat apparently watching the tesselated pavement to which the moonbeams transformed our black marble. The door opened, and James Pyne came out. The 'Thank you, sir; the first thing in the morning it shall be attended to,' was spoken in a cheerful voice. When he saw me he was about slouching out, after touching his cap, expecting I would again reproach him as I had done before he took the letter. But I only said, 'James, please take this soup over to your wife, and tell her to warm a little of it carefully, and not to smoke it, and give baby a dessert spoonful at a time. I will send over some fresh to-morrow.'

"'God bless and thank you, ma'am. I told you I would not go home when I returned, but—I am going there now. God bless you, and good-night!'"

PART IV.

MRS. GRANT sat at her window after the moon had set. She saw the shadows on the blind of the window of the Pynes' cottage. She saw the man and wife seated together at their little table: his head for quite half an hour bent over a book. Was he reading, and was it the holy book that brings peace and hope to many a shipwrecked heart?

I knew she was pondering over her perplexities, though

grateful for the result of her little *ruse*, which, though hoped for, was hardly expected. Long after her head rested on her pillow, I felt assured her busy brain was at work for means to withstand the evil, as plan after plan suggested itself for refilling the fold. The disappointment, instead of causing anger, drew her more closely to the sinners, who, as yet, were not even repentant. I had every confidence in her success, for she is a rare specimen, in womankind, of mingled judgment and enthusiasm.

We were seated at breakfast the next morning, discussing the best means of regaining lost ground, when Jane Pyne followed the servant so closely into the room that we hardly heard her announced. In a moment she had fallen on her knees, and with clasped hands entreated my friends to save her husband.

"You know, sir," she exclaimed, "he was in this house in your honour's museum at eight o'clock. He told them the clock was striking nine when you, madam, gave him the soup for my baby: then, you know, it was quite impossible he could have been at Taunton's End between eight and nine. But they say he was there, and have searched our little cottage, and call it attempted murder. And they've taken him and Bob of the Brooms—the master of the beer-shop you know; and the villain," continued poor Jane, whose sobs impeded her utterance—"he swears my husband was there drunk; which, sir, and madam, you can prove he was not, only busy this morning sorting the wood for the case."

Small events can set a country neighbourhood in commotion; though there were plenty of people to talk, there were hardly any to explain, and still fewer who understood what they called the rights of it. But we gathered that the magistrate and a friend, having dined with the rector, were riding home, and took the bridle-path through the

fields, and, as they went, they heard a rustle and a scuttling among the heather and long fern and the blackberries, and his honour called out to know who was there, and there was still more rustling; and his honour got off his horse, and while he was making his way there was a shot, and he screamed and fell; and the young gentleman who was with him collared a man who, in the darkness and the scurry, ran against him; and by this time their grooms came up and seized the man, who proved to be no other than Bob of the Brooms; and his honour knew him at once, and said, "Oh, Bob, this from you!"

And his honour was not so hurt but he got home: and "they do say that the poor gentleman, being top-heavy that night, it will go against him. But any way," said Jane, "there are three or four doctors from all parts with him. That ruffian of the Holly Bush swears it was my husband fired the shot, and so they have taken him—and you know, ma'am, and so does the master, it was impossible," added poor Mrs. Pyne. "They say a wife's evidence is no good, but, as sure as there's a heaven above us, last blessed night, after he left this, he read me a chapter in my mother's bible, just out of his own wish, and I felt as if heaven was opening for us. And I thought I'd tell you this very morning, mistress dear, that, and more; but my heart is crushed with this fresh trouble. He is as innocent as a new-born babe, as I know truly."

"And as I know and Mrs. Grant knows," said Mr. Grant. "I shall lock up my museum, and Mrs. Grant and I drive at once and depose to the facts. The man did not leave this house until past nine, and Mrs. Grant saw his shadow on the blind stooping over his book after the moon went down."

Poor Jane shed tears of gratitude, and the cook, whose fidelity had caused her to be considered almost as much a friend as a servant, after the departure of her master and mistress, who, as an act of mercy, took Jane with them, came

to me, when I had locked and double-locked Mr. Grant's museum, and "opened her mind," as she called it.

"It's asking your pardon, ma'am, for sitting down before you, only standing on one leg don't agree with me; the sin of it is between the gardener's dog and the handle of the old gridiron; and yet, ma'am, I read a great mercy in it, for if it hadn't been for the dog and the gridiron, I should have gone with that letter, and that unfortunate Pyne would have been at the Holly Bush, and thrust by Bob into the very thickest of last night's mischief, whatever it really was, of which he is as innocent as I am, who never fired off anything worse than the master's stick at that circumventing dog of the gardener's. And I've sat looking at the rights of it in my own mind, as steady as I could, through all the talk and bother this morning. To see how mercies come to us! That dog and the handle of the old gridiron giving way, saved Master Pyne; and will, or I'm not here! give a turn that will help the dear mistress out of her perplexities. When I could not walk, Pyne took the letter, and mistress—God bless her! she's always up for good—got him to look at the insects and things that must have new cases, and then gave him the beautiful chicken-broth I made for her, to take to his baby! so that the allibuy, I think they call it, comes out as white as milk. Oh, dear lady! how wonderful it is how mercies crop up. It will turn the back-sliders to the right again, and open the magistrate's eyes, through the hole he has got in his side, to the real character of his pet 'Bob of the Brooms.' The grooms who were with their masters say they heard the church-clock chime a quarter to nine not a minute before the shot was fired. They also say that the fetlock of one of their horses got caught in a snare, and the horse may be lame for life! That's what his honour and his friends have got by taking advantage of my dear mistress's absence to overthrow Temperance! And think of the

wonderful change that will come about through the gardener's horrid dog and the handle of an old gridiron!"

It was clearly proved that Pyne was really in Mr. Grant's hall when the shot was fired. "Bob of the Brooms'" gun was identified; and, when defence was no longer possible, he declared he had no intention of firing at any one, but the trigger caught in a bush and went off. Another of his friends was captured with several house-breaking instruments on his person, and both men were fully committed. The magistrate's life was certainly, for weeks, in imminent danger; but when sufficiently recovered his first act was to withdraw the license from the Holly Bush, and offer the strip of land on which it stood, at a nominal price, to Mr. Grant. "Tell my fair enemy," he said, when with a still trembling hand he signed the transfer, "that I believe she is right; those sort of people are really the better for teetotalism. They do not understand self-restraint. Say it out," he added, "for I see the question on your lips. You were going to say, 'Do you?'"

My dear friend converted the Holly Bush into her school, and thereby saved many of the Moorland children long walks; and within three months of her return those happy mothers' meetings were resumed, and the curate absolutely brought home a young wife, zealous of good works. Pyne returned to his industrious habits, and at the second temperance meeting requested leave to resume the pledge. "Bob of the Brooms" and his three worst satellites were got out of the country; and the women became again too much busied with their duties to study their rights. The wretched woman who for a time had obtained influence over Jane, made a wretched exit; while intoxicated she had taken shelter from a storm in a lime kiln, and was found dead in the morning.

Jane's cottage was as neat as ever, but all our care could not save her baby. "I know she will be taken," said the poor

mother to Mrs. Grant; "twice I have seen her, in a dream, in the arms of a beautiful angel, folded warm, and pressed to her heart. And I know, when I see that star in the heavens, that its angel will come to my child and take it, take it soon, for it becomes weaker and weaker every day. She kneels beside a bright stream with it, and the star twinkles, and twinkles more and more. I am sure it wants my baby to be with the infant angels of heaven."

And truly the child passed away during the night of the very day she had so spoken. Mrs. Grant, whose perplexities had vanished like last year's snow, came out of the cottage with a troubled face that afternoon; and thus she said, "I almost fear that Jane may soon follow her child."

"What is the matter?" I inquired.

"I had quite forgotten," said Mrs. Grant, "in the peaceful lull they enjoy, that Franky had said, the evening that I happily went to seek a messenger in their cottage, 'Mammy, don't cry, *he will not hit you again.*' I know now, but only since the baby's death, that her husband had 'hit' her, poor thing! Not only has she concealed her suffering from me, but she has concealed its effect from him.

"The drunkard strikes many a blow, unconsciously often, it may be, unto death. There is an old proverb, 'Hell is paved with good intentions,' but all the 'good intentions' in the world cannot withdraw the roots of a frightful disease from that young, suffering woman. I deeply lament that she had not told me before, but I will go with her to town to-morrow; when Pyne knows it (though she declares it is not his fault. It was little more than a tap; it must have been coming before, she says; and all the unselfish excuses a loving woman makes to shield her husband from blame) I am certain his mental sufferings will be equal to those that torture her poor body. As if to expiate his backsliding he is among the

foremost in the temperance movement, which, thank God, is taking more hold of the people than ever I expected, and, at our very last meeting, he instanced himself and his 'dear Jane' as brands plucked from the burning, and dwelt upon the obstinate blindness of those who withdrew their hands from the plough."

Mrs. Grant took her to London, and insisted on her husband not going with her the first time; in truth he was not fit to go, the poor fellow seemed paralyzed by the idea of such a result. But the physicians' report as to the cause of her sufferings removed the belief that the disease was produced by an act of brutality—though it was clearly the result of his intemperance. He had fallen on the floor, and her exertion to raise him up to his bed had ruptured the muscles of her arm, beneath the shoulder, and produced violent inflammation. This was really the first cause of her neglecting the decent arrangement of their home. The blow the child remembered was on the arm, and told in black and purple of a violence which Pyne deeply repented, and never repeated. Poor Jane soothed and explained, and did her best to comfort him. And though Mrs. Grant could not create an insincere hope, yet she permitted him to accompany her in her next visit to London.

It was right she should remain in the hospital; but, from the first, there was little hope of cure. At length, in compliance with the wish of both, she was brought back, so that her last words might be spoken in the home of her early happiness; though the walls had seen the backsliding of both, yet they were also silent witnesses of the repentance and the firm faith which both cherished of a reunion where there could be no backsliding, and where both would "rest in the Lord" at the appointed time. During the three weeks that Jane lingered, many a doubting spirit drank a deep draught of faith in the regenerating power of temperance. And Pyne was

always outside the cottage door to strengthen the few sweet words her feebleness permitted her to utter. "But," he would say, "for the accursed spirit of alcohol she would not now be lying there." He would blame himself fearlessly, hardly able to restrain his tears. But Jane would show how she had been led away, though not by alcohol, and make it manifest how woman's patience and lovingness can win back what seemed all but lost. She always said her husband never erred, except when bewildered by that terrible drink.

You can see her resting-place in the churchyard; Pyne has enriched her headstone with cunning carving; and in the summer evenings, after service, the most steadfast leaders of the temperance movement in what is now really a happy valley know where to find him and his son; and, after some seasonable converse, poor Jane's favourite hymn mingles with the song of the nightingale. He thinks it the same bird that brought music to her window when her baby died.

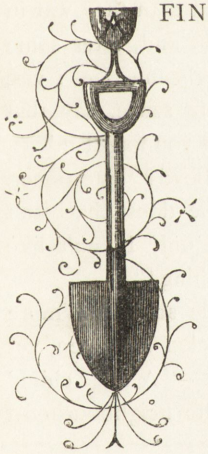




N. Chevalier.] [J. C. Griffiths.

DIGGING A GRAVE WITH A WINE-GLASS.—"COME HOME, MOTHER."

DIGGING A GRAVE WITH A WINE GLASS.



FINE, likely boy he is—there's no denying it," assented Mistress Peggy Byrne to an observation made by her pretty young friend, Mary Flynn, in a shy, blushing way, concerning their mutual acquaintance, Terence Boyd. "He is so; and bates the three kingdoms for eyes, which are the making of a face—the glory of it, anyhow! I stand up for eyes all the world over. Some stand by mouths, but they, the Irish ones specially, can spake for themselves. Others cry up noses, which," added Peggy Byrne, after caressing her own with a "floundering" pocket-handkerchief, "I count nothing! What signifies the nose? You'd never read a man or a woman's maneing by the nose. There it stands, steady and constant, always the same, barring when, like Tim Garrett's, a clip of a stick turns it crooked for the rest of its days. You can't read a man's nature by his nose. But, oh, darlint! the dance or the wink of an eye, or the corner up, or corner down, of a mouth!—och, aroon!—whether they're handsome or ugly, the book nature spakes the truth, even from silent lips. But to think of

the 'cuteness of mankind; sure it's as plain as sunlight in June, they don't like to wear spectacles, to hide the expression of their eyes, because it would dim their beauty; but they cover up their mouths by those mousetachers!—the poor girls now can only get at their maneing half way, and the light in the eyes bothers them. The Irish girls are not so bould yet, that they can stare into a man's eyes to read his maneing; but, long ago, they could peep under their eyelashers and read it, and he never the wiser, just out of the curl of his lip. But now the mouths are all hidden under the furze bushes: so no wonder the poor craythurs of girls are more bothered than they war in ould times." Peggy paused to take breath, and, after some time, added: "But handsome is that handsome does: yes, Mary, mavourneen, they all, that have any sense, say that handsome is that handsome does; and don't you forget it."

"But what has that to do with Terence Boyd?" questioned Mary, drooping her head. "What is it he does that isn't handsome? It's nothing to me, to be sure; only I don't like to hear a neighbour's child run down for nothing!"

"Neighbour's child," repeated Peggy, while she drew more tightly the ends of the handkerchief that circled her keen, yet good-natured, face, under her coal-box bonnet—"A fine 'child,' Terence Boyd is, to be sure, and where's the neighbourhood Mary?"

"His mother and my grandmother, Peggy, lived close beside the seven Castles of Clonmines before either of us were born, and if that does not make us neighbours, I don't know what does, Peggy Byrne," and she drew up her little figure to its full height, and tried to look dignified.

Peggy had a peculiar way of replying to anything she either did not believe in, or disliked: she produced a peculiar sound, like "thhad thha!" and she tossed her head—an "indignation toss," Mary called it. She "thha-d," and tossed her head more

vigorously than usual, and pressed closely to her side her bonny basket, containing various muslin articles, very neatly crimped. Peggy was proud of the contents of her basket: and well she might be. They were "got up" in a manner that would not have discredited a Parisian clear-starcher! Mary had a roll of needlework that she was taking home to a lady to whom the muslins belonged. She was that rare thing in those days of natural sewing machines—an excellent needle-woman, plying her needle rapidly and neatly. The women stood almost beneath the shadow of Buckingham Palace, just where the bars divide St. James's Park from the broad pathway.

Seated on the curb stone, her bare feet nearly embedded in the brown mud of the highway—for a heavy autumn shower had just fallen—was a dark-haired, weird-looking girl, aged about fourteen; she had fine features that time must ripen into beauty, though their expression would, of a surety, be made or marred by circumstances. A small flat basket of walnuts was beside her; she was cracking the walnuts with her strong, white teeth; then partially shelling, and exhibiting them in rows round the edge of her extemporized shop; she was jesting mirthfully with one of the lads of the shoe-black brigade, who had indulged himself with a pennyworth of what the girl announced to the passers-by to be "fine *goolden* walnuts."

"Why, if that isn't Nelly Livermore," said Peggy Byrne to her young friend. "Nelly, is your father still at work on the Embankment?" The sunshine faded out of the poor girl's face while she answered:—

"No, Mrs. Byrne, he is not."

"Not," repeated the clear-starcher; "then where is he?"

"Well, there was a bit of a misunderstanding; and, trying to set his comrade right, they said he hot him rayther hard: anyway, he got twelve Sundays for it."

"Oh, my law,—thhad thha! I suppose he was *overtaken*,

honest man, when it happened! Ah, my! it's the top of the tree James Livermore would ha' been years ago, if he hadn't a turn for digging HIS GRAVE WITH A WINE GLASS!"

"Well," said the girl, with deepened colour and flashing eyes, "he's not the only one with a fault."

"No; more's the grief of the world, he is not; and that fault in particular counts its hundreds and thousands. But your mother, Nelly; sure it must be hard times when pretty Polly Livermore's daughter turns into the soft shoes, and takes her sate on a curbstone."

"Yes, Mrs. Byrne, the times are hard; but there's Nancy Rayne signing to me over the way; I must run, for she was to have a chance of some cherry-cheeked apples, and Nancy and I always go shares." She snatched up her basket, flopped through the mud, "dodged" among the cabs, and disappeared down James Street.

"Is there anything specially wrong with her mother, Phil?" inquired Mrs. Byrne of the shoe-black brigade boy, who was one of her numerous acquaintances. "Since I have left Pye Street, and come to the West End—not out of any grandeur," she added, tossing her head, "only, you know, to be near Mary—I haven't set eyes on one of the Livermores until this day since I don't know when!"

"Oh, it sets poor Nelly wild to speak of her mother to her," answered the lad. "She's more trouble to her than her father. It was *her* drunkenness and ways that drove *him* altogether to the bad, and she's turned cruel against Nelly. If Nelly catches sight of her she runs like a hare before the hounds. Poor Mr. Livermore is thankful for the jail that keeps him from his wife and the drink; he says he does not know which is the worst curse."

"But *he* had a turn for it first, Phil," said Peggy, "I remember that. She's gone fast down the hill, as women do; they go

down faster than men, and have not the strength to get up again. Every day I hear of another and another, *digging their graves with a wine glass*," muttered Peggy. "Oh, dear," she continued, "will the curse of drink ever pass from the people? —the more people the more drink, the more drink the more graves."

"Well," said Phil, "I'm a Band of Hope boy."

"Thank God for it," said Peggy earnestly, "and pray for strength to keep your pledge. Don't put faith in your own strength, but in HIM only who gives the strength. I knew her when she first took to it: well-to-do tradespeople they were then: greatly respected by all who knew them. I remember her and her two children: she had two then—she has but the one now; when there weren't better dressed people in the court where they lived: and it's asy for me to call back the day that gave a chill to my heart. I saw Polly Livermore standing by the windy of one of the curses—I mane the public-houses,—and poor Nelly was trying to while her away. It seems to me I can hear her at this moment, and her mournful words between sobs, 'COME HOME, MOTHER!' Not she: she had had a dale too much; but she would have more. Well, one by one, the good clothes went, and the rags took their place. Ah! 'tis a woeful story, though a common one! What can be done for that wretched woman? Nothing!"

"But the girl," said Mary; "you find such ways of helping people, Peggy, can't you think of something for her?"

"Thha-thha! I think awhile, Mary dear, and then I pray awhile, and betwixt the both the Lord strikes out something for me to do; the thinking would be nothing without the praying. But we must part here, dear. They won't let me carry a basket through the park; yet sure, a basket isn't *vulgarer*, and not so noisy, through St. James's as a cab. But never mind, I'll go the round, and meet you by the National Gallery—

there's fine resting on the steps, and the sparkle of the fountains is like the waterfall at Powerscourt, barring the want of the trees—and go asy through the park round by the water. The ducks are as innocent and as pretty a sight as you'd see in a day's walk, and here's some bits of crusts I put in my left-hand pocket for you to give them, since I could not have that pleasure meeself on account of the basket; but, for your life Mary, don't let them gobbling swans get a crumb! I hate the sight of them—bloated out, swelling with pride and impudence, bobbing their heads forward without the high heels or the tight-lacing either, as if enough natural sickness did not crawl into the world but we must cramp and squeeze our poor sinful bodies."

"Do you mean the swans, Peggy dear?" said Mary, with a saucy little smile that played about her lips like a sunbeam.

"Oh, there, don't bother me! It's troubled I am about the wakeness as much as the wickedness of the world, and that poor Nelly Livermore is going between me and my rest. I wish I hadn't seen her!"

"Oh, Peggy!" exclaimed Mary, "don't say that; that is cowardly. Sure you're not one to grudge the trouble of stretching out a hand to draw a poor fellow-craythur out of the mire!"

"There, go your ways through the park, only don't hurry, but take it asy," said the worthy woman, as she turned down James Street; then paused, and called to her,

"Mary, listen, dear; mind you wait for me. I have a particular reason you shouldn't go near that big house without me. 'Tell you what it is?' not just now, dear, but maybe I will, my darlin'; only wait for me on the steps."

"But, Peggy,—"

"Now don't bother me, darlin'; I don't see what call she had to want spakeing to *you* at all. I brought all the directions

right; there never was one wrong, and the work all beautiful; and, 'bove all, we must be to the minute; she's a queer tempered lady, and we must hear all and say nothing! When you get your instructions about the work, you must start, and lave me there."

"Have you known her long—I mean, *very* long, Peggy?"

Mrs. Byrne turned round sharply. "Mary, that's nothing to you; you must be there in time, or you'll never have another needle to thread for her; and keep a dumb tongue as to whatever you see or hear."

Mary looked after her, and then at the little lad, who was beating one shoebrush against another, while he whistled softly the *refrain* of a street song, one of those that popularise music to the million.

"Has Mrs. Livermore been long gone so entirely to the bad?" she inquired.

"Well, some time," he replied; "there's scores of 'em down Westminster; they begin with a thimbleful, mother says, and end—well, I don't like to think how they end; but the women are worse than the men! They don't seem, mother says, to have the strength to overcome it, when once the love of the drink gets *holt* of 'em."

Mary entered the park, crossed over and turned down by the water, while her old friend Peggy trotted off with her basket. She passed Mr. Martin's chapel and the alms-houses, and, on the same side of the way, saw Nelly Livermore and another young girl talking over and arranging a couple of baskets of nuts and apples, at the corner of the pavement; they were so intent on their task, that they did not see the staggering approach of a drunken woman, who, with the yell of a wild Indian, fastened on Nelly, who attempted to rush across the street to escape her. Both staggered and fell, and at the same moment a cab, going at a faster pace than is justifiable in a

crowded thoroughfare, passed almost over them. Peggy seized the horse's head, and held him firmly. The animal neither kicked nor moved; a gentleman who was inside sprang out, and there was no lack of ready hands to endeavour to extricate the sufferers.

The woman, somewhat sobered, had received little injury; but poor Nelly's temple was bleeding from a frightful wound, and she was quite insensible. Peggy, with a presence of mind that never deserted her, placed her basket on the seat of the cab, and prepared to lift in the insensible child.

"Let a policeman take her to the hospital," said the driver; "my cab will be ruined."

"I will pay the damage," exclaimed the gentleman.

"I will go with my child," said the wretched mother. "Peggy, you won't hinder me; you knew me in better days."

"I don't want to stand betwixt a mother and her child," answered Peggy, while she placed the young girl on her lap, and supported her head on her bosom. "You will want looking to; but you drove her to her death, as you drove her father to jail. Oh, if the first glass of spirits that passes the lips of man or woman could be turned into present poison, what thousands on thousands would be spared degradation and ruin!"

The gentleman, having taken his number, gave some money to the driver; a policeman jumped on the box; the once pretty "Polly Livermore," her large bleared eyes fixed with an expression of terror and helplessness on her daughter, huddled her rags into a corner of the cab; the quickly-collected crowd as quickly dispersed—all except Nelly's little friend, who hung on the door crying—and, in a few minutes, the poor girl was carried into Westminster Hospital.

The woman's case was attended to elsewhere, but the surgeon shook his head while he examined the injury Nelly had received.

"She is not dead," he said, in answer to Peggy's inquiry, "and she may recover consciousness, but the wound is very deep."

"And dangerous, your honour," added Peggy; "sure I knew it, and your honour knows me, if you'd only take time to remember. I clear-starched you five years ago, and you used to say no one could turn out your shirt-fronts with Peggy Byrne! (the good-natured surgeon recognised her.) You might know me also by this, your honour," she said, pushing back a band of silky grey hair from her left temple, "but it wasn't as bad a hurt as that."

"What became of *him?*" inquired the surgeon, though he kept his eyes fixed on Nelly, and his finger on her pulse.

"Well, sir, he travelled for the benefit of his education: not that I ever raised a word to harm him;" and then she paused, her great grey eyes gazing into vacancy, as she murmured, concerning the worthless yet ever precious husband, who had disgraced himself and abandoned her, "Ah, darlint! you was as tattering a rover as ever broke this world's bitther bread, or supped the sorrow of sin, I'll say that for you, Micky Byrne; yet I'd rather see your handsome face this blessed minute than wear the Queen's crown (God bless her!) in Westminster Abbey." An expression passed over the surgeon's face that said plainly enough, "What fools women are!" but still his eyes were fixed on Nelly. There was a slight heaving of the sheet the nurse had thrown over the child, and a filmy, grey mistiness gradually overspreading the ghastly pallor of her poor pinched face: there was a movement of the lips, an effort, it seemed to Peggy, to speak. The impulsive woman sank on her knees beside the bed. "Oh, doctor dear, sure it can't be THAT come for the poor young thing already? Oh, doctor, say it isn't! and she to go without the priest to clear her road, and her misfortunate mother the cause!"

"She is indeed gone," said the doctor, as he turned away; "saved, most likely, from a life of misery and shame."

Peggy drew her rosary from her pocket, and laid the crucifix on the now motionless lips. "Asy—asy," she said to the nurse, "just a minute. The poor innocent child! just let me go over a prayer for her, and if her mother has sense enough left in her to ask for her, don't tell her yet how it is. Another grave dug with a wine glass! another grave dug with a wine glass! and the child so full of life not an hour agone! young life—poor child! Oh, why should we mourn and lament over those called away before Satan, who watches his turn, gets the black drop into their fresh young hearts; just one minute more, it's the blessed prayers I should be saying, and not crooning my own thoughts." And then she repeated what she believed in reverently and tenderly, and having heard that the miserable mother was sleeping, she could not help muttering, "It would be a mercy if she never woke." As she left the hospital, she was waylaid by poor Nelly's little friend, whose cries were great because she was refused admittance. She was a fierce little thing, whose feelings knew no restraint; and when she heard that her friend was dead, she clung to Peggy wildly, entreating to see "her Nelly," only once, once more.

"Oh, my child," said Peggy, "you must not take on so; she is out of all sin and sorrow."

"And has left me alone in it; she was the only thing I had in the world to care for," screamed the girl.

"Death is often nigh handy to us, dear," said Peggy, "when we're anything but ready for him."

"Look!" exclaimed the little fury, quite heedless of Peggy's words. "I'll wait here, night and day, rain, hail, and shine; and they shan't drag me away. I'll wait here, till her mother comes out; *she* murdered her—and I'll brain *her!* I've the stones in my basket ready." She seized a stone and held it

aloft, clasped in her emaciated fingers. "Nelly, my Nelly, said her mother would be her death, and so she has been; but I'll have her life!"

"Have you no parents, child?" inquired Peggy, horrified at the wild vehemence expressed in every distorted feature of the face, in which her great eyes burned rather than sparkled.

"Not that I know of; what's the good of the whole biling of parents in Westminster? They drink and fight over gin all night, and drive every scrap of a starving child they can get to beg and steal for the gin all day. It's the children keep the parents. I han't got none. Oh, my Nelly! my Nelly!" she continued, with a sudden burst of grief, as she cast herself on the steps, "I have nothing now."

Terrified at the violence of the little starveling, Peggy addressed herself to a policeman, in whom she recognised an acquaintance:

"You've heard what that poor child said? Can't you see to her? Has she no one belonging to her?"

"I'll make her move on presently," he replied; "that's all I can do for her until she does something. It's like enough she'll assault that woman, for she's a regular tiger kitten, and those poor apple-girls are often greatly attached to each other. She's as well without parents, such parents as gin makes them! I'll see after her, missus; I'm a father myself, and always thankful when girls like that are put off the streets for some fault. It's their only chance of earthly salvation."

Peggy went close up to the policeman.

"Look here," she said, "Mr. Connor, I've been looking at the world many a year out of the back windows ('windys' she called them), and so have you; but do you think the world's better or worse than it was ten years ago?"

"Worse, by a long chalk, Mrs. Byrne."

"And why?"

"Because there's more people in it, for one thing; and for one woman who got drunk then, ten get drunk now, and take no shame for it."

"I know that," answered Peggy, "I know it to my grief; but I can't get under the cause; reason, there is none: there's more edication."

"More learning," interrupted Mr. Connor, sententiously, who was a model policeman, firm, erect, unflinching, dictatorial, and very observant, as all policemen ought to be, with an adamantine faith in himself; "there's much in the differ between learning and education. Not that there's any support in either where there's no beef and 'taters; and them that hasn't what I've mentioned, takes some to brandy, some to gin, according to the class; it's easier to get; it's fire, as well as food; and the more of it that goes in, the more sense goes out; and so on, Mrs. Byrne."

"Well, I suppose so; but, Mr. Connor, it's not only *poor* women that take to it."

Mr. Connor elevated his right eyebrow, and passed his hand over his mouth to conceal an involuntary smile.

"Right again, Mrs. Byrne; it's a troublement to many; and it's just among such-like—as you so distantly allude to—that the habit has increased. The railroads has to do with it, and the competitive examinations, and the tearing away at everything, and heating it all up with sherry and champagne; everything is done in a whizz and a whirl, first with one thing, then with another. It's fearful the quantity they *tot*, to get up the steam, and then to keep it up. It's when we're in coloured clothes, mixing in society *on the sly*, that we see so much of the back-stairs' practice, and what's drank at the refreshment tables, and in the corners, and taken up to my lady's chamber unbeknownst, and the red lavender—ay! and the tasty drinks, and the lots sipped by pretty young ladies at croquet parties, and

the gentlemen coaxing them on to it, and winking and laughing at—"

"There's Big Ben out with all he knows, Mr. Connor," exclaimed Peggy, "and one waiting for me, and me overdue this minute a good hour at Auburn Place. Look to the little orphan, Mr. Connor, for the sake of HIM who called little childer to his knee and loved to talk to them; and if you can't find her people bring her to me, Mr. Connor—Mistress Peggy Byrne, at the corner of Drice Place: I call it Belgravia. 'Kindness will cut the claws of the wildest cat,' and there's a power and all of love in her for poor Nelly. Love is the Lord's breath in every heart. Love and hope live together. She loved poor Nelly."

CHAPTER II.

MARY FLYNN acted according to her old friend's instructions as nearly as she could. She fed the ducks, and did her best to protect them from the assaults of the tyrannical swans; but her efforts were almost in vain. Her attention to the pretty birds did not prevent her turning over in her mind, not for the first time, what it could be that made her old friend always object to her going alone to the lady who gave them both so much to do and paid so liberally for it; and then she again turned her attention to the swans; for she had a natural appreciation of the beautiful, and a kindly feeling for all living things.

She loitered on her way, for she did not much like the idea of waiting for Peggy on the steps of the National Gallery; and just as she turned to go up Spring Gardens, she heard a well-known voice laughing and talking loudly. Did the words sound *thick* as well as *loud?* She hoped not; but she knew the colour flushed to her cheek and that her heart beat rapidly.

She was not deceived in the voice. Terence Boyd, two other young men, and a young woman, came, boisterously, from Charing Cross. The girl was sauntering between Terence and one of his friends—a young fellow she did not like, Abel Doyle by name; and Mary was not pleased to see that Terence's hand was placed on the girl's shoulder, and that they were talking and looking at each other so earnestly that he did not see her until she was close to him. She would have passed them, but Terence caught sight of and rushed towards her.

"Mary!" he exclaimed, "is that the way you cut an old friend? Walk on, walk on, walk on," he said to his companions; "maybe I'll overtake you."

"Maybe, you'll overtake us!" echoed the girl in a coarse voice, mockingly. "May bees don't fly this time of the year. Is the young lady too fine to join company? We are going for a row on the water."

Mary shrank involuntarily from such a party. "I am taking work home," she replied, "and have no time to spare;" adding in a low tone to Terence, "You are not in a fit state to walk with me, or any well-behaved girl, and to be so overtaken at this hour in the morning. Oh, Terence, Terence! if I had not seen, I could not have believed it!" Her affectionate, gentle heart sent the tears to her eyes; she walked quickly on, Terence still by her side; his friends went their way.

"You're hard on me, Mary; it's all along of Peggy Byrne, who has set you against me, that's what it is."

"Peggy Byrne did not give you the spirits you drank this morning!" answered Mary. "I wish you'd leave me, Terence; I don't like to be seen walking with you in the state you're in."

"If I leave you now, Mary, I'll never come back," answered Terence passionately; "so take your choice. I always knew

you had a weak heart, but still thought there was a well of love at the bottom."

Mary was bewildered; the young man's heated manner, loud words, and excited gestures, drew the attention of the passers-by, and her sense of propriety and timid nature caused her to tremble and turn pale. She had gained a little self-command from the hope that, having intentionally loitered on her way, Peggy's rapid footsteps would have brought her first to their trysting-place; but no Peggy was there. Then she thought it was a mercy that Peggy did not see Terence in his present excited state. He kept repeating, "If I leave you now, Mary, I'll never come back. I'll take my oath to it."

"You had better take yourself off," said a policeman, wearied with having nothing to do. "I've watched you annoying this young person for some time, and a man's no man who forces his company on a woman. Walk on!"

Terence replied to the admonition with an oath, and, at the same moment, dealt him an unscientific, but a telling, blow. The policeman returned it, and in a moment there was that delight of the London roughs, a street row. Poor Mary, terrified and panting, escaped to the steps of the National Gallery, from whence she saw Terence, after much resistance, marched off in a circle of policemen. However hoodwinked the girl had been by an early affection for Terence, she was sufficiently clear-sighted to know that, if called on to give her evidence, she must confess that Terence struck the first blow, and was not sober. She observed the policeman who had been so unceremoniously dealt with peering among the crowd, doubtless for her who had witnessed the commencement of the fracas. To avoid him, she watched for the moment his head was turned the other way, sprang lightly up the steps, and concealed herself beside one of the pillars, to which she tremblingly clung for support. Appa-

rently satisfied that his was a hopeless search, she saw him at last follow his companions, until they mingled with the crowd. Agitated and trembling, she seated herself in the bend of one of the steps to wait for Peggy. She bent her head over the parcel to conceal her tears; when more composed, her old friend's warnings stood in array before her. Could it be really so? Was the love of her young heart another victim to the vice that was leading thousands to destruction? Was it possible that it had brought "one of her people," as she felt him to be, before a magistrate? Had she seen him taken off by a "Peeler" "all through the drink?" Suddenly, St. Martin's clock tolled the hour. She hastily dried her eyes, and wondered what could have delayed Peggy; the lady would be so angry; it was more than half an hour past the time. Mary knew she required the work for a particular purpose at a particular hour. She thought that it would be better to disobey Peggy, and go alone to Auburn Place, than to hazard her employer's displeasure. She had heard she was a "very touchy lady;" for Peggy had told her that, no matter —if ever she saw her—what she said, she was never to be answered, and that what she'd have to do would be to go on, "never minding, and seeing nothing."

She could form no idea as to what delayed Peggy, who was, for an Irishwoman, astonishingly punctual: but she was thankful that Peggy had not seen Terence "overtaken," and wondered how she could conceal the terrible fact from her. Should she, or should she not, go to Auburn Place without Peggy? The clock chimed the quarter. Shading her eyes with her hand, she gazed over the crowd for Peggy's peculiar bonnet and gay-coloured handkerchief in vain, and then took her way to Auburn Place.

When she arrived at her destination she was admitted by the footman, and ushered up-stairs by the lady's-maid, who

reprimanded her rather sharply for her unpunctuality. Mary had the Irish readiness at framing an excuse, and she managed to soften the Abigail's displeasure before they reached the lady's dressing-room.

Mrs. Layton had her baby on her lap, and her feet on the fender-stool, and examined the work over and over again in a way that Mary thought very peculiar. She told her maid twice she need not wait before the woman attempted to move.

"Let me have baby, ma'am," she said, "this is his sleeping time." She returned from the door, and attempted to take the child, who was more than half asleep.

"No, he can sleep here," replied Mrs. Layton.

"Let me have him, please, ma'am," persisted the girl; "master said he was not to sleep in this room."

"But I say he shall!" said the mother; "and you are impertinent. Leave the room!"

"Oh, very well!" was the answer. "If anything happens to the child, and you let him fall in the fire, as you have done before, I shall call this young woman to prove that I did my best to prevent it," and she flounced out of the room.

Mary, who had been a servant, was astonished at such conduct; for she had more than a remnant of old Irish reverence for employers, and thought, "her mistress will surely give her warning."

Mrs. Layton rose from her seat in great excitement. She was a young, pretty, graceful, woman, slight and fair, with large blue eyes, and a full complexion, which anger had deepened into scarlet. She still held the child in her arms; but, to Mary's horror, as she attempted to walk along the room, she turned the infant on one arm, and staggered as she did so. Was it possible that a lady, "a born lady," could have fallen into the degrading vice, which she could not have believed

had risen from the streets and entered such a sanctuary as that? No; she must be ill.

Mrs. Layton went towards her wardrobe, the child hanging half in, half out of the bend of her arm. Again she staggered, and Mary, seeing the child falling, caught it, and exclaimed, "You are ill, ma'am!"

Mrs. Layton turned on her a changed countenance.

"How dare you touch my child, and speak when you are not spoken to? Put down my baby: lay it in the chair! I suppose you had your lesson on the stairs! A pretty pass the world is coming to when the *canaille* are permitted to—to—. But where is Mrs. Byrne—nurse, I mean? and where are my frills? where the chemisette and the guipure set?—where, I say?"

"Madam," answered poor Mary, trembling—for Mrs. Layton had come so close to her that her breath, tainted by brandy, told a sadly true story—"I beg your pardon, but it's Mrs. Byrne that's the clear-starcher, and something has hindered her being here at the right time. But as she told me your ladyship wanted the needlework, and to explain something, she—Peggy, that is—couldn't understand, she said she would come with me herself. I'm the needlewoman, your honour," she said, curtseying, in answer to the lady's half wild, half stupefied, look. "I thought it best to come alone than to wait any longer for Mrs. Byrne, who was delayed in some way."

In a vague, listless manner the lady took the needlework, and examined, or endeavoured to examine it; the angry, excited expression gave way to one almost idiotic.

"Oh, yes, I understand; now I understand. That impertinent girl made me angry; but I shall discharge her. I will not keep her another week. You heard how impertinent she was. Are you in service?" she questioned, dropping the work on the floor.

"Not now, my lady," said Mary, with another curtsey, "not now. I can make as good bread by my needle, and have more quiet."

"But I have taken a fancy to you. You shall have her situation. You would be faithful, and do as I desired—mind, as I desired—in all things. I should be your mistress, you know."

Another curtsey.

"Many thanks to your honour, but it's not such a place as this I'd be fit for. I——oh, take care, my lady!" she exclaimed in a terrified tone, as "the lady" staggered over the chair where the child lay playing with its fingers; "sure it's the precious babby you're just going to sit on!"

Mary's exclamation was barely in time, for it was echoed by a scream from the child.

The terrible habit that was growing on this unfortunate lady had not yet destroyed her maternal affection, even when under the influence of stimulants. She snatched up the child, sank into the chair, and burst into tears.

"Oh, don't go into *asterricks*, my lady, don't! The darlint isn't hurt. Your weight didn't rest on him; he was only frightened." "Oh, what will I do at all, and the both of them screaming!" thought poor Mary; "and I afraid to call that vixen!" She managed to bring Mrs. Layton a glass of water, and just as comparative tranquillity was restored, the same "vixen," to Mary's great relief, ushered in Mrs. Byrne, who, as if to add to Mary's alarmed perplexity, darted an angry look at her.

Mrs. Layton seemed more composed. "May I take baby now, ma'am," inquired the maid; "he's been crying, I see, poor dear."

"Leave the room instantly!" was Mrs. Layton's fierce answer. The servant exchanged glances with Peggy, the expression of

whose face said as plainly as she could say without words, "Go at once;" the girl lounged out of the room. Her insolent behaviour increased Mrs. Layton's anger. Turning to Peggy,—

"You have seen, more than once," she said, "that woman's conduct: I must get rid of her."

"The master thinks she takes such care of baby," replied Mrs. Byrne.

"Others could do that as well. Oh, Peggy! you who nursed me in my infancy, might have more feeling than you have! I was so glad to find you after so many years, and thought I had found a true friend; but you're like all the rest —you're like all the rest; you take part with my husband against me. I wish I was in my grave, I do, I do!" and her vehemence returned.

Peggy, without replying to her, turned to Mary, and said sharply, "Have you given up the work you were in such a hurry to deliver to the lady?"

"Yes, Peggy."

"Have you received the fresh order for what she would see you about?"

"No, Peggy."

"Then you'd better go home. I will bring whatever work Mrs. Layton has for you, or you can come some other time."

Mary curtsied to the lady, and was about leaving the room, when Mrs. Layton said,—

"Nurse, I intend to take that girl into my service. Stay, I have something to say to her."

"Not now, ma'am; and she's not fit for your service, anyhow. Let me tell you about her first," said Peggy, with an air of authority.

"Then she must come to me to-morrow."

"Very well, ma'am. Go now" (to Mary).

Mary was almost too bewildered to take refuge in a curtsey, and felt wonderfully relieved when she found herself on the landing, where she encountered the servant suspiciously close to the door. The girl stood still, and looked Mary all over, from her coarse, serviceable shoes up to her neat straw bonnet, which was trimmed with green ribbon.

"And so you are to come and have my place," she said in a contemptuous tone; "that's the last news! Was I listening? Why, of course I was. Sure a drunken woman *is* a madwoman as long as she's drunk! but it's *how* she gets the drink astonishes us all. That old Irishwoman was her nurse: we know that. But there never was one stood out more against her bribery than Mrs. Byrne; yet she's very fond of her. We have a weary, weary time of it; we all pity Mr. Layton, and love the dear children. The eldest is sent away. And Mrs. Layton was as nice a lady, and as good a mistress, I have heard, as ever lived, until she fell into this habit; but, of course, as you are Mrs. Byrne's friend, you know more about it than I do."

"Indeed," replied Mary, "I know nothing about it. I've worked for the lady, Mrs. Byrne bringing me the work, for a good while; but I never knew she was her nurse. We poor Irish, I know, are very ignorant; but we have too much respect for our employers to make a talk about their affairs, particularly if there is any cloud over them; and if Mrs. Byrne was the lady's nurse, sure she'd bite the tongue out of her head, rather than let it tell of her fault. And if I knew this morning as much as I do now, it's long sorry I'd have been to come by myself, which Peggy—that's Mrs. Byrne—told me not to do, only she was delayed, and time was up and over, and I wanted to be in time, and betwixt the two I was fairly bothered. And so, good morning to you; and be sure of one thing, I wouldn't, for twenty guineas a year, take your place;

though, if such ill luck overtook me, I'd keep a civil tongue in my head to my employer as long as I lived with her, and a silent one behind her back."

The maid was for a time paralyzed by Mary's plain speaking. She left her to find her way down-stairs, but some rude words she knew followed her over the banisters.

"The idaa," thought Mary, "of behaving like that, and she aiting her bread. So that was Peggy's rason," thus ran her thoughts. as she walked back to Pimlico, "for not letting me get a sight of that poor lady. Oh, dear! but the Lord's hand is heavy on the country when such a one falls into those ways. I've often argued with Peggy that there is some excuse for the poor crayshurs that get warmth and support from a penn'orth of poison, when they have neither food nor fire; but the likes of her, with all earth's blessings blossoming round her, to let herself down to the level of the staggerers in the street! Sure it's past understanding how it can be! And me, with my heart like lead in mee bosom on account of that fine handsome boy, who's been the love of my life before I knew what love was. I wish I had money enough to be a nun, and wouldn't I be one to-day, before to-morrow, and so shut out the sin and shame of the world; only, God help us! it would be there all the same," added poor simple-hearted Mary, "whether I was a nun or not!" And so, sadly pondering over what she had heard and seen, and the new and more terrible warning she had received, she made her way homeward with a heavy heart.

CHAPTER III.

When Mary had parted from Peggy she was full of the hope that she should be able to convince her old friend that Terence Boyd was all she wished him to be, for he had promised her the week before to join the teetotalers, and Mary was anxiously

waiting to ascertain how he kept the pledge. The park and trees looked green, and the sunbeams danced on the waters, and the wild-fowl were enjoying their baths, and Mary, when she fed them, seemed to share their enjoyment, and was as happy as a lark soaring over a corn-field; but on her return walk she thought the trees looked dusty, and the water lead-coloured, and her feet felt as heavy as her heart. The shoe-black brigade boy had left his box and brushes close to the railings at Buckingham Palace, and was talking with a knot of youngsters at the entrance to Bird-cage Walk. They were all troubled about something, talking and gesticulating; and as the boy turned his face towards her, Mary saw two stripes down his face that had been washed quite clean by tears. Another time she would have inquired the reason, but curiosity was dead within her; and she went heavily homeward, and set about preparing tea in the one really clean and comfortable room that Mrs. Byrne shared with her. It boasted of two windows, and its being at the top of the house they considered a great advantage, for two rooms had been thrown into one, which, according to Peggy, made it as good as two; and Peggy had "the finest board and best light in London" for getting up small things, and Mary another window (all to herself) for needlework, "and no one could bother them by passing the door."

It was a relief to Mary to weep while she worked; and the scene at Mrs. Layton's was obliterated by her anxiety about her lover. She could not go to see after him herself; nothing she could state (how often her thoughts reverted to that) would do him anything but harm. He was not sober, and he struck the first blow! "No wonder," sighed Poor Mary, "that Peggy talks of the thousands that dig their graves with a wine glass!"

It was quite dark, and Mary had lighted her candle before she heard her friend's well-known step on the stairs.

Mrs. Byrne looked weary in mind and body. She cast off her bonnet, untied her handkerchief, so that her neat little white cap showed round her face; and now that her cumbrous head-gear was thrown off, her head looked full and well-shaped, but not so enormously large as when it was "dressed" for walking. Mary unpinned her shawl, and placed her basket on the bed.

"I don't see any work for me, aunty Peggy," she said; adding, "and but little for yourself."

"There's work and plenty, but not the sort that will fill our pockets, my child," replied the woman, sitting down and resting her arms on the table. "Thank God for His many gifts," she continued, "and the cup of tay, before all earthly things; and you have it all nice and warm for the ould woman, Mary, and she never wanted it more. God bless you, Mary, and brake hard fortune before every honest man's child."

The two women—the old and young—drank their tea in silence, and Mary saw that Peggy's eyes were moist with suppressed tears.

"May I take off them hard boots, Peggy, dear," said Mary; "that will ease your feet. You must have had a long wait at the lady's, or a long walk after."

"Long enough both, dear; we'll talk of that presently. But if ever you let pass your lips what you came to the knowledge of this day, the back of my hand to you, Mary, for evermore."

"Never fear, Peggy; you don't think I'd give the wind of the word to such as that. Sure, I blushed all over with shame to see a born lady forget what she owed herself."

"Mary, you little know what I've gone through this blessed day," said Peggy, with a long-drawn sigh. "Lay by the things, dear; take off your thimble, and—ay, that will do, sit down just there"—and Peggy told her the tragedy of poor Nelly's

death, winding up her story thus—"And that wretched mother, the wife of Livermore, whom I mind only a little while agone, a clean, neat, handy boy, and pretty Polly Livermore—thought of so well; and he now in prison, and she the murderess of their own child, such a heap of rags and wretchedness."

"And you saw it all with your own eyes, and that was what kept you. Sure, I wonder the life did not lave you, dear aunty," said Mary, drawing still closer to her friend.

"No dear, it has always plased the Lord to put strength into me equal to the work laid out before me; when we ask for it, it will be given us; and after you left, I couldn't help but go back to Westminster Hospital. I wanted to see after that poor child, you remember I told you of, on the steps; and, sure enough, before I got there I met the child in custody.

"'She did it sure enough, Mrs. Byrne,' the policeman had told her; 'she watched the woman coming down the steps, flew at her, and battered her with the stones she had all ready.'

"It was awful to see how the child gloried in it—the evil one stood upright in her. But the love she bore poor Nelly made her human to me; and I went to the police-court to see the end of it. I know the policeman could have hindered her from attacking the woman; but he wanted to get her sent to the Reformetary; for it will take her off the streets anyway, and do more for her than I could have done. But, my poor Mary, she was not the only one I knew there. Oh, my darling, how many graves are dug with a wine glass, by rich and by poor, every day and night in this great city!"

Such a mingled expression of love and pity came into Mrs. Byrne's eyes as she looked at Mary, that the poor girl shivered from head to foot; she felt instinctively that her old friend had seen Terence Boyd at the Police-court—seen him in custody.

"How white you've turned, Mary, my child; keep a good heart, darlin'."

"You may spake out, Peggy," she answered. "I know who you saw there besides the child; the policeman was too sudden with him. I could have got rid of him without *his* meddling: they're always interfering with what they've no call to."

"Thath! thath! my child! If that was all, you'd have been there yourself to give evidence, but you could not do it. I guessed who the young woman was; and it's not hid away in the crowd she'd have been if she could have saved him. I heard the whole story, and as he turned round and saw me you'd ha' thought he'd have fainted."

Mary started from her seat, her cheeks flushed, her eyes on fire.

"Didn't you spake one word for him, Peggy? Was there no one to spake a word for him?"

"I did what I could, child; don't blaze up like that. I tould his honour that I knew the prisoner to be come of dacent people, well brought up, and an industrious boy, and that I couldn't believe he'd insult any female; certainly not, if it was altogether himself that was in it. And the magistrate, who knows me (for I've taken on me the charge of two or three poor girls at that office, and got them well placed, *as he knows*) says—'Then who was in it, Mrs. Byrne?' he says.

"'Plaze y'er honour, the whisky,' I says; 'he's not the only one in the coort, I go bail, y'er honour, who is digging his grave with a wine glass.'

"'But to be even half-drunk at this hour of the day, and to strike a policeman, who only told him to move on; even (to the prisoner) you allow that was what provoked you?'

"And Terence looked up, and said, 'It was so, sir; it was no business of his.'

"But, of course, none of them would give in to that; so he was fined, or to be imprisoned. He had the money all but half-a-crown, and——"

"You gave him that. I know you did," exclaimed Mary, as she hid her convulsed face on her old friend's ample shoulder, and pressed her arms round her neck.

"I did: yet neither from love nor liking, but for the honour of ould Ireland! And he followed, hot foot after me, when he was discharged."

"Well," sobbed Mary, breathlessly, "and what did he say?"

"'Mrs. Byrne,' he says, 'God bless you,' he says; 'you've saved me from shame,' he says, 'for no one belonging to me was ever in a jail. And *she* to know it! I'll take any pledge upon the face of the earth to satisfy you.'

"'It's easy to take a pledge,' I answers, 'but it's the keeping of it, Terence, and that can't be done without the help of HIM who will help when we ask it in spirit and in truth.'"

"And what did he say to that?" inquired Mary.

"Why he covered his face with his hands, with a loud sob, and turned away."

"Oh, Peggy, darling!" exclaimed the poor girl, "why did you not take him there and then to Father Green, who gives the pledge."

"Thha thha," muttered Mrs. Byrne, "Father Green is his director; and, if he was so minded, he'd go to the priest's knee without my taking him, that he would; and it's sorry I am to say that there's many a one among Terence's comrades who think but little of their religious duties. We'll pray for him, dear, and for all sinners; watch and pray, and he may take a turn for good, who knows; but *you must wait till he does*. If the sweet-heart won't reform before marriage, he'll never reform after it; if your heart is ever so much set on him, wait and watch; he had sober parents, and that's in his favour, for the love of drink runs in the blood, like any other disease, and parents should know that, and act according. And that reconciles me to poor Nelly's death, for, surely, it must have

run in her blood, poor child; and I thought, when the shock of her death was over, what a blessing it was that she was taken before she became what her mother was! God help us! The devil puts many a poisoned cup in our way, but the worst of all is the whisky. Oh, then, sure, I'll pray that the Lord will save all we know from a drunkard's burning life, and shameful death."

Mary could only answer with her tears; she knew the truth of what Peggy said; daily, nightly, she saw the crimes that arose from drink. It was the active agent in murder; the instigator of all crimes in her class. But great as was her distress at Terence's "misfortune," love—the love that springs up in the heart of every true woman, no matter how sinful or unlovely the object is in other eyes—furnished many apologies for him; "he was over-persuaded," "overtaken," "she was certain it was the first time he ever touched a drop in the morning;" but she would wait, she would watch, and she would never marry him unless he kept the pledge unbroken for six months!

But Terence's backslidings did not impress her with the same dismay as the scene she had witnessed in Auburn Place; she understood perfectly how poor men and poor women in her own sphere were tempted by "the drop," and, once beguiled into the habit, how glass followed glass, until the grave Peggy talked of was dug and filled.

She had seen how the terrible temptation of gin dogged the steps of poverty, and heard daily of crimes fostered by drunkenness; but that a lady, enshrined in all the elegancies of life, should descend to such a habit, was something beyond her understanding, and she shivered when she thought of it.

"The lady you saw to-day, Mary," said Peggy, after a long pause, "has taken a fancy to have ye' for her maid."

"I'd die first," was Mary's impulsive answer.

"She may write to you; or, if she takes it into her head to come here after you, what would you do then?"

"She could not force me to live with her against my will. Why have you anything to do with her, Peggy? You have lashings of work from plenty—of—of—sober ladies."

Peggy smiled, but it was a bitter, regretful smile, and she "thha thha-ed" more than usual.

"True for ye, Mary," she said at last; "but I love the smallest bone in her body more than the bodies of all my customers."

"Peggy!"

"Ay—I do. Her mother was the sweetest lady that ever broke this world's bread. My mother, and gran'mother, and great gran'mother all lived in the family, war born in the family—farther back than I can tell; they had estates in both England and Ireland—the great family I mean—sometimes living in one country, and by times in another; but my people held on that they were Irish, and my sweet lady used to say—'Stick to that, Peggy!' Now think of that, Mary."

"Think of what, Peggy?"

"Of the world's changes—wonderful to look at, hard to bear. Well, Mary, Mrs. Layton's mother was an angel, and I was brought up, as one may say, to run at her foot; and when she married—and she married as fine a looking gentleman, and as noble, as you'd meet on the face of the earth; kind and gentle, too, *when it was himself was in it*—and—he thought he loved the ground she walked on; yet he broke her heart! She withered off the earth with the sorrow and the shame he brought her to, my poor, dear darling! When she married, I went to be her maid, and it was not long before I saw that the young master was seldom himself after dinner; the love of the drink was in him, and sore sorry was I to find that his father had had the same fault. 'A jolly companion' they called him.

down in the gay hunting country where he was bred and born; and when my poor young lady's husband was only a three-year-old babby, his papa's glory was to stand him on the table, and make him drink off a brimming glass of port without drawing breath! That was his first lesson; his mother did her best for him as long as she lived; but still the taste was given him in his babyhood, and, strengthened by his father's precepts and example, and it never left him. The ould gentleman's constitution was hale as a March morning, and, who knows, he might have lived till now; but, though he was put straight on his saddle, with his whip and his bridle in his hands, as he'd often been before, after a day's hunting and a night's carouse—and went off rocking in the saddle like a cradle, tallyho'ing the hounds, so that the leaves of the trees quivered at the sound—he fell and broke his neck, at his own avenue gate, which the lodge-keeper had been too drunk to open at the right time.

"I shall never forget the night that we got the news. My dear young lady was expecting the mother's blessing soon to come into the world, but still she would wait up for master. Now, he was kind and loving to her, but so he was to his friends, and they could twist him when he was with them like a silken thread; and though he'd promise my darling to be home early, they'd get over him, and she always said the way to get him round was the more he stayed away the kinder to grow; but master was too soft. I hate men," exclaimed Peggy, vigorously, "that have not got a good stiff backbone to make them stand up manfully for the right. Why, he knew from what the doctor told him that every glass of spirits he took was a glass of poison, and yet he'd take it. If she was by, he'd let her coax it from his lips. If she wasn't he'd go glass after glass—ay, after a while, whether he had companions or not. Well, my dear, just in the chill before daybreak he came home,

and she at last made him understand how it was—that his father was dead. I was not in the room, but I was nigh at hand, and bitterly they cried together, for the shock of the news sobered him. He was very religious by fits and starts, and lamented with her to think of the poor dear gentleman being commanded away when the sin of his life had scorched the heart and brain out of him, and he had not the knowledge or the power to say, 'Lord, save me, or I perish.' Of course my dear young lady took the opportunity to reason with her husband lovingly and gently, and he owned the truth of all she said, as he had done countless times before, but he did what he had never done before, and which put new life into her, even in her sorrow. It took that effect on young master that he knelt down by the mistress and took the Scripture in his hands, and pledged himself to neither touch nor taste spirits as long as he lived, and then ordered horses, and away down to what was to be their home evermore in this world.

"My poor young lady could not go on account of her situation. When he was leaving us that night he turned round on the steps, and laying his hand on my shoulder—

"'Peggy,' he says, 'you have been faithful to her all your life, and I leave her in your care. The doctor and nurse are at hand, but if she's taken ill you send for me at once. She is my very life, Peggy, you know that,' and out he went into the night; and as he got into the carriage the light from her window, where she was watching him, streamed down on the carriage, and he stretched half out of it, kissing his hand and waving his hat, long after she could get sight of him, though the carriage lamps cast a wild, mad sort of whirling light as they flashed through the darkness.

"I can see it now," continued the old woman, pressing a hand over her eyes, "I can see the whole of it now. The ould master, we heard, had a wonderful funeral, for he was well

beliked in the country. My darling said she did not know how they would get on by-n-by, for her husband had little taste for field-sports, but I could see, and thanked God for it, that her dear heart was at peace; for she rested on the pledge he took against '*stimulants*,' which was what *she* called all kinds of spirits. I prayed every night on my two bended knees that God would give him strength to keep that pledge; but I trembled for her happiness, for I knew he was a man of sand, no strength in him—a kind of give-away sort of heart, never able to say no, and fond from his cradle of the drop. But love adds to woman's weakness. A woman will go on believing that what she wishes to be true *is* true—ay, while the man of her heart lies and laughs at her!

"She was full of the joy of faith; there's nothing so sweet to a woman as the feel that she can trust the man she loves without thought or question, and she believed in the core of her heart that he'd never break that promise.

"Her time came, poor lady, and I got a letter wrote to the master to come home; but long before he could get the letter the babby was born—and, to be sure, he did come as quickly as he could—and she was asleep at the same time, and the doctor so charged us to keep her quiet, that I ran to meet him, and to hinder him from going in, because it might startle her, and she so weak. But my heart went down into my shoes, for I smelt the smell, and saw the flush on his cheek and the fire in his eyes, that I knew was never kindled even by beer or wine; and my heart died in my bosom when I thought of the broken pledge, and how she'd feel it a weight on *her* soft, pure, Christian heart for evermore.

"He would see her at once; and *she* saw *him!* Considering the weak way she was in, I thought it would have killed her, but it did not; only she was, so to say, maimed for life. She was crushed, and soon withered as I tould you, quite withered

away. Of course, we went down to the family Hall, a beautiful place once, but the drunkard's Hall, all gone to wrack, all more or less following the master's example! The father's lot of 'good fellows' gathered round the son, and though bills, debts, and duns were as plenty as sands on the sea-shore, the hounds were kept, and dinners, and breakfasts, and drinkeries, went on as bad as ever; the place well deserved the name it got of 'Madman's Hall.' I used to see HER growing paler and paler and weaker and weaker, day by day, and in the mornings sometimes he'd kiss and cry over her, and call her his angel, and all that. She saw he was going from bad to worse, and it was pitiful when it came near the last to hear her whispering prayers that 'the dear Lord would not take into account his broken pledge.' I knew how that hung about her broken heart.

"It was cruel to see the wreck and ruin of that fine property; but it was harder for me to see her dying, with her babby, so rosy and cooing, on her breast!

"She raised herself when the lightness before death came on her, and turned the babby over, from her bosom to my arm, and pressed my hand over it! And then she called her husband with such a cry—her last in this world. She had never taken her eyes off the door since the night fell; and I had sent and sent one after another for him! But it was of no use; his friends jeered him, they did not believe the messages, and I don't think he understood them; but when she was really gone, some of the servants raised a moan through the house, and there came, they said, a sort of hoot round it, and the great hall-door blew open, though it had been a still night before. And there was a sough in the wind passing through the house that frightened the drinkers; and when they found that DEATH had come, they gathered themselves up as well as they could, and staggered away from the Hall, leaving him

half-sitting, half-lying, at the head of his table, like a tree once the beauty of the forest, rent and blasted by lightning. I never can forget it. I had come down from the stillness of death, knowing that she had been murdered by his ways, my sweet rose, my lily! The moonlight had flooded the bed and the room, and the infant was cooing like a young dove—poor little motherless babby!—and my blood was rushing from my heart to my head, and I felt as if God had forgotten me! And the servants, little knowing the savageness that was in my heart, kept hustling me into the hall, saying, 'Go to him, Peggy,' 'he'll mind you, Peggy,' 'he doesn't understand;' and there he was, his blue, watery eyes, unwinking, staring, but seeing nothing—not the broken glasses, nor the sputtering lights flaring out, nor the slops on the mahogany, nor the furniture broken and tossed; the great grand pictures of his ancestors looking grim from the broken frames and smoky walls. His long, white, powerless right hand curled round the half empty tumbler, which it had not strength to hold, and servants so scared, calling, 'Go to him, Peggy.' And I *did* go to him. I flew at the poor helpless drunkard, like a wild beast. It was God's mercy I did not murder him. I forgot what he was, and what I was! I felt choked with the curses I'd have poured on him. At last, I got words for the terrible truth, and the servants, seeing how mad I was, held me back, and he, quite past understanding, tried to stagger to his feet and make a speech!"

Overcome by the memory of that dreadful night, Peggy sank on her knees and uttered a prayer. She wiped the drops from her forehead, and, looking at her young friend, who sat white and trembling before her, said,

"There, Mary, that has quieted me; whenever you're in trouble, Mary, dear, a hearty prayer to the Almighty Father ill give you the strength of a hundred men!

"They, who were so eager to get me to speak to him, carried me away; and the next day I pitied him. I did more, God help me; his agony was so great, I tried to copy her, and forgive him. You know, Mary, he murdered her, all the same as if he took a knife and cut her throat. God forgive him! And yet, would you believe it, the day of her funeral he could hardly stand straight; think of that, Mary, machree—think of that! I'm sure it was nothing but the knowledge I had that she depended on me to be as a mother to her child that kept the life in me; but for that I should have been thankful to have my grave made at her feet, for the world was still a long way before me, and I knew pretty well what sort of a world it was. And, immediately after the funeral, he gave up intirely, and the creditors fell upon the place; and when it was all up, those who might have looked after him wouldn't walk the same side of the road with him; and he'd come and look at me and the babby so pitiful, and the house at the same time full of bailiffs—the dirty crew!—and ask me, with his white and trembling lips, if I wasn't glad she was gone! Well, of course, among the lawyers and the creditors, they made ducks and drakes of the property, and his relations were only too glad to get him out of the country, on an allowance; and so we were sent off to France for ease and cheapness."

"To France!" repeated Mary, opening her great eyes; "no wonder you're such a well-learned woman, after such travelling."

"Brandy was cheap there," continued Peggy, "but the village we were in was sober, and somehow the delight he took in the child weaned him off wonderful from the heavy drinking; he would dander about with her from hour to hour, and, truth to tell, his ways and his mind were childish; but from quiet, and early hours, and fresh air, he got back some of the beauty that won my poor lost mistress's heart. I kept the spirits as much

out of his way as I could; for, in spite of me, he'd sometimes steal a spoonful or two of his punch to the child, and make her cunning enough not to tell me. I had such a terror over me that she might grow up with the family taste for it, that I watched her; and one evening I was almost turned to stone, for, coming suddenly into the sitting-room, I saw the little craythur dabbling her hands where some brandy had been spilt on the table, and sucking her fingers as children suck sweeties. She knew I never let her taste anything of the kind, and down went her pretty hands the minute she saw me, and then she said, 'Smelling it, dear nursey, it smells so sweet.'

"Oh, how the evil one plants his lies on the lips of even dear little children!

"Time wore on, and my heart turned to the poor master, for he was a *rale* gentleman for more than two hundred years, and *she* had so loved him; and I was grieved to the heart to see him wanting so many things, and no sign of any proper teaching for the child. But in an ill hour a lady (she called herself) came to the village for quiet—a great stalking varaga of a woman—and somehow she put her comehether on the poor master; and the upshot of it was, he married her, and placed her as a mother over that darlin' child. I put up with her hardness to the child a little, and her hatred to me altogether, for I knew I was now all in the world to the sweet one, who loved me; and so I humbled myself to her as if she'd been a born lady. But she was determed to get both of us out of the way; and the master, always asy led, gave in, and my jewel was sent to a convent school, and I, in a foreign country, packed off with a month's wages, which I had the comfort to fling in the woman's face.

"Think of a gentleman, born, bred, and reared, that had had such an angel for his first choice, and stood six foot two in his stocking vamps, taking up with such dirty trash

as that, and wanting my little darling child to call her *mammaw*."

"And you, Peggy dear, what did you do in a strange country? Oh, how could any gentleman treat you like that—you who had been the blessing of his wife and child!"

"Well," answered Peggy, slowly, "look here, I think he was glad to get rid of me. The very sight of me reminded him of what he had been, and what he was! I do think that indeed! It's a good thing we can't see the inside of each other's hearts. We'd find worse readin' in many of 'em than has ever been put into print. But if ever poor craythur was broken to bits it was me; and I was so eager to find the child that though my knees, praise the Lord, are ready and quick at kneeling for prayers, I almost broke them, they war that stubborn, trying to kneel to ax her to tell me where she had sent the darlin'; but she wouldn't.

"And there was I alone, and my heart in my bosom shrivelling for want of something living to love, doing a hand's turn for the poor craythurs that war that ignorant they hadn't a word of English, and asking them to lend me a cat for company; for I had no money to get back to England; and sure the master and his new wife quitted the place, and I could find neither tale nor tidings of them! Poor gentleman, my heart ached for him, and it was just at that time I had the heavy trial to meet with in a husband. He was flush of money, and I was hard up for something to fill my heart with, or I'd never have had him. Thath! thath! The beauty of the world he was, with a tongue like a smoothing iron: the greatest vagabone, Mary dear, and one of the worst liars, that ever broke the world's bread! Well, anyhow we got back to England, and I tried to make out my master's lawyers; and my dear mistress's people had been broken stock and lock, and the estates gone in some estates' court, and the family emigrated, and it's no

good to tell you of all I went through with such a husband as I had; but anyhow I found myself free one fine morning to work hard for twenty-one years.

"The Lord be thanked for all his mercies! I've had a turn at everything, especially nursing, in and out of hospitals, and clear-starching, since the strength has gone out of my back; and that brought me again among the gentry."

"But how did you find Mrs. Layton?" inquired Mary.

"One lady recommends me to another, that's the way of it; and the first word she spoke to me, I felt my heart swaying backwards and forwards—up and down—and I stood and looked at her, trembling all over. And the sight left my eyes, and I should have fallen down if she had not caught me, and was as tender as her mother would have been—tender in heart and hand, and wanted to know what ailed me, and brought me a glass of wine. But I called for water, and then asked, Did she know me? And she said she had never seen me before; but the young forget. I was silly enough to ask her if she remembered her Irish nurse; not she! And I tould her a few things I remembered—not many, I was so confused; and at last I said, 'Have you the mark of two cherries on the instep of your right foot—ripe red cherries? If so, you were once Maud Langley, and your mother—my own dear mistress—gave you to me when she was dying.'

"She started, the colour flushing to her cheeks and the tears to her eyes, and she made me sit down, and sat down beside me, and tould me how her father had her from a convent, and charged her, if ever she should make me out, to remember what I had been to her mother and to her; and how sorry he was we three war ever parted, for that terrible woman, after almost breaking his heart, left him, and never was his wife, for she had a husband before she saw him, who never died at all—small blame to him. Oh, dear! it was wonderful to see how,

bit by bit, memory opened up to her the past; and she was a warm-hearted darling, but with more of the father than of the mother in her; and her husband, a kind, noble gentleman, was so interested and kind when she tould him about her ould Irish nurse. And she was expecting her confinement, for it was about the babby's bits of things, its beautiful caps and laces, I went there—to get them up, you know; but she had other things to talk about—her poor father's death, and how shattered and broken he was. I could not ask her, his own child, if he stuck to the drink to the last, though she hinted that, though always kind and loving to her, he was not always himself; and she tould me how she met with friends that somehow or other got her more of the property than she expected; and after awhile she said she got married, and had such a good husband. And the way he took her joy at meeting with her ould nurse was more than I could have ever thought of; and nothing would serve her but she must have me in the house to see after her babby when it came, as I had done after her quite twenty years before! I tried to show her I was not fit for that work now; still she held to her fancy, and I went into the house to satisfy her; it wasn't *this* babby, but the first one. Such a kind, good, considerate husband as she has—a dear gentleman—and everything the heart can wish for!

"Thath! thath! I had not been long in the house, when I saw that at times she was flushed and excited, and took more wine than I thought right, only I did not let on to the servants that I noticed it. And the doctor, I laid blame to him; but he would talk about keeping up her strength by stimulants, instead of nourishment; and the fine lady nurse she had engaged before she hit on me she encouraged her, and if she only looked a little pale, she'd bring her brandy and water, what she was ready enough to call for herself. I did my best; and I knew the nurse would have choked me if she could, when I

said the finest babbies in the world were nursed on payetees and milk. *She* had her wine and brandy too, and so much of it that the master noticed it, and told her if he saw her again in that state, she must leave the house; and he spoke to his wife about it, and she was that crafty, that whenever she felt bewildered she would lay on the sofa and say her head ached. You may believe it was a cruel trial to me, who had her sainted mother before me night and day, with her that was now a woman—cooing in her blue-eyed innocence! to see she had the bad of her father in her, and to know that she was poisoning the unconscious babe that lay on her bosom, with the desire that *was digging her own grave with a wine glass.* At last her husband saw what made him lock up wine and spirits, and only give it out himself; but she'd get it somehow —the devil always finds the means! Many a word I said when I'd get her alone, and she'd always agree with me, and be harder against those who took to the drop, even than I would be; but oh—as I said before—she had more of the father than of the mother in her! She got over her time wonderfully, but the babby was a puny little morsel, and glad I was when the fine, flashing monthly nurse left, and I had her to myself; and she would nurse the babby—why not? And the mother's love was so warm for her first born, that I got her to take what was right for the child, and no more. But—I suppose it was the Lord's will—I met with an accident turning into the square, was knocked down by a horse, and, to save the dear babby, I twisted myself in a way which held me fast in a hospital for six months, and during that time the child got ill, and the doctor would have it weaned, and then, indeed, she fell into her father's ways all out. Even to you, Mary, I cannot expose the state I've seen her in, and how I saw her dear, good husband's love falling away from her, and her servants so disrespectful that I could knock them down; and she, like the

father, so full of promises to give it up, bowed down to the earth at times, and as good as possible may be for a month, and then breaking out again. The accident had made me unfit for nursing, so I was not always with her; but when she got into one of her drinking fits, the good gentleman himself would come for me, for he said I managed her better than any one else.

"It's bad enough for a woman to have to put up with a drunken husband; but it's a thousand times worse to have to bear with a drunken wife; women should beware of the drops, and the half-glasses, and the tastings that lead them on from little to more, and from more to much; for once they become drunkards, it's easier to cure ten men than one woman! Why, dear, that good patient gentleman at one time had to put her away—under restraint they called it; think of the shame and breaking up of his heart and home. And the first-born, the little shrivelled babby I tould you of, never took a proper grip of life; it looked when it was born like a thing half-scalded, as it really was, from the spirits she took, and it dwindled and dwined away, and died while she was far off—under restraint! I asked to see it, for I wanted to put a few shamrocks with the flowers they had strewed over it, on account of its blessed grandmother's country; and while I was looking at the poor little atomy, its father came in. 'Don't go, Peggy,' he said, in a whisper like, 'don't go; you and I know why I am thankful that the spirit is freed from its little suffering body! And the mother away, and all; it will half kill her, for she has a tender loving heart.'

"'Don't give way, sir,' I says, 'she may take a thought from this very thing; who can tell?'

"His face lighted up for a minute, but fell again, and I left him alone with his dead child, whose grave was dug by its mother with a wine glass.

"She came back after a time, looking as fresh as a rose in June; and, if possible, her husband was more loving and attentive to her than ever, and sent for her ould nurse—and the master, God bless him! was always the same—but at that time *she* had taken a turn against me, just the way her father did. Sometimes she'd want me every hour in the day, at others she'd be a week without asking for me, except for the clear starching.

"She's a rich lady, and I'm a poor hard-workin' woman, without chick or child, and hardly as much in my ould stocking as will carry me out and bury me dacent; for I could not rest asy in my grave if the parish had hand or spade in it; and yet I would not change places with her this moment, God be thanked! night or day. I know what I am doing, and am mistress of myself; and even if the body is in rags, it is the temple of the living God. He made it, and breathed His spirit into it, His name be praised!"

The old woman's face looked so elevated, so happy, as she said these words, that Mary involuntarily crossed herself: there was a long pause.

"But Peggy, she's gone back to it, worse than ever, hasn't she—?"

"No; not worse, that could not be, but as bad. Until after the birth of that darlin' child you saw, she kept from her temptation altogether. And it was a heaven on earth to go and see the happiness that reigned in that house, for though I believe he kept a strict eye over the stimulants for ever so long after he brought her back, yet he is often forced to be from home by his business. And 'deed I blame the doctor for giving her when she was confined what she was too fond of. You see, dear, when once a person has a turn for that, there is nothing for it but total abstaining. They must neither touch nor taste nor smell. They must put it away altogether as they would

any other poison. There can be no half measures with drunkenness—no; and, what's more, they must pray earnestly to Almighty God for strength. Without the Lord's help our best strength is feebleness. The pledge is the safeguard. It was our Almighty Father that put *that* into the great heart of a good man. The blessed pledge—it is a promise, a holy promise——"

"But, Peggy," interrupted Mary, "Mrs. Layton has pledged and promised, and see how she breaks it."

"She does, God help her, she does; but look ye, Mary, she has never asked OUR FATHER'S help. She trusts her own strength, and her inclination upsets that. She manages somehow to get the poison brought her. Mr. Layton's expected home to-night. She seems to be striving against it, poor thing and, knowing he was coming, I stayed as long as I could, for she never touches it *fornint* me. You saw that clip of a girl had lost all respect for her. And if she had not insisted on your going to the house about the work, you never would have known what you do. I can't bear her to be seen, that's what it is, for my ould heart cherishes her still! I stayed as long as she let me to-night, and every cab I heard I hoped was the master, for she was quite sobered down, and in general she wants me to stay longer than I can, for she thinks there's no one so clever about babbies as her poor ould nurse; but I fear she wanted me away to have another turn at the drop! I asked her to be let stay to see the master come home, but she wouldn't. Oh, Mary, the drink hangs like a curse over the rich and the poor; the high and the low are poisoned by it. Sure if it was only the experience of this one day, Mary darlin', this one day is enough, and I could talk till sunrise, for the curse is spreading. May the Lord look down upon us and stop it——" A sudden noise interrupted Peggy's invocation.

"It's Mrs. Gordon turning out her cat," said Mary; "she

doesn't take much," she continued, "but whenever she gets a drop she's sure to turn out that poor old cat."

"Ay," observed Peggy, "gin and humanity can't put their horses together; but that's not Mrs. Gordon and her cat, it's some one stumbling up the stairs. Hold the light, Mary."

CHAPTER IV

MARY opened the door, and in less than a minute Mr. Layton, white and panting, rushed into the room.

The women looked at him in astonishment, while he waited for power to speak. At last Peggy exclaimed—

"The babby, sir, does anything ail it?"

"No, Peggy, worse than that. Come with me at once, she has asked for you—sent me for you. Woman! what do you lose time for?" he added, almost with the fierceness of a maniac. "The doctors say she cannot live. When I came home I ran upstairs to find her, my wife, in flames! They say she had not rung the bell. I hear you were with her —a long time—late—tell me—truly—I can bear anything—when you left her —*was she herself?*"

"When I left her she was," said Peggy, trembling from head to foot.

"What o'clock was that?"

"I can't mind now, sir, but it was late."

"She cannot tell how it happened—that's no proof. The agony she suffers must bewilder her, but she has asked for you."

Mary was trying to put on Peggy's bonnet and shawl, for the old nurse seemed almost paralyzed.

"Come, come," he repeated, "and yet I cannot bear her groans. My darling! to find a blaze of fire curling over her. But she was quite herself when you left her, you are sure of that? quite herself?"

"Yes, sir, quite."

It seemed possible that he could draw consolation from that assurance, for he repeated the question again and again. The two women followed him down stairs, Mr. Layton and Peggy drove off, and Mary returned to her lonely room, but did not go to bed. After a little time she sank on her knees, and prayed most devoutly; sometimes those simple, earnest prayers were interrupted by heavy sobs, which, however, "lifted" (as she would have expressed it) the weight off her heart; never had Peggy's "preachings" against "the drink" appealed to her so forcibly. The events of this one day were so appalling, that she needed no farther evidence to prove the wide-spread pestilence which prostrates alike the rich and the poor. Though her fair, soft face was bathed in tears, she registered a resolve that, unless her lover gave up "the drop" "out and out," and proved he had done so by a whole year of abstinence, she would give him up; yes, though the effort "wrenched the life out of her heart!"

What terrible experiences of the curse that attends intemperance were gathered into that one day! The poor little bright wild-eyed child who had crossed the road as with winged feet, so agile and so full of life, assailed by her drunken mother —struggling beneath the wheels—dead—dead in half an hour! The playfellow of her childhood, whom she believed loved her—poor, faithful, foolish girl!—as she loved him, toying and flirting with another—a painted doll!—a characterless girl like that—unable to walk steadily, and then bursting into a senseless quarrel—all, all the doings of drink. How all things had clouded since she had passed through the Park! She thanked God when the clock struck twelve, and pressed her hands tightly on her brow to shut out the past; but it would return again and again, the scene winding up with the fearful sufferings of the poor lady. She did not notice that the candle

had flickered out, until she found herself in darkness. There were neither blinds nor curtains, and after a time she perceived the dim, mysterious twilight stealing round her.

A light glimmered from an opposite window, and she could hear the tender tones of a watching mother soothing the querulousness of a sick child; then the nearest clock struck out the hour fiercely on the air, while others afar off seemed its echoes. I doubt if any one who has not waited for day to break in the murky city can thoroughly appreciate the beauty and the blessing of light. Gradually the dark atmosphere became grey, and the sparrows—pariahs of the air—began to rustle and twitter round the chimneys, and peep from under the waterspouts: the watching mother extinguished her light, and both men and women going to the work of honest though hard industry stepped firmly on the pavement. Poor Mary wondered as the light increased where the stars went to. She set the fire and hung up the kettle, and adjusting her dress after laving her face and smoothing her beautiful black hair, determined to go and walk up and down Auburn Place, and wait until she could see Peggy.

She was about to set forth, when there was a stumbling in the street, a sound of shuffling rather than walking feet, and an attempt to chorus one of the drunkard's songs, "We won't go home till morning:" a party of youngsters staggering home from a night's debauch—three youths, young lads, little more than boys, linked together, arm within arm—gibbered, and sang, and swore! She thought how fortunate it was she had not been on her way and met them. She listened until sure they were gone. When she got to the door-step a sweep, with his long, folded broom and empty soot-bag, passed; and then, round the corner, came the early morning cry, "Fresh water-crea-a-ses;" and the swift, yet even-footed milkwoman, her face blooming as a peony within a hedge of white May-

blossom, stopped to fill the jug that awaited her on the "airy" railing, and answered the cat's mew from below with "Take it asy, pusheen, you'll have your share by-n-by." "Oh then, the top of the morning to you, Mary!" she added, to Mary's "Good morning." "You're early afoot; and I'm late."

"I'm going across the Park to try and get a sight of our dear ould Peggy, who was called out late last night."

"And so was my mother," replied her acquaintance. "Poor Jenny Devereux had her brains as good as bate out by that blaguard of hers, and my mother went to settle them for her and try to put sense into her, and make her lock him up; but she says she won't turn him over to the law, because when he's sober—honest man!—he's like a lamb, and would go through fire and water for her; but mother says she can't get over it—the hurt is too bad. If Mrs. Byrne was here, she'd say, 'That's another grave dug with a wine glass!'"

"Judy," exclaimed Mary, "stop, dear, don't smile at that saying, never more—never!—never!—I tell you! You just look and see that graveyard *forenint* us; how full it is! I tell you—and it's as true as that you're standing there—that half the graves there—ay, and *more*—have been dug, not by spade and shovel, but by a wine glass! It's a quare way of putting it; but it's the TRUTH."

"What ails you, Mary? You're as white as curds; and your lips are all of a tremble," said the milkwoman.

"Because," replied Mary, "I never saw the curse of drink as I saw it yesterday. It never came home to me until the last twelve hours, and now I can hear or see nothing—nothing! but the curse drink has brought on big and little, young and old, rich and poor."

She went on her way.

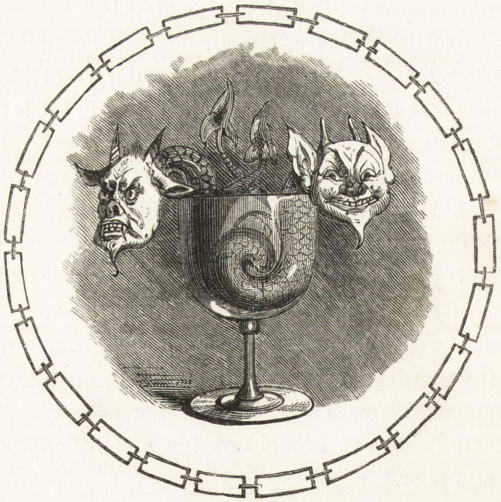
"The Lord save us," ejaculated the milkwoman, looking

after her; "I b'leve there's a dale of truth in it; only if there is, what fools we all are, giving our time, and money, and strength, our body and bones, to make palaces of gin-shops, while we starve in the dirt, and die in the gutters."

The woman pursued her walk with a thoughtful countenance, and Mary saw, with an aching heart, when she reached Auburn Place, that every shutter was closed over the windows which yesterday admitted air and sunshine and the sounds of life.

At last the voice and the pressure of Peggy's hand has roused her.

"Stand up, child," she said; "I was going home. The poor lady—it's all over with her! I would lay down my head on this doorstep and die a happy woman were I sure that this would be the last grave in our country *dug by a wine glass.*"



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SPECTATOR.—"The arraignment of the prosperous distiller at the bar of the Judge of all the Earth is powerfully conceived, and the evidence called is awful and true. A soul-destroying, mind-debasing sin, a source of awful cruelty and terror, crime, and ruin. As such the writer treats it, very ably, and with much truthful pathos. As a literary production the poem is of considerable merit, profusely illustrated with drawings by our best artists."

CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE CHRONICLE.—"We strongly recommend it; it will be found interesting and useful for temperance meetings in the winter evenings."

DAILY NEWS.—"The immeasurable woe and wickedness of drink-debauchery are very powerfully revealed in these energetic verses: and the poem is written with that simplicity of language which is most likely to have an effect on the class of minds needing the lesson and the warning."

THE BUILDER.—"An earnest and able effort to set forth the miserable results of intemperance, with a view to check its terrible progress."

THE ALLIANCE NEWS.—"Not only a beautiful and powerful poem, but it is so constructed and directed as to form a touching plea of Temperance. We earnestly counsel all our friends to read it."

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MORNING POST.—"The Illustrations and engravings are alike admirable, and art has very rarely assisted letters so effectually in denouncing a sin which is according to statistics, becoming every day of greater magnititude, and burning like a cancer into our social system."

NOTES AND QUERIES.—"The poem is forcibly written, uniting elegance with force, and earnestness with all."

GENERAL BAPTIST MAGAZINE.—"The poem is bold in conception, vivid, striking, and life-like in its portrait painting, fervid in feeling, and everywhere resonant with the clear ring of truth."

STANDARD.—"The best and most impressive warning in verse and illustration we have seen against the unspeakable horrors of Intemperance."

THE TEMPLAR. "Let this book be scattered broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the land. Circulate it among the children, circulate it among lodges and Temperance societies, circulate it in cottage and drawing-room, among those who patronize and uphold the drinking system. Money expended for this end will be wisely spent, and we believe the 'Trial of Sir Jasper' will carry Temperance truth and effect conviction, where the Temperance lecturer and ordinary Temperance literature have no access."

UNITED KINGDOM ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT.—"The Committee have rejoiced to hail the issue and aid the circulation of Mr. S. C. Hall's admirable and powerful poem, 'The Trial of Sir Jasper,' a temperance tale in verse. The poem contains a powerful plea for the prohibition of the liquor traffic; and it subjects that traffic to a withering impeachment. . . . . The value and interest of the poem are sustained by the graphic and powerful artistic illustrations, from the hands of our ablest national artists. The poem should be read in every Templar lodge, and on all Temperance and Band of Hope platforms, and should be circulated everywhere."

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