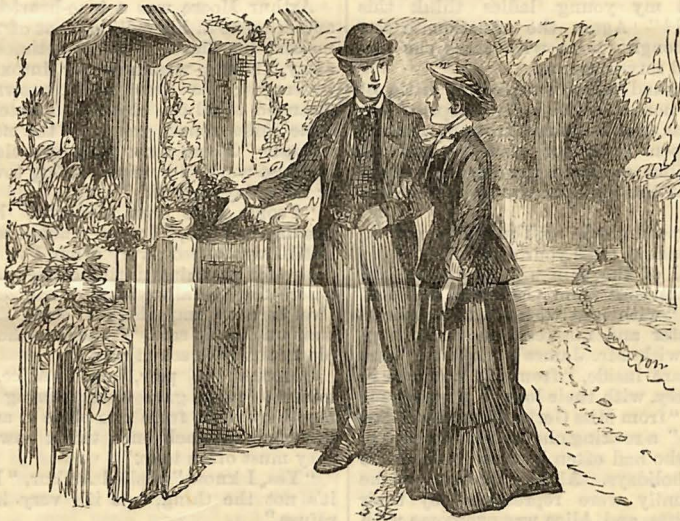


Meetings are held in the Mission Room as follows.—Band of Hope Meeting, Thursday Evening at 7.45. Temperance Entertainment, Saturday Evening at 7.30. Divine Service, Sunday Evening at 8. Meetings for Prayer, Sunday Morning at 9.30, Evening at 9. Sunday School, Afternoon at 2, Evening at 6.45. Admission Free.

SHEPHERD ST. CHRISTIAN MISSION
BAND OF HOPE & TEMPERANCE SOCIETY,
PRESTON.
CHRISTMAS TRACT.

DECEMBER, 1880.



THE MARRIAGE VOW.

A COTTAGE STORY.

"I TAKE thee, Alice, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinances."

Never was solemn troth more sincerely plighted than on the bright summer morning when, in the parish church of Leigh, Arthur Moore held the hand of his early love and betrothed bride, Alice Green.

Arthur had not much to offer her beyond the wealth of his love, and it was but a humble home to which he took his bride after the ceremony; yet it was one

they were proud to possess as their own. Alice had had a hard service, one she had borne patiently and cheerfully for ten years; she had only left her place this morning, bringing with her the respect and love of a large family, and many substantial proofs of their regard.

Alice had never seen the little home that was now to be her own. "It's but a small place, Allie," said Arthur, as they walked arm-in-arm down the rural lanes leading to their cottage; "our living place is not half the size of your kitchen at Mrs. Hare's, and p'raps you'll find it a bit dull after being used to such a family about you."

Alice smiled. "For better and worse; I'm not afraid, Arthur," she said.

It was a picturesque little place, with

even for a short time, but he was proud that she was of so much importance, that she was valued and needed; and besides, he felt strong in his good resolutions. He would not entertain the idea that he need be a hindrance to his wife doing the good service, so he bade her a cheerful and loving good-bye, and drove back alone.

Arthur rubbed down the mare, and led her to her stall, brushed the spring cart and put it under cover, then went to the kitchen door to pay for it. The farmer sat by his fireside smoking, and a mug of ale beside him; he was reading his paper, and looked a picture of contentment and of respectability.

"Nay, nay, there's no need to pay aught," he said, in reply to Arthur's inquiry as to the price; "you're welcome, man, and you'll be doubly welcome when you want it to fetch your good little woman back again."

The farmer's wife brought a chair forward; "Sit down, sit down," they both said.

Arthur took the proffered seat, and took also a supper of bread and cheese and ale. The good woman of the house knew something of her guest's weakness, and brought out also a jug of new milk, and one of buttermilk, but Arthur, feeling strong in his resolutions to be moderate, chose the ale; "the farmer could take a glass or two, why should not he?" At nine o'clock his host laid down his pipe, and Arthur knew he must go.

"I'd rather Moore had taken the milk, and so would his wife, poor soul!" said the farmer's wife; "a man like him should take the pledge."

"Nay, nay," said her husband, "it's not as bad as that, I think."

"Well, he's too fond of it, and he'll have to take heed lest he fall, he's too confident; I shall be glad when his wife comes back, he's well-meaning, but he's weak on that point."

Alice found her late mistress very ill from a nervous disorder; two or three nurses had been dismissed, she could not take to them; but she gave herself into her old servant's hands gladly, and from that time she began to improve. Alice did not reveal her own anxieties, nor how greatly she desired to be back at home; she wished Arthur would tell her openly how he was going on in that one respect, which, so far, both of them had avoided in their letters. To be sure, they did not write much, and perhaps she was too anxious.

When Alice had been more than a month from home, she began to feel very *fidgetty*, she *would* like to be with Arthur at

Christmas; nothing had been said, and Mrs. Hare was still feeble; but Arthur alone, or making merry with others, was more than Alice could bear to think of. Nothing had been *said*, but Mrs. Hare had often thought for her good nurse, and often as she lay still would watch Alice's face as she sat in the room with her work, and she thought it had a look of care, a look that used not to be there even in the days of hard work: she had no near ties of kindred, if she had anxieties now, they must be connected with her husband.

"Alice," she said one day, "we are keeping you a long time from home, I am afraid it is not right; why it is just Christmas time, and your husband must need you; I fear I have been very selfish," she continued.

Alice felt that she must restrain herself for her mistress's sake. She answered cheerfully, that when she saw her sure to go on well, she would be glad to return to her husband.

"Then, my good Alice, write to-night for your husband to meet you to-morrow afternoon; they must pack you a hamper of Christmas fare," she said, smiling, "for you will have the house to brighten up, and there will be no time for the cheer."

So the following day Alice left, with the gratitude of her friends, a hamper of Christmas dainties, and handsome acknowledgements of her good services; she saw that Mrs. Hare had become anxious for her departure, and thus she did not offer to remain. Mrs. Hare held her hand at parting, and after thanking her for all her kind care, she added emphatically:

"Always think of us as affectionately interested in all that concerns you, and thank your husband for me for sparing you."

When Alice arrived at the station which terminated her railway journey, there was no one to meet her; she was not surprised at this, although she would have been overjoyed to see her husband there, "but with so short a notice of her coming, it was scarcely likely." The roads were hard and clean, and it was but a four miles walk! "perhaps Arthur is staying to tidy up a bit." She walked rapidly, and as each mile was accomplished, her impatience became extreme. She met two men in a cart, who lived two miles beyond her home, they looked at her, and said something to each other; she had never spoken to them, and did not like to now, but she was sure they were speaking of her, and one of them shook his head, and laughed. Alice was glad then she had not asked them if they had seen Arthur.

At length she came within sight of her

home; no smoke from the chimney! her heart beat so fast, Alice was obliged to stand still, notwithstanding her impatience. "It's only a week since I heard from him," she said to herself, "surely I need not be like this!" Poor woman! she could not reason herself out of her anxiety, and she trembled so much that she could scarcely untie the string round the little gate.

The sight of the garden re-assured her a little, it was neat—the digging had been done. Alice peeped in at the cottage window, the blind was partly drawn up, all looked in order, for "Arthur was very tidy in his ways;" she thought there had been no fire that morning. Alice went to the little box-tree where they were accustomed to hide the key if either of them was out and expected to return, but there was no key there; clearly she was not expected. Alice was very tired with her walk, and wished she could get into the house; she sat down on the bench where she often sat with her sewing, and where she and her husband were accustomed to sit on Sundays in the summer, talking of their flowers. How Alice wished he would come! he should be home now! had he not received her letter? Perhaps not, and he might not come at all; soon it would be dark; "it was very foolish to come with so little notice," she said.

Just then a sound of wheels gave her some hope. It was John Holmes, the milkman, returning from his round; she stood at the gate, and stopped him.

"Well, mistress?" he said.

"Do you know anything of my man?" Alice asked, with a dry, choking voice.

"Of your man? well, why—well, he's not home, I reckon!"

"No," said Alice, "and, well, where is he?"

"Well, you don't know then that he's got hissel' into a bit of trouble?"

"Trouble, no! I've been away in [Hill-town, and I've heard nothing; I'm just come home."

"And can't you get in?" asked Holmes.

"Oh no! never mind that, tell me about Arthur," poor Alice said, faintly. What did it signify where she was, when something had happened to her poor husband? She felt that she did not want to *get in*, but to go to him wherever he might be.

"Tell me quickly, please, what it is that has happened."

"Well, he's had a row with Rooke."

"With Rooke? what can he have had to do with him?"

"Why, it's a pity he had, but so it is; it seems they'd both been having something. Rooke was quite gone, and said Moore was a 'poor hen-pecked fellow,' and he raised

a great laugh at him. Moore was only what you might term 'fresh,' but he got vexed, and he stepped up to Rooke and struck him; Rooke lost his balance and fell, and he's lying in a bad way in the Hospital."

Alice groaned.

"Moore was taken into custody; they should have let you know; nay, don't, don't take on," he added; for Alice had sunk down, holding her hands before her face, and sobbing hysterically. It seemed hard that it should have come to this, for after all Arthur was not a *drunkard*.

"I must go to my husband, Holmes; could you, oh! could you *take me*?"

"To-morrow?" asked the man.

"No, oh no! *to-night*—now; I'll pay you well, but please take me now."

The milkman hesitated. "I don't see," he began, but Alice interrupted, praying him to lose no time. Holmes was a considerate kind of man, and at this moment he was thinking of his pony, as well as feeling very sorry for this good wife of a foolish man, as he thought Moore to be.

"Well," he said, "I must go home and leave the cans. Poor Bustle," he said, speaking to his pony, as soon as he had left Alice, having told her to cross the fields, and meet him at the top end of "Fallow Lane;" "poor Bustle, I'm to be paid, but there's no pay for thy extra work." Bustle was already impatient at the delay, but it was cheery work going home with empty cans.

Poor weary sorrow-weighted Alice began her further walk, sighing heavily. "Oh Arthur, that I'd never left you! what will be the end of this?"

Arthur Moore had been taken into custody at the time of the unhappy event, and his wife found him in the depths of despair. "So you've found me out," he said to Alice, as she came up to him; "ill news travels fast. I thought to have good news for thee; better have staid where you were."

"Arthur, my poor fellow!" and Alice went up to her husband, putting her arms round his neck, and laying his head upon her bosom; "I ought never to have left you all this time; but take heart," she said, with a tone of hopefulness she did not feel, "it may not be as bad as we think."

"If Rooke dies, I shall be tried for *manslaughter*: think of *that*, Alice," Arthur said, raising his head, and gazing at his wife with a look of horror, "You see he slipped; the worse fool I, for having touched him in that state."

"And you?"

"I came to my senses directly after I

had struck him. Oh Alice! I never thought I should bring you to this, or I'd never have taken my marriage vows."

"That was a joint thing," said Alice, "and we both said 'for better, for worse!'"

"Then you won't go to Mrs. Hare's? I've been thinking that might be the best thing for you to do."

"Never whilst my husband lives," said Alice, jumping up with a start as a thought struck her; "you must be got out of this place."

Next morning by eleven o'clock Arthur and his wife were standing by the bedside of Tom Rooke, in the ——— Hospital, and shortly after, were on their way to their little home. Mr. James Hare had come down by an early train, and had offered bail for Moore; this had been in consequence of a telegram which Alice had sent the previous evening—this was the thought which had caused her to start up from her husband's side. "How little did I think I should ever claim Mrs. Hare's promise in this way," she said to Mr. James the following day.

They were a sorrowful pair, this man and his wife, as they opened their cottage door that afternoon before Christmas Day—a terrible trouble hung over them. Alice's letter, saying how *glad* she should be to get home, lay on the floor—it had been pushed under the door by the postman. The hamper had been forwarded, and was unpacked by Alice with a heart too heavy for the relief of tears, whilst Arthur sat in his chair, looking abject.

There was no "brightening up" of the house, no evergreens stuck in the looking-glass, or in the ornaments on the chimney piece. The Christmas rose, which Alice was always so proud to bring in, withered on its stem in the garden; no neighbours were invited to partake of the often-boasted pudding, pork and mince pies of the Hares'; the goose was to them flavourless; and, above all, the Christmas "Peace" was far from them. "*If Rooke should die!*" day and night this was the burden of Arthur Moore's song.

And in the other home, where Tom Rooke should have been, there was scolding, hunger, dirt and misery, noisy lamentation, threats against Moore, and reproaches of the suffering man stretched on the hospital mattress. He lay there many weeks, weeks of anguish to Moore, but he *pulled through*, to the great joy of Arthur Moore. He tried to atone to Rooke for the wrong he had done him, and in this Alice joined him; they both worked hard, and helped the Rookes in all ways. Alice took in plain sewing, and went out to sew amongst her husband's employers; she helped

Rooke's wife in order that she might go out to wash and clean; and in the time to come, both families recurred to this great calamity as the means to their life-long good.

"I shall have to take a pledge, Alice," Moore had said one day to his wife, "a pledge as sacred and binding as my marriage vow; there's nothing else for *me*, and I want Rooke and me to take it together." Tom Rooke was softened by his long illness, and the constant kindness of Moore and his wife touched his rough, uncultured heart.

"If *Rooke had died*," Arthur used to say, "I should never have got over it. The being in custody and the fine disgraced me, but that I can bear, and may live down; the other I never should."

And it took many years of respectability and steadiness to "*live down*" the remembrance of this disgraceful event. Arthur Moore always meant well, but he was weak. He used afterwards to say, "I tried to *touch* pitch without being defiled by it, and I found *I* never could."

Did Alice regret that she had married Arthur Moore? No! she was faithful in the love that cherishes its object: in all that bitter time she cast upon him no reproaches, and shared his burden as a true helpmate.

E. R. L.

SIR GARNET WOLSELEY ON TEMPERANCE.

THE following letter from Sir Garnet Wolseley, recently written to a clergyman, appears in the *Church of England Temperance Chronicle*.

"I can state generally, that my experience has proved to me that the less liquor there is consumed in an army, the more efficient is its condition. I have never seen men do harder work than that done by the three battalions I took with me on the Red River Expedition in 1870, and I never saw men make lighter of hardships, more cheerful, more healthy, or better behaved, than they were. With the troops under my command recently in South Africa, we had very little spirits. Of my own personal escort the majority were total abstainers, and they were models of what soldiers on service should be. I find that if you give men plenty of tea and sugar, they don't miss their grog after a time; having no grog with you in a campaign eases your transport very, very considerably, and removes a temptation to steal, which its presence with an army always creates. There is no one that wishes well to the temperance cause more sincerely than I do."

Arthur saw her, he came to meet her; he put a hand on each shoulder, and looked into her saddened face.

"Allie," he said, "I'm afraid I've spoken roughly; you must pass it over this time, I hope never to do it again;" and he stooped down and kissed his wife.

"It's the other thing that caused it, Arthur; let that be laid aside, the rest will all be right." It was very hard to Alice to say even so much, and she trembled as she spoke.

As the months went on, Arthur did not "lay aside that other thing," and then he often came home vexed that he had not,—dissatisfied with himself, and moody, when he would have been bright. And Alice began to look for her husband's return anxiously, she scarcely dared confess to herself that the love of intoxicating drinks was becoming strong in him. "How is it?" she would think to herself, "how is it that it can have come to this with him, after so many years of patient waiting, and as I believe *only seldom* indulging before our marriage? What have I done, or missed doing?"

Whilst thus musing, Alice heard her husband's step, and the click of the little gate; she sprang up, and, oh joy! he was *all right*. After supper that evening, Arthur emptied his pockets of the gains of the last few days, and gave them into his wife's keeping; they were more than usual, some accounts having been paid that had been long due. Alice had missed this money, and had feared it must have been spent in drink; her face flushed with pleasure as Arthur laid it down.

"You thought it had gone then, Allie,—been spent over myself. I think if I'd not had a good little woman at home, I should have been no better than poor Rooke, bad as he is; I pity him going home to his *nagging* wife, so unlike my quiet tidy little woman, who always gives me a kind greeting and a bright one, *when she can*. What! weeping, Alice?" he said, his own voice trembling; "well, I'm not quite made into a sober man, but you're making me into one, and I'm determined to keep my marriage vows, which of course I couldn't if I became a drunkard."

"But I've been thinking, Arthur, at least I never *knew* that—" she stopped, scarcely knowing how to put it.

"That I was not a perfectly sober man before we married, eh?" he shook his head significantly; "but you know, I've never been called a *drunkard*."

"Oh no!" said Alice, recoiling from the idea; that which she had tried to say was, that she had not known Arthur's temptation to be so strong. But why say

it? it would have made no difference about marrying him; like many other hopeful, loving women, she expected her devotion would keep him right. Now she wished that he did not feel so sure of himself, and it was on her mind to say, that his efforts to keep sober must be constant and not fitful, but he was so self-satisfied, and so elated to-night, she feared to damp his pleasure by what he might term "preaching."

"Well, I musn't sit here," he said, "we shall have frosts before I get my garden ready for them;" but there was to be no digging or clearing that night. Coming in at the gate was a boy.

"Well, my lad, has t' got a letter?" Arthur asked.

"I've got a telegram for the missus," said the boy, coming forward; "I don't know what 'tis," he added, "something partiklar, I expect."

Alice came forward trembling. A telegram for *her*. Arthur too, seemed stunned, he turned it upward and downward until Alice said, "Let's see, Arthur, what it is."

"From Miss Hare. Can Alice come? Mrs. Hare is very ill, and wants her."

The husband and wife read it, and then looked at each other silently; both felt that Alice must go. Arthur spoke first.

"You'll have to go, Allie, Mrs. Hare must be bad and want you very much, or they'd not have sent this;" and he smoothed the paper on the table, and re-read it very slowly.

"I should like to go to my poor mistress, particularly as she wants me, but—I'm thinking of you, Arthur,"—a pause—"you'll be lonesome."

"Lonesome! yes, I'll be lonesome, Allie." He glanced up at Alice's face, he knew that wistful look meant more than fears for his loneliness; and he added, "and I'll take care of myself, I'll keep sober, so have no fears, for it must be."

So Alice packed up her clothes, and Arthur went to a neighbouring farmer's to see if he could hire a spring cart, to take his wife to the station. Poor Alice was very down-hearted, she was deeply grieved about her mistress, but her husband was undoubtedly her first care and her first duty now, and she did *not* like leaving him. Once or twice during the drive, her heart quite misgave her, and she was ready to tell Arthur she must go back. Then she thought of her ill, and perhaps dying mistress, who had been so good a friend to her, and she resolved to go.

Whatever might be Alice's fears and anxieties, it seemed that her husband had none; he was truly sorry to lose his wife,

thatched roof and latticed windows, a tiny garden in front, but running round the house to a good vegetable plot behind. Alice had come from the town, and there seemed to her a marvellous display of flowers; she thought of the children in the nursery at home, how they would love to gather the beautiful stocks, and the sweet-williams, the pinks, roses, and lavender; and if she could manage it, they should.

Arthur had worked early and late to get these flowers to perfection; he would have been half jealous had he known Alice's thoughts, but they were very natural, and she quickly turned a look of grateful love and beaming pleasure upon her husband, saying, "You never told me of the *flowers*, wouldnt my young ladies think this beautiful?" Again the affectionate servant's thoughts were with those she had loved and served so long.

Arthur had told his wife but little of the new home; he wished to surprise her, and it was with a look of triumph that he threw open the door of their cottage, whilst Alice stood on the threshold, as if aghast at the sight of the objects before her.

Arthur laughed. "You may go *in*, Allie," he said, "it's your own house."

Several of the things in the room had tickets hanging from them:—a chest of drawers, "with best wishes," from Alice's late master and mistress; a corner cupboard, "with Mr. James's respects;" the pretty ware inside, "from the children in the nursery, with their love;" a handsome tea-tray, "from Miss Gertrude, with kindest regards;" a rocking chair from the boys at school, who had often been so troublesome in their holidays. All the members of the large family were represented by their kindly gifts, and Alice was overcome with tender emotions of surprise and gratitude.

"Well Allie, I thought to marry a poor woman, but I have found it was not so, indeed."

And Alice had well deserved her good fortune. She had gone when young into a family thus burdened with many troubles and struggles; she bore her part, which was often a hard one, with patience and cheerfulness: for a long time she was the only servant, and she faithfully aided in the small economies it was needful to practise. But better times came, and then her place was made easier; and when she left to be married, no wonder the family were glad to recognize her worth, to give back to her, as it were, the shillings she had saved from time to time, when money was scarce.

"I knew," Alice said at length, "I knew

some things had come, but I never thought of all these, and such beauties too," she said, as she softly touched the various articles. "I wish they could know how pleased I am, though."

And Alice was very pleased, and very happy! Married to the man she loved, and with such a home, what more could she want? This was a day of mark to her, one of those which are as pegs on which to hang many memories: she had left service, left a home where she knew herself to be valued, and was come to cast in her lot with *one* whom she trusted to make her happiness, as she intended to make his. "If only—," there she stopped, and, wedding day as it was, gave a little sigh.

Arthur Moore was a true-hearted man, and diligent in his calling, that of a clock maker; but alas! he had sometimes fallen away, from a weakness for intoxicating beverages; he was well known, and attended to all the clocks and watches for some miles round, going by the name of "*Doctor*" Moore among his own class: he had also work in a neighbouring town two or three days a week.

"People have been too kind," he said one day to Alice, "I never wanted to drink until I was asked; very often I've had no desire for anything until I came to a place where they've always asked me, and then I've been so impatient, I could scarcely wait until they said, 'Come into the house place, and take something.'"

"More's the pity," said Alice, "my mistress quite gave over offering ale to men that went from one place to another, getting it at each one; think how much they must often take."

"Yes, I know," replied Arthur, "I know it's not the thing, but it's very hard to refuse."

This conversation took place one night three or four months after their marriage, when Arthur had come home excited by liquor, and had been petulant with his wife about some trifle. Alice was very troubled, she had waited tea until her husband's return, waited long after the usual hour, and then it was to see him thus. "No use to say anything now," she thought, "I'll never be too ready with my words." She was sitting very sad and silent with her sewing beside her, whilst Arthur slept off the effects of his potations. When he awoke he went out into his garden, and stayed there a long time. Alice put away the untasted tea, and made some porridge for their supper; then she went out to her husband, who was standing looking over the hedge—the first time she had seen him look listless and idle. When

TEACH THE BOYS ABOUT IT.

At home and at school the boys should be taught the natural effect of alcohol upon the processes of human life. First, they should be taught that it can add nothing whatever to the vital forces or to the vital tissues—that it never enters into the elements of structure; second, they should be taught that it disturbs the operation of the brain, and that the mind can get no help from it which is to be relied upon; third, they should be taught that alcohol inflames the baser passions, and debases the feelings; fourth, they should be taught that an appetite for drink is certainly formed in those who use it, which destroys the health, injures the character, and, in millions of instances, becomes ruinous to fortunes, and to all the high interests of the soul; fifth, they should be taught that crime and pauperism are directly caused by alcohol. So long as £400,000 are daily spent for drink in this country, leaving little else to show for its cost but diseased stomachs, degraded homes, destroyed industry, increased pauperism, and aggravated crime, the boys should understand the facts about alcohol and be able to act upon them in their earliest responsible conduct.—*Parish Magazine.*

ALCOHOL AND PUBLIC HOSPITALITY.

This is becoming a serious question. Actually so learned and philosophical a body as the British Medical Association has voted that the tickets for dinners, at its general assemblies, shall not include a charge for wine. This is a portent. No doubt the wine will go too, in due course. Is Dr. Norman Kerr fully aware of the prodigious change he is inaugurating? Moreover, we heard, the other day, of a body of divines dining, on the occasion of a religious gathering, with nothing better to drink than "water" and "zoedone." This, also, is a portent. If this kind of thing goes on, a Christian man will not be able to dine in public with his brethren without becoming a "teetotaler," at least for the time. It is intolerable. Will Christianity survive it?—*General Baptist Magazine.*

HOW THE MAINE LAW WORKS.

In the course of the Pan-Presbyterian convention recently held in Philadelphia, the Hon. Wm. E. Dodge, of New York, read a paper on "Temperance," taking strong ground against the license system and in favour of prohibition. He referred

to the effects of prohibition as witnessed in Maine, saying that under the old régime there was one drunkard for every fifty-five of the population; 1,000,000 gallons of spirits were distilled annually while her liquor bill amounted to 1,000,000 dols. Since prohibition there is not a distillery or brewery in that State, the recent sale of liquor amounting to the merest fraction of the former quantity sold, whereas the death-rate from drunkenness has been reduced to one in three hundred of her population. In Vineland, N. J., with a population of 10,000, not a criminal case has occurred in twelve months, while the great prosperity of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and the happiness produced as the direct result of prohibition in Canterbury, New England, have been remarked by every visitor and traveller. He urged that the Presbyterians should commence and carry forward in their churches the great reformation, and that the ministers should set an example of abstinence from intoxicating drinks.

HYMN FOR TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES.

By the REV. W. ALLEN WHITWORTH,
Vicar of S. John's, Hammersmith.

O God, how long shall drunkenness
And sinful lust prevail,
And England still the sin confess
And still the fruit bewail?

Arise, O Christ, assert Thy right,
Thy rightful kingdom claim,
Endue Thy sons with holy might
To triumph in Thy name.

Thy soldiers we, our cause is Thine,
Our work be Thine to bless,
The while we strive by discipline
Our bodies to possess.

By Prayer and Fasting may we gain
The grace of self-control,
And learn the fleshly lusts to rein
Which war against the soul.

Rather forego some lawful joy,
Some lawful pleasure lose,
Than one weak brother's soul destroy,
Or one fair gift abuse.

Obedient to Thy call we stand
At Thy command we go,
In rank united, hand in hand,
To war against the foe.

Give us, O God, the grace we need,
And our endeavour bless,
Till all our countrymen be freed,
From stain of drunkenness. Amen.

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1880

BRIEF REPORT OF THE MISSION FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT.

FOUR years ago this Society was formed for the purpose of carrying on unsectarian evangelistic work in some of the most degraded parts of the town, which were apparently overlooked by existing organisations. At first, Prayer Meetings were held in a cottage in Rose Street, kindly lent for the purpose. Then a house was taken, and afterwards, more space being required, two rooms were thrown into one. In September, 1879, still greater accommodation being requisite, the present Mission Rooms in Shepherd Street were engaged; so that from the first, its sphere of usefulness has steadily but surely increased, and thousands have been brought under the direct influence of the gospel, who, but for its existence, would have been entirely neglected.

The work comprises Tract Distribution, and Sunday Evening Services in four common Lodging Houses, in addition to the regular Services, Meetings and Sunday School, which are held in the Mission Room. By the list of Services given below, it will be seen that on an average 540 attendances are registered weekly at its varied meetings, and it may justly be presumed that few of those who attend would ever have entered a regular place of worship.

All the Lodging Houses in the neighbourhood are visited every Sunday morning, the Bible is read, and portions of it (gratuitously supplied by the British and Foreign Bible Society) are occasionally given. In addition, about 15,600 Religious and Temperance Tracts are every year distributed to their inmates. Special visits by the tract distributors are often solicited by many sick, infirm and dying people of the district.

A flourishing Band of Hope and Temperance Society has been established, numbering 117 members, many of whom have taken the four-fold pledge against Drinking, Gambling, Smoking and Profanity.

The Sunday School, which was opened in September, 1879, with 56 scholars, now numbers 104; its apparent success shewing the need there was for its formation, but it is seriously crippled in its work from the want of suitable teachers. The Superintendent would be glad if Christian Friends, many of whom must be eminently adapted for the work, would promptly volunteer their assistance.

We have been generously assisted by many Gentlemen and Ladies connected with many of the Churches and Temperance Organisations in the town, and to all of these our best thanks are due.

We can, in spite of much difficulty, point to many as the fruit of our labours, and are thus encouraged to carry on our Christian effort with increasing energy. We work under the assurance that God will not permit His own preached word to fail, and that He will shower down richer blessings on the important work we have taken in hand.

LIST OF MEETINGS.

Place.	Time.	Character of Meeting.	Average Attendance.
Shepherd Street Mission Room	8.0 p.m. Sunday	Preaching.	100
" "	2.0 p.m. "	School.	64
" "	6.45 p.m. "	School.	53
" "	9.30 a.m. "	Prayer Meetings.	6
" "	9.0 p.m. "	" "	38
" "	7.45 p.m. Thursday	Temperance Meeting.	121
" "	7.30 p.m. Saturday	" Entertainment	70
High Street Lodging House	5.45 p.m. Sunday	Preaching.	16
Main Sprit Weind	5.45 p.m. "	" "	35
Back Lane	5.45 p.m. "	" "	32
Total Average Weekly Attendances			540

We have just opened another Lodging House Meeting in Water Street, which does not appear in the above list.

JOSHUA WILLIAMSON, SUPERINTENDENT,
22, Frenchwood Street.