

MINGLED MEMORIES

IN

A NOVEL FORM.

BY JABEZ INWARDS.



"The leaves of memory seem to make
A mournful rustling in the dark."

LONDON:
W. TWEEDIE, 337, STRAND, W.C.

1868.

250 1 289

LONDON
PRINTED BY WOODFALL AND KINDER,
MILFORD LANE, STRAND, E.C.

MINGLED MEMORIES.

THE STORM.

IT was a dark wild night; the clouds were black, and the rain fell heavily. Being the first Monday in the month, it was usual for the worthy vicar and his friends to hold a temperance meeting, and it was pleasant to see, in the neat little village school-room, that the clergyman and the dissenting minister could meet together upon equal and friendly terms, for here they could sit upon the same platform, and enforce, by precept and example, the same great truths. Though the meetings had never been very large, much good had been done. This, indeed, was a favoured village, for the squire and his excellent lady were staunch teetotallers, and several of the more respectable inhabitants had allied themselves to so good a cause. But what an inclement night for a meeting was this first Monday in December! Who would think of encountering such foul weather? It was wet, cold, and windy, and a great part of the surrounding country was already flooded. Yet, notwithstanding these opposing elements, a few of the leading friends had assembled, and they were each right in supposing that no others would attend, for they knew the roads and the footpaths were almost impassable. But there were present the squire, who was also a magistrate, the worthy clergyman, the dissenting minister, a retired landlord, farmer Hopkins, Hobbs the blacksmith, the venerable old schoolmaster, and the parish sexton. The fire was cheerful, and they heartily congratulated each other for the moral courage they had displayed in having ventured out upon such a night. But where was the congregation? The seats were all empty, and, judging from the violence of the storm, there was no probability of their being filled. Perhaps the weather would improve

a little, and a few of the villagers might come in. But no, the clouds appeared darker, not a star could be seen, and some of the strong trees were uprooted by the fierce and fitful wind. It was now clearly evident that there would be no addition to their number. The speakers were there, but minus a congregation. What could be done? It was too wet and stormy for them to leave, and the bright blazing fire invited them to remain. So at length they resolved to form a fireside circle, and spend an hour or two in detailing what they knew of the evil power of strong drink, and of the blessings of temperance.

It was suggested that the vicar should preside, but the good man said, "No, no; we had better dispense with all formalities, and make our simple statements for the good and the edification of each other."

"I think," said the schoolmaster, "the storm gets worse. Hark! Ah! there, above the fierce howling of the wind, I hear the wild shriek of that poor drunken woman: she has been from public-house to public-house all day long. When sober she is neat, clean, and tidy; but when drunk her eyes flash with the wild look of the maniac, and her language is revolting and horrible. I believe she has just been torn from the public-house by her good-hearted and sober husband, who, though he abhors the drink, still loves her, and still he forgives."

"Intemperance is, indeed," said the clergyman, "the great curse of our country, and now it appears the proper time for me to say a few words."

"Excuse me, sir, for saying one word before you begin," said the retired landlord. "The poor woman whose wild shriek we have just heard has got a curious way of calling a glass of gin a flash of lightning; and when I kept a public-house she came in one morning and said, 'Landlord, give me a flash of lightning.' She was not aware that her husband was behind her, and he, by such conduct feeling incensed and outraged, struck her on the back, and said, 'There, madam, there's a clap of thunder for you.' I knew he was sorry for what he had done, for in a moment he spoke kindly to her, and entreated her to go home."

THE VICAR'S SPEECH.

I MET a young and beautiful couple at the altar, and married them. The church was full, the pledges were given, the flowers were strewn before them, the people were glad, and the bells rang out a right merry peal. She was affectionate, graceful, and highly educated; and he was a young and talented clergyman, and there appeared before them a bright and almost cloudless future. He loved and visited his people, and he had a heart to give to the needy and the poor; and by his advice and attention he comforted the afflicted and the dying. His face beamed with a smile for the children, and he always had a kind word for the sorrowful and the distressed. He was the centre and the heart of a wide and loving circle. What his parishioners felt he felt, and their sorrows and cares afflicted him. His home was sacred and holy, and his beautiful and beloved wife was the angel of his hope and joy. Before the first year had fled he sustained the endeared and noble relationship of father, and, with a heart full of rejoicing and gratitude, he smiled upon and fondly caressed his much-loved child. For he felt a new impulse—a deep, strange, and impassioned vibration filled and thrilled his soul. It was sweet and powerful music which made him glad, and he fondly thought of the little one—of its fragile body and of its deathless soul; and she whom he tenderly loved as a maiden and a wife now sustained towards him the most loving and the most responsible of all relationships, viz. that of mother—that peerless, priceless name so full of harmony and love. But a shadow fell: the little one was weak and sickly, and the loving and anxious parents felt that soon, very soon, their precious treasure would be taken away, for it was already manifest that the strong hand of death was laid upon the weak little sufferer. They watched with tears and prayers the twitchings of his soft frail limbs, until at length the final struggle came, and his sweet eyes were closed in death. I saw the intense manifestation of the father's deep affection, and the evidences of the mother's deepest gratitude and holiest love, combined with a joy which

was rapturous and almost angelic, when they first saw the darling treasure which their Heavenly Father had bestowed; and I saw also their changed countenances, and heard their deep sighs, when that treasure had been taken away. At their request I officiated at the burial: the marriage bells had scarcely died upon my ears before they were saluted by the solemn tones of the funeral knell. There is much that is hopeful in the death of a child, for Jesus has said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." *Matth. xviii. 10.* But the grief of the bereaved ones was most distressing. It appeared almost impossible for them to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Very shortly after the mother gave signs of declining health, and her medical adviser recommended her to take two glasses of port wine per day, and a little London porter with her dinner and supper. At first she shrank from it, for she remembered how some of the members of her own family had fallen; but the prescription was insisted upon, and she felt obliged to comply. And, like thousands of others, she mistook the stimulation of alcohol for strength, until imperceptibly she had acquired a strong love for it. What she loathed at first she soon yearned for, and that from which she shrank she now earnestly craved. And the sad truth soon became known to the servants and her friends that she loved it far too much; and at last her husband's eyes were opened to the fact, for, on returning home from a funeral, he found her prostrate and helpless by complete intoxication. He was struck with horror, the sight was ghastly and most forbidding. Her beauty and the charm of her smile had disappeared, and there played upon her face alternately the burning flush and the pallor of death. The fondest hopes of his soul had fled, and the good man wept like a child; for he loved her with a pure and tender love. He had cherished the fond hope, that in the future of their lives they should walk together in the ways of wisdom and of truth. He had esteemed and loved her, not only as his wife, but as a sister in Christ; they had frequently bowed together before the throne of mercy, and their united praises of love and adoration had mingled together in the house of the Lord, and he had indulged the higher and the better hope of spending with her an eternity of praise. But now all his hopes were dashed to the ground. Yet in the presence of this dark sad scene he strove to hope, even against hope. He pitied her, and,

notwithstanding her disgrace, the first gleams of consciousness filled him with joy. The spirit had not forsaken its abused and fragile tenement, and before she could refer to her folly, or make the slightest excuse, he reassured her of his devotedness and love. Her heart was full of grief; her conscience was not seared; it was tender, and it troubled her. When alone she sighed, wept, and prayed to be delivered from the grasp of the malignant, seducing, and tormenting tyrant; but there were none in her circle to recommend abstinence. Even her husband took a little, and thought it was good; and, alas! alas! with the best intentions, a little more was administered to her, and again the insatiable desire returned. When a little more was desired, and it was promptly supplied, the alarming symptoms quickly returned; and thus, week after week, she continued to indulge, until at length her sad condition appeared to be beyond all hope. Her constitution, which was never very strong, soon became perfectly shattered. When her end was fast approaching I received from her husband a pressing invitation to visit her; and this wild night reminds me that I went through the tempest and the storm. The lightning flashed, and the thunder rolled; a great fear thrilled me as I entered the vicarage. I met the husband, with a pale sad face; his lips quivered, and his eyes were full of tears. I followed him, and when I entered the chamber her pale wasted form told me that I was in the presence of death. When I spoke to her she gave one last, sad, painful look of recognition, but she uttered no word, and she made no sign, and in a few moments, with a convulsive struggle, her cheerless spirit passed away. In the solemn stillness which followed my heart was troubled, and, thinking of the mother and the child, I mournfully, but silently, asked the question—Will they, can they, meet again?

This is only one sad history out of a great number with which I have been made familiar, by the terrible power of intoxicating drink. At her burial the people wept, and so did I.

How refreshing it is to refer to what temperance has done. We can pass from the dreary grave to the happy home, and from the deep sorrows of death to the joys of a pleasant and a happy life. The man who passed my house like a gentleman the other day was once a noisy, desperate, drunken sot. He was rushing headlong to ruin. His wife was neglected, and his children in rags. In the midst of his madness he was induced to sign the

pledge. He became sober, steady, and thoughtful. He read his Bible, and went to the house of prayer. He listened to the truth as it is in Jesus, and he became a humble follower of the Lamb. His wife lived in the sunshine of his love, and his children have grown up to be an honour to their parents, and a blessing to others. One son, a fine clever lad, has become a Methodist travelling preacher, and for years that family has enjoyed the blessings of peace. The once drunken father is now an active and earnest Christian, the daughters are good and amiable, and the son is engaged in making known the blessings of salvation through the love of Him who was wounded for our transgressions. Had temperance done nothing more, this would be an ample reward; but there are thousands of similar instances where it has proved to be, both to parents and children, a shield, a defence, a blessing, and a joy.

THE MAGISTRATE'S SPEECH.

BEFORE I heard of teetotalism I was a very moderate drinker, and, perhaps, I felt sometimes a little proud of my moderation. I always detested drunkenness, but I thought well of the drink; and so, with many others, I denounced the effects while I recommended the cause. But my good wife had for some time tried the abstinence plan, and, though she was rather delicate, she was fully persuaded that the little wine she had taken had done her no good; and now, after some years of abstinence, she is both healthier and stronger than she was when she took it. As you know, I have had the honour of being a justice of the peace for many years, and frequently my heart has been deeply affected by the scenes of vice and wretchedness which have been brought before me. I will detail to you a few cases which were presented in one day.

A poor ragged boy, aged fourteen, was brought up for stealing. He could neither read nor write; his father and mother were drunkards, and he was trained to beg or steal, and the former failing, he had recourse to the latter. The case was fully proved, and, there being no alternative, he was committed to gaol.

The next case was a poor girl, who had been most cruelly beaten. She came to appear against her drunken father, who went home in a state of fury and madness, and inflicted upon her a most cruel and terrible punishment. The girl wept, because she did not wish to punish her father, and the father wept, at the same time declaring it was all through the drink.

The third case was that of a poor woman with three little children, whose husband had forsaken her and them. She was penniless and very ill. Her wretched condition deeply affected me; and it is a sad truth to relate, that in the course of a few weeks she was buried in a pauper's grave, and her motherless children were all sent to the workhouse.

The fourth case was for an assault by a bankrupt tradesman, who had lost his business and his good name, and everything precious in morality and religion, through the drinking habits in which he had indulged. His face was like fire, his nose was large and purple, his eyes blood-stricken and inflamed, his lips

white and parched, his flesh coarse and dirty, his hair matted and uncombed, his look idiotic, his gait a stagger, his speech senseless and incoherent. He was fined, and in default of payment sent to prison. I am convinced there would be but very little for either policemen, magistrates, or judges to do, were it not for the influence of these alcoholic compounds.

Returning home that day, I called at the workhouse, and the master at once conducted me through one of the rooms to show me a new-comer. She was a young woman about twenty-two years of age, and though very ill, the lingering marks of beauty were upon her. She had led for five years a dissolute and an abandoned life. Her parents were poor, but respectable: she was induced to leave home early, for the purpose of waiting behind the bar, where she supplied the dangerous and tempting drink, and where she was obliged to hear the low coarse talk of the sensual and the vulgar. Her once fine moral susceptibilities were destroyed. At length the love of strong drink gained such an ascendancy over her, that she was accounted unfit to occupy the position of a barmaid. She had forgotten the prayers of her father and the tender love of her mother. The Bible and the hymn-book had lost all their charms. Her good hope had fled; and now to her perverted and estranged vision the impassioned and alluring fiend of pleasure appeared like an angel of light. Her mind was restless, her prospects dark, a feverish thirst incessantly made its imperious demands, and before she had seen twenty summers her still young and once beautiful face was marred and distorted with the unseemly tracings of the demon alcohol. Under such circumstances she could find no other situation—for who would engage a discarded barmaid? After this she plunged deeper and deeper into sin, until at length she refused to recognize any of her old friends. The dark fiend of vice had claimed her for his own. She was tortured with sin and sorrow. But in the midst of her grief and shame she thought of her home and her mother, of the days of her girlhood, and of the Sabbath school; and then, under the lashings of an outraged conscience, with a bleeding heart and drooping soul, she returned again to the haunts of misery, revelry, and shame; and thus she continued to be a wild and wicked wanderer. The gin fiend sported with her, and tormented her. The days of her peace were gone. The star of her hope had set, and the joy of her youth was dead. The affections of her heart were dissevered from the gentle, the graceful, the loving, and the pure, and were allied to the

desperate, the gloomy, the hateful, and the abhorrent. With garments tattered and torn, with feet crippled and sore, with hope and health departed, with a body hungry and weak, and being friendless and penniless, shoeless and hopeless, with no one to comfort, to cheer, or direct her, at the door of the workhouse this wretched and dying woman presented herself. All this, and more than this, she told me; and then looking with a look which I shall never forget, she said, "Sir, are you a minister?" To which I answered, "No, but I trusted and hoped that I was a Christian." "Oh, sir," she exclaimed, "I have been such a sinner; I have sinned against light, against the knowledge I obtained at the Sabbath school, against my own conscience, and against the prayers of my loving parents. I am all sin; my life has been a curse to myself and to others; I am filled with fear and terror; I feel that my time is short, and I know that God is angry with the wicked every day. Do you think, sir, that Jesus can save such a wretched outcast as myself?" and then, with the strongest emphasis, she reiterated, "Can he save me? Will he save me?" I assured her that Jesus was not only willing, but that he was able and mighty to save, and that he had shed his blood that her sins might be washed away. For a moment she was speechless, and her eyes were closed; she was full of trouble, and in great distress. It was, indeed, a scene of woe. Again she opened her eyes, and looking at me, if possible with greater earnestness than before, she said, "Can I be saved? Will Jesus save me? Is it possible for my poor soul to escape from the wrath to come? I feel that I am in the arms and the power of death." I knelt by her bedside, and prayed to the Heavenly Father, that for Christ's sake He would have mercy upon her, and I felt His loving presence, and His gracious power; and at that moment the poor passing soul began to pray. Death was so near I could not leave her: the master and the matron of the workhouse were present. She spoke in broken accents of her mother, of her father, of her home, of the Bible, of singing, and of the Sabbath school, and clasping her hands, she said, "Yes, yes, sir, I do believe that Jesus died even for me. He seems to be so near me now. Alas! I have wandered far away from Him, but in these my last moments He has come to me; yes, yes, blessed be His name, He has come to me, He has come." Her voice failed, her hands fell, her eyes closed, and her spirit passed away.

In returning home I reflected much upon what I had seen. That she was dead there could be no doubt; but was she

saved? Was her repentance that which is unto life? Was her faith simple? Was her hope the good hope through grace? I fondly believed then, and so I do now, that all these questions could be satisfactorily answered. But what an affecting sight it was on that fine summer afternoon. The pure sunshine was in her chamber, and the birds were happy and glad; the hills were clothed with verdure, and all the flowers were innocent and beautiful; and although I entertained a good hope that her spirit was saved, yet I could not but be sad. I thought of her girlhood of innocence, of her Sunday school, of her home, of her parents, and how intense their sufferings must have been when they thought of the waywardness of their child. Then I thought of the tap-room, of the polluting and ensnaring scenes, and of her wild wicked wanderings; of her wasted weary life, and of her sad and solemn death; and of the deep wrong which is done to any young girl in placing her in such an awful and dangerous position.

When I related the substance of what I have said to my dear wife, a mother's tear glistened in her eyes, and she exclaimed, "How long, O Lord, how long? when will this drink-curse come to an end?" This death scene was deeply impressed upon my mind; and while we reflected upon the sad and bitter consequences of drinking, we resolved, with the divine aid, not only to continue our abstinence, but to do everything in our power to induce all classes to help forward this great and glorious reform.

THE DISSENTING MINISTER'S SPEECH.

I WAS on a missionary tour, and was staying at a temperance hotel in a nice little country town. My chamber window commanded a view of a fine large garden, at the bottom of which lived a clever and talented preacher of the gospel. Very early one morning I was greatly surprised by hearing a gentle tapping at my chamber window, and while greatly wondering what it could mean, it was very quickly repeated. I immediately drew back the curtain, and close up to the window I espied a note, which was fixed to the end of a long stick, and when I opened the window, a voice not much louder than a whisper said, "Take this note, read every line of it, but never let its contents be known, nor from whom you have received it." I knew the voice, and saw the receding form, and, though greatly puzzled, I rightly conjectured there must have been some cause for such an unusual proceeding. I opened the letter, which, with your permission, I will now read:—

"My dear Sir,

"I am in great distress of mind. You well know the position which my husband occupies, and from the impression which I believe has been made upon your mind, you will be very much surprised to learn that he has contracted a great love for raw brandy. A few weeks ago some of his hearers noticed his strange conduct in the pulpit. At that time he told them he felt too ill to collect his thoughts, and no one, I think, suspected the real cause. Several times he has suffered from delirium in the night, and then he walks about the bedroom like a madman, and nothing will satisfy him but brandy. It is a most distressing sight. I am full of sorrow, my heart is nearly broken. Pray do not tell any one, but call and see him before you leave, and let your conversation be directed to the dangers and evils of drinking.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours very truly,

"Z."

During the day I called upon that minister, and tried to converse with him upon the subject of temperance. He admitted the truthfulness of all I said, but excused and defended himself by saying that he only took a very little; in fact, what he took was next to nothing: and these things were coolly said in the presence of his wife, though the breath with which such sentences were uttered was fully impregnated with alcohol. And I affirm from testimony, the truth of which I cannot doubt, that on the Lord's day evening he has, while preaching, been greatly under the influence of drink; and that by midnight, or in the early hours of the morning, he has been as wild as a maniac, under the burning and terrible influence of strong raw brandy. In his better moments he was a good-natured kind-hearted man, but the love of strong drink overshadowed him with a cloud; it caused him to err in vision, and to stumble in judgment, and he who might have been a distinguished servant of the Lord, became the slave of Satan and of sin.

I was recently informed by a highly respected minister, that a few years ago, in one of the chief towns of England, it was resolved by the ministers of the different denominations to meet once a month at a friend's house for friendly conference and mutual edification. For a time they did so, and all went on well; but the plain and simple repast which was at first supplied was soon superseded by the wines, the spirits, and the tobacco, and the hour of midnight witnessed their devotedness to the pipe and the glass: and one who was present informed me that two of the ministers fell under the table beneath the overpowering influence of alcohol. The next Lord's day they were both in their pulpits, inciting their hearers to holiness and good works. This shocking scene broke up the monthly meeting, which, apart from the drink, might have been a blessing to them and to others.

A few months ago I took a walk in the outskirts of a neighbouring town for the purpose of enjoying the breeze and the cool of the evening. Nature was calm and beautiful, and the western sky was full of glory, and all the surrounding objects seemed to speak to me the language of peace; and looking up into the calm deep blue sky, it appeared almost natural for me to be reminded of the rest which remains for the people of God. But suddenly I was startled by a form, the appearance of which I shall never forget. Being rapt in thought, I could not tell from whence the strange figure had come. Nearer and still nearer he came, and fixing his fierce gaze

upon me, with clenched fists and flashing eyes he uttered a wild shriek, and then, like a lump of lead, fell to the ground, harmless but terrible. In the wildest and most erratic manner he stretched himself on the grass; he then gave another loud yell and a maniac laugh, which were followed by a volley of awful imprecations. A few rays of the setting sun fell upon his vacant and distorted face. Who could this strange person be? He was not drunk, and if not he must be mad. I was not afraid, and when he turned his face more fully towards me, it struck me that the features bore some resemblance to one whom I had known several years ago. He was then young, respectable, and well educated. It was true that I had heard of his downfall and his drunkenness, and I had also heard that he had become an inmate of a lunatic asylum. Could this be the man whom I had known in my youth? It was! He had escaped from his keeping. He did not know me. As I have said, I felt no fear. Knowing only a portion of his sad history, for several minutes I stood gazing upon this moral and mental wreck. Sitting silent, in the light of the setting sun, and again fixing his vacant eyes upon me, he evoked the surrounding echoes with his wild frantic shriek, and the loud wild laugh of the maniac. How quiet, peaceful, and beautiful was nature! how wild, terrific, and forbidding was man!

At this moment I saw coming towards us farmer Brown and one of his labourers. Upon reaching the spot, and beholding the poor creature, they were filled with the greatest surprise. The good farmer said to me, "Who is that? he looks like a maniac."

Instantly a terrific shriek came from the wretched man, and, with a desperate leap, in a moment he stood face to face with the farmer, who, with a quivering lip and full heart, said, "Why, poor, poor Tom, is it you?"

"Ah, ah!" said the maniac; "my name is Tom."

The farmer knew him well. He was the only son of an old and highly respected neighbour; and some affirm that by the foolish kindness of his mother he was humoured and spoilt in early life. He drank himself to madness, and had been under restraint for several years; but the poor man had escaped, and had travelled the distance of five miles.

The labourer was despatched to the police office, and a member of the force was soon on the spot. He was charged to take great care of the poor man, to be very kind to him, and to convey him back with all possible expedition to the place from which he had escaped.

So he and the policeman went one way, and I and the farmer took another path leading to the town. After a short silence, he shook his head, and said,

"Dear me, dear me; what an awful sight we have seen! Was it not shocking, when the glory of the day was departing, to see such a doubled-up form of hideous helplessness? Ah, sir, that man's history is very dark. That poor maniac broke his mother's heart: he was her only child, and she doted upon him; she indulged every want, and with a heart full of kindness and love, she insisted (as she thought, for the good of his health) upon his frequently taking both beer and wine. He was a fine good-natured lad, and I believe he was kind and good to all, but at last he succumbed to the power of the drink. The first time he went home drunk his kind mother made an excuse, and spoke of him as only having been slightly overcome; but she felt quite sure that her good boy would be careful for the future. But, alas, sir! he went again, and again, until all who knew him felt that he was confirmed in his ruinous habit. His voice was soon heard in the street; he abandoned his chapel, closed his Bible, broke the Sabbath, laughed at his mother, derided his father, and turned away from the Water of Life to partake of the flowing and poisonous stream which leads to madness and death. Thus he went on from bad to worse, until it was clear to all that his reason was affected; and his actions were such that he was accounted irresponsible; and so he was removed to the asylum.

In the course of a few weeks from that time the mother's health declined, her sighs ascended, and her tears fell. Poor thing! her heart's love had been taken from her—her only child was mad. Her grief was more than she could bear; and when I called to see her the burden of her soul was, 'My son, my son!' And she appeared like Rachel of old, who would not, could not be comforted, because he was not; and very soon her loving but troubled spirit passed away. And there, sir," continued the farmer—"you may see it from this spot—is her neat white tombstone, upon which there might be truly written, 'Died of a broken heart.' And her good husband soon followed her, for he was smitten with paralysis, from which he never recovered. Ah, sir, the great day of judgment can alone reveal what evil strong drinks have done."

I said, "I hope the policeman will take care of the poor man."

"You may depend upon that," said the farmer, "he is a

steady temperance man. He, with myself and others, signed the pledge, and we have now an active temperance society; and we should be right glad, sir, for you to come amongst us."

"But," I said, "do you think hard work can be done without beer?"

"Hard work!" he exclaimed; "I think no farmer's men work harder than mine, and they are happy, healthy, and strong, and they never take a drop: and you must excuse my plainness of speech, sir, when I say, that it is all fiddle and nonsense to suppose that hard work cannot be done without beer. We have a great work to do, sir; will you help us?"

In parting, I told the good farmer I would think about it, and so I did. The grave and the asylum were before me; the sighs of the brokenhearted and the wild shoutings of the maniac fell upon my ear, and deeply affected my soul. Then I thought of the mother and the drink, and of the father and the drink, and of the maniac and the drink, and of the danger of the little drop and the drink, and of the adulterations and the drink, and of the temptations and the drink, and of the death-beds and the drink, and of the lost souls and the drink; and I looked in vain to discover any good which had resulted from the drink. And as I looked upon the wide and wild scenes of moral, social, mental, and spiritual desolation, the moral sky became dark, the clouds gathered in all their blackness, the wail of sorrow and the groans of the dying fell upon my ears; the wild look of the maniac flashed upon my eyes, and I saw myriads staggering to eternal woe: and from that time I have totally abstained.

THE RETIRED LANDLORD'S SPEECH.

WITH your permission, gentlemen, I should like to say a few words. I am not a teetotaler, nor am I a drunkard. I consider myself a moderate drinker. It is true that when I was in the trade I both heard and saw many strange things, and I could, if I wished, supply you with many a sad tale, to show you the evil of drunkenness. I have heard much to-night, but a hundredth part of the sins and sorrows which follow in the wake of intemperance can never be told. I freely confess to you that I am fond of a moderate portion, and I may be wrong, but I think a little does me good. I like the drink, but I hate drunkenness. When the gentleman from London analysed the drinks, I was fairly astonished; and the worthy vicar said at the close, there was no good in them. I thought he went a little too far, but when I thought of what I had seen, I was puzzled and perplexed. The spirit was taken out of the beer and the wine, and when burnt the flame was of a bluish colour, and it filled all the room with a lurid glare; and this he said was what gave men the blues; and he also said it was a thirst-creating and consuming fire. I confess I am puzzled to find out any real good in them, yet somehow or the other I cannot help but think they are good, though I cannot tell for what. But, gentlemen, one thing is certain, that all publicans and all public-houses are not alike. I believe all the drinking houses are bad, but not equally so. There are some good-hearted landlords and kind-hearted landladies, and of course there are others neither so good nor so kind. There are good drapers and bad drapers, good grocers and bad grocers, and of course, excuse me, gentlemen, I mean no offence—good parsons and bad parsons. I do not wish to defend the publicans, but I must confess I do not like to hear them called by a nickname, such as Mr. Boniface, and I think by such means some of your lecturers have lowered themselves and injured their cause. I must confess that to-night some of my old opinions have been shaken, yet I as truly confess that I am not a teetotaler, and at the present do not intend to be; and, with your permission, I

must say a word or two on behalf of the honest, respectable licensed victualler; for, whatever the teetotalers may say, they are not all bad men, they are not all ragamuffins. I know there are some in the lower strata of the trade as bad as bad can be, but this will not justify us in condemning all; and we must not forget that the trade is a lawful one, and that nearly all the people are delighted with the drinks. I will repeat to you as well as I can the substance of a speech which I heard from a staunch teetotaler, who, though he hates the drink and the traffic, has, I think, put the matter in a very fair light. He said, "Do not let us blame the publicans so much, but let us blame the drink: the public-house would be as good and as safe as any other house, if it were not for the drink;" and then he said, "If the licensed victualler were here, might he not deliver the following speech: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am a licensed victualler. Mine is an old and long established calling; and if the drinks I sell were not good, do you suppose that a Christian government would grant me a license to sell them? If they were not good, do you think that our most gracious Queen, while pic-nicking in the neighbourhood, would have sent for them? If they were not good, do you suppose that some of the dukes and the lords of the land would call at or send to my house to purchase them, and to pay the best price for them, and to praise them? If they were not good, how can you account for the fact that the archbishops and bishops purchase them? If they were not good, would learned and scientific doctors recommend them to their patients? If they were not good, do you think that a number of respectable tradesmen would almost every night come to my house for the purpose of drinking them? If they were not good, why should the experienced nurse come with her bottle under her shawl to purchase them? If they were not good, why should the poets, the lawyers, and the philosophers praise them; and why should the clever Englishman, the shrewd Scotchman, and the witty Irishman pay such high prices for them? Now, gentlemen, perhaps there may be nothing in all this, and all the people may be wrong in the opinions which they have formed. Yet, nevertheless, it is so; and when nearly all the people have told, and are still telling, the publicans that the drinks they sell are good, I think you should not blame the publican so much; for he is protected by the Government, defended by the magistrate, applauded by the brewers, and encouraged by the people. If the drinks are bad, you must enlighten the mind of the public;

and if it be so, you have a deep, broad, firm foundation to stand upon. Publicans are men, and they must be treated as such.' ”

When I was in the trade, I well remember I had a short distance to travel. When I entered the railway carriage there were two ladies and a gentleman. The ladies I knew as very active teetotalers, and they knew me; and, with a very good meaning, I dare say, but I think with bad taste, began to talk at me about the public-house, and the sin and the sorrow which were caused by the traffic, at the same time expressing their surprise that any person could continue in such a business; and perhaps I was too hasty in saying what I did, but I felt both offended and annoyed. The gentleman perceiving this, in a kind and good-natured manner, said, “Well, sir, I am a teetotaler, and, from what has been said, I presume you are in the liquor trade?” I replied, I was, and was not ashamed of it; but he fairly puzzled me. He then said, “Will you allow me to put a question to you?” “Certainly,” was my reply. And this was the question: “Do you think you are as good a man as you were before you took the public-house?” I was sent aback, and for the moment silenced: at length I honestly, but with a face flushed with shame, answered, “I do not think I am.” I felt as though I wanted to be, and yet I could not feel offended with him. After a moment’s pause he said, “Will you excuse the liberty of my putting another question?” and I replied, “Certainly.” And then, looking very seriously at me, he said, “Time is passing away, and we must soon die; and I put it to you, if you were dying, do you think you would be able to thank God that you had taken a public-house?” and in a moment I said, “I am sure I could not;” and, call it weakness or what you like, I turned aside my head to wipe away a tear. And then he remarked, “Do you see, sir, the case stands thus: You admit that you are not so good a man, and you further admit that if you were dying you could not thank God for your business; and now I ask you, as I may never see you again, Can you be guiltless before God if you continue in such a business?” I was dumb, and felt condemned. The train stopped: he shook me by the hand, and we parted.

I have never forgotten his questions, and I sometimes think I never shall. It is a dangerous business, and the fruits are bad; and, from what I have heard, I feel puzzled about the goodness of the drink: but I must cease talking in this way, or I shall convict and convince myself.

THE FARMER'S SPEECH.

THIS stormy night reminds me of a sad event which took place a few years ago; and, although I am stout and strong, I must confess that I always have a little fear when the lightnings flash and the heavens frown. My neighbour's son, a fine young lad, with an open and intelligent-looking face, and a kind generous heart, went as usual to market, and I well remember the somewhat dashing appearance he made when on that bright summer morning he passed by my house. He was very steady, and greatly respected, and a few months before his untimely end he went to a temperance meeting and signed the pledge. Upon reaching home he told his father what he had done, and, strange to say, his father upbraided him for it, and went so far as to insist upon his taking a little beer and wine. I believe when I saw him on his way to market that morning that he had never been what is termed the worse for drink. Though great efforts were made to hide the fact, it was well known to some that on that day he had taken it too freely—in other words, that he was drunk. Gentlemen, the drink at the market table has proved a curse to thousands. He was strongly advised not to return home, and his friends urged two reasons why he should not, for they knew that he had lost almost all power of self-control, and the threatening aspect of the weather was the other reason why they advised him to remain. But he heeded them not; he disregarded their remonstrance, and laughed at their fears. He saw no difficulties, he feared no danger, and, notwithstanding all that was said, he mounted his horse and started for home. He was daring, wild, and impulsive, his brain was inflamed, and amidst the wildness and the fury of the storm he laughed the loud laugh of the fool. This was the first time he had ever given himself up to the evil spirit of alcohol, and he was led captive by the devil at his will. Within was the burning and consuming fire of drunkenness, without was the fatal fire of the lightning's flash. The dreadful drink power madly impelled him on. The horse was frightened, but the rider was fearless and desperate. The toll-keeper advised him to wait a little while, for he saw the sad plight he was in; but he heeded not what the old man said—he was not afraid, and he should

soon reach home; and on he went with an idiot laugh and a ribald song. It is supposed that the horse was so startled, either by the fearful lightning or the thunder, that he threw his rider; but the poor young man's foot caught in the stirrup, and he was dragged by the running and affrighted steed a considerable distance, with his poor head beating and dashing against the ground. At length his foot was released, and he was left by the roadside either dying or dead. The horse went home. The mother and the father saw it, but where was the rider? Where was their only child? A servant was immediately despatched, and the father with a trembling heart quickly followed. The poor mother fell back into her chair, and felt a consciousness that some dreadful thing had happened. The servant soon found the lifeless body: the father saw him lift up his hands in horror, and in the next moment he was looking upon and wildly shrieking over the mangled corpse of his reckless child. The mother was full of fear and apprehension, and very soon the sad news was conveyed to her that the joy of her heart and the hope of her life had passed away—that her much-loved child was numbered with the dead. In the morning he was the light and joy of the house; in the evening he was there a cold and mangled corpse. In the morning his spirit was there, hopeful and rejoicing, in the midst of the fruits and the flowers; in the evening that spirit was in the eternal world. When I saw the almost broken-hearted mother, with a look which I shall never forget, she said, "Oh, what an awful death it was to die!" She knew not that he had been drinking, for he had been up to that fatal day a sober young man. "But," she continued, "was it not terrible for him to fall by the lightning's flash? Was it a judgment upon him? Nay, that could not be, for he was so generous and kind. What had he done, or what had his parents done, that he should have come to such an end?" And then, again, in the bitterness of her soul, she exclaimed, "It was, indeed, an awful death! I saw not his last look, I heard not his last words; but my poor child was killed in the midst of the tempest and the storm. Was he prepared to die? Did he think of Jesus in his last moments? Had he time to offer up a prayer? Was he too frightened by the fearful lightning?" These and other questions were put with great pathos and feeling, and then her pale face evinced a blank despair.

This was a circumstance which deeply impressed me, for I loved the lad almost as much as though he had been my own. What made him sign? Was it an impulse from above? Perhaps

he was led to the act by the hand of his guardian angel. Be it so or not, it was a moral determination, which, if persisted in, would have saved him from such madness, and from such an awful death. The foolish but good-natured father scorned the pledge, which would have kept his child perfectly sober, and forced him to take the drink which eventually slew him.

Last week while at the market table, having with my dinner a glass of cold water, farmer B., from N., looked at me with some surprise, and said he thought that as a farmer I ought not to encourage water-drinking, for it was a reflection both on farmers and farming, and that he intended, so long as he grew barley, to drink beer. I replied that I had not only a conscience, but a deep feeling upon the subject, and that I was perfectly satisfied that abstinence from all intoxicating drinks was the better and the safer plan.

When I was in my barley field last harvest I thought much of the goodness and mercy of God, and my mind ran back to the time of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles, and I thought of the ancient harvests, and of the beautiful story of Boaz and Ruth, and I was struck with the fact that in the Bible we never read of a malt-house, a brewery, or a distillery; and we know that in the olden and better times the barley was used for food, and we never read of its being turned into beer until many ages had passed away. And when several at the market table put the question to me, "What was the barley sent for?" I said, "Gentlemen, with your permission, I should like to put a question to you," and the question I put was this: "Do you think that our Heavenly Father sent the sunshine and the shower, the darkness and the light, to bring barley to a state of perfection in order that it might be worse than destroyed in turning it into beer? For," and I said it with emphasis, and I mean to repeat it, that "as a good, sound, nutritious, solid article of food, it is worse than destroyed when by the fermenting process it is converted into beer; and if," I said, "you really wish to know what barley was sent for, you have only to read your Bibles, and there you will clearly see how the wisest and best men used it; and if you wish to follow in their footsteps, you will neither make nor drink beer." Then they said, "Do you think it wrong to make beer?" and I promptly answered "Yes. For it is a fact that the making of the beer involves the destruction of the food-property with which God has endowed the grain, and for which that grain was made. And this shameful perversion of this heavenly blessing is the dark and

ominous beginning of the great and terrible evils which follow in the manufacture and the drinking of intoxicating drink. And when I think how wisely and well the barley was used by the good men of old, and to what great advantages we might use it now, in view of its terrible destruction and of the still more terrible effects," I said, "surely God will visit us in judgment for this great wrong; yea," I said, "He has visited us, and at this moment His judgments are abroad in the earth, for in all parts of the land the sighs of the wretched and the wailings of the dying are heard. Malting and brewing are a perversion of God's providence; they are the sowing to the wind, and, as a sequence to that folly, thousands of drooping, agonized, and dying men, and weeping frantic wives, and helpless starving children, are reaping the whirlwind, and all around us are heard the sounds of wretchedness and woe. In the darkness of ignorance the turning of barley into beer is an act of waste and folly, but in the light of science, knowledge, and experience there are graver consequences involved. If we were to use the barley as food, either for ourselves, our fowls, or our cattle, we should get a most profitable return. We should have meat, eggs, and poultry more abundant and cheaper. There would be less idleness and more work; less crime and more virtue; less poverty and more money. It would almost, if not quite, close the public-houses and the prisons; and the magistrates and policemen would have but little to do. Our poor rates would decrease, our savings would increase, the health of the people would greatly improve, and peace and prosperity would abound. As a nation we are degraded and perplexed by intoxicating drinks; they encompass and curse the land. We can hardly step out of our houses unless we meet some poor child of want, or a reeling staggering drunkard. This otherwise beautiful land of ours is studded with licensed houses, where both men and women are tempted to ruin and to death. And by making what is termed the real home-brewed, many a farmer has called into existence a serpent which has bitten a child to death, and left the parents in agony and woe. Farmers would be the first to reap the advantages of temperance: they would have better, stronger, and more trustworthy men; there would be fewer rates to pay, and there would be more security and greater purity by our own firesides; the conversation of the nation would have a higher tone; a purer language would be spoken at our market tables, as well as in the commercial rooms. For this great reform we must work and

wait; we must let no opportunity slip; nor must we be discouraged.

Although we have no audience, this may be a very good meeting. My heart rejoices in the good which has been done. We must keep in mind that Alcohol is our great foe; we must give him no quarter; we must not keep him in our houses nor pass him to others; we must shun him and hate him as an evil and seducing spirit. No parleying nor half measures will do. We must aim at him a deadly blow. Excuse me, gentlemen, I may have spoken rather warmly. Teetotalism is a simple, effective, and pleasant remedy for one of the worst evils; and although we are only talking amongst ourselves, I trust that this little fire-side meeting may tend, if possible, to unite us more closely in this good and blessed cause. How many farmers have we seen ruined by strong drink. Where was there a finer man, or a man with better prospects, than poor Jenkins? He is now in rags and ruin! He had a farm of his own, and he swallowed it; and a good constitution, and ruined it. He had a good wife, and he ill-used her; he had friends, and insulted them; a Bible, and he sold it; a home, and he left it. He once sang divine psalms, he now sings pot-house songs; he once looked well, but now he looks as wretched and as forbidding as crime and sin can make him. His strength has fled, his character and credit are gone, and he is running headlong either to the workhouse or to the jail, or to both. He will soon die, and what his end will be I dread to contemplate. I could refer to many who have been cut off in the midst of their days. Intemperance cares for neither money, education, nor health; it sears, scorches, strips, sports, and spoils some in all spheres and stations of society.

I am happy to say that all the work is done on my farm without a drop of intoxicating drink; my labourers are real good temperance men. They can plough, mow, reap, and thrash well, and our harvest-home feast is a time of joy and thanksgiving. The men, with their wives, are there, and a right pleasant evening we spend. We serve them plentifully with good old English fare of roast beef and plum pudding, and we never part without joining in a song of praise to the God of the harvest. It is with us a time of gratitude and peace. What a contrast it is to the former times and customs, when the drink was sent freely round, and the minds of the labourers soon became bewildered, and their conversation too frequently partook of the low, the sensual, and the degrading; and at the midnight some were helplessly

drunk, and others wild in the mad mirth of revelry and song. A change is coming, gentlemen, a change is coming: the clouds are passing away. I see yet a bright future for our dear old fatherland. We must not lose faith; we must plough, and dig and sow, and weed, and watch all the young plants with tender care; and the sun will shine, and the showers will fall, and God even our own God, will give us His blessing.

THE BLACKSMITH'S SPEECH.

MEN talk as though hard work could not be done without beer. I believe there never was a greater mistake. I am not much of a scholar, my knowledge is not great, and I know nothing of Latin or Greek or Hebrew; but this I fully know, after ten years' practice, that hard work can be done without one drop of intoxicating drink. When I first began to abstain I was almost afraid to make the experiment, and my dear good wife said she thought teetotalism might suit tailors, but she did not think it possible for me to do my work without a little beer. But I was determined to give it a fair trial, which I did, and I never regret it. I was not a drunkard, and, although I was but a humble tradesman, the drink put many temptations in my way. I do not believe that men are obliged to become drunkards, but what I affirm is this, that if they take only small quantities of the drink, and they love it, they cannot help loving it; and whoever they may be who love it, they are more or less in danger of being ensnared by it. Though I was not a drunkard, I loved the drink, and how could I help loving it? And I knew, as in the case of taking tobacco, snuff, or opium, that love might increase; and when I thought of what it had done, and what it was doing, I felt ashamed that I loved it, and yet I thought I could not give it up.

I well remember one Lord's day morning, as I was on my way to the house of the Lord, I heard a neighbour say, "What a sad thing it is;" and another said, "Poor thing, she was a kind-hearted woman, and no one's enemy but her own." "What is the matter?" I inquired. Then a near neighbour said, "What! have you not heard? Why, poor Mrs. K., at the manor farm, was found by her husband, a little after midnight, burnt to death by her own fire-side." A cold chill ran through me, and in a moment I inquired what could have been the cause; and in an impressive undertone it was said, "Drink, drink—nothing but the drink." A party of friends had spent a pleasant evening with the farmer and his wife: the drink was freely supplied; and although it was known that the mistress was very fond of it, no one observed that she had taken it too freely. When the friends had separated, and all the mem-

bers of her family had retired to rest, she remained down stairs, for the purpose of taking a little more; and it is believed that when she had lost all self-control the fire caught her clothes, and in a short time she was burnt to death. Her husband heard neither shriek nor groan (a strong evidence that she was made insensible by the drink), but as it was unusual for her to remain so long, he went downstairs, and to his great horror found her dead. She was a blackened corpse. Before she loved the drink she was a good wife and kind-hearted mother, but she ruined herself and met with an awful death. But why did she drink it? And how came she thus to love it? There can be but little doubt that she was in the first instance deceived by what is termed moderate drinking; she mistook the stimulation for strength, and that which she esteemed as a necessary blessing proved her ruin and her curse.

I am sometimes met by persons who say to me, "You know, blacksmith, it is not the use, it is not the use which is wrong." To such I reply, "What is the use? Be good enough to tell me the use." But they never do tell me the use, and I firmly believe it has no use. Old Alcohol is an outlaw, a pirate on the high sea of humanity, and it now becomes the solemn duty of every man to do all he can to drive him from the face of the earth.

Thousands of working men have exploded the farce that alcohol is necessary to enable them to work. As a blacksmith, I ought to know a little about hard work; I am generally at the forge more than twelve hours in the day, and I believe it is one of the greatest delusions to suppose that hard work cannot be done without beer. My next door neighbour is a tailor, and a few days ago we had a little chat upon temperance, and he very seriously affirmed, that he could not do his work without either ale or porter. I could scarcely keep from smiling. I simply said to him, "If I can use my great hammer upon temperance principles, surely you can use your little needle."

In passing through a village recently, I saw several young men who were making straw plait, and with their strong fingers they simply have to move a few splints, a thousand of which would not weigh a pound: it is easy work for very little children, and the whole skill and the work combined may be summed up in the provincial and homely distich,—

"Under one and over two,
Pull it up tight, and that will do."

Now, when I spoke to these young men—(who were walking about, and making the straw plait while they were walking)—upon the subject of temperance, they said they were quite sure that they must have a little beer: and I have met with those who do nothing, who affirm that it greatly helps them in their idleness.

A farmer's labourer called upon me a few days ago, and said, "I'll tell you what it is, blacksmith; I am very sorry that you are a teetotaler, for your practice is doing us poor men no good. Why don't you take a pint or two of beer now and then, as you used to do? When we tell the farmers we must have beer when we work hard, they point us to you, and tell us how you work without it." I replied to the poor man, and told him that I was so much in love with temperance, that I had tried it so long, and that it had answered my purpose so well, that I never intended to give it up. I then thought it was my duty to tell him, that beer did not contain anything which would do him or anyone else any good; that it was dear, dangerous, and unnecessary; and that many labouring men in the hay-time and the harvest were by it rendered incapable and helpless. If the poor men would but open their eyes, they would clearly see that intoxicating drinks are their greatest foes.

The blacksmith is considered to have a spark in his throat which nothing can quench but beer, and I tried for more than a quarter of a century to quench it by taking a little, but could not succeed. As soon, however, as I became a cold water drinker the spark was extinguished, my throat got cooler, my brain felt better, my mind became clearer, my arms became stronger, and my prospects brighter; and so they are now. My work was hard and heavy, but it was done with greater ease; and at the close of the day I could read better, and think better, than I could before; and since I have banished the drink and disposed of the barrel, my pocket is fuller, my house is better furnished, my library is larger, my wife is happier; and I can rejoice, with her and the children, not only for the blessings of temperance, but for the possession of that good hope which is full of immortality. What a man requires for the body is good bread, meat, and fruits, and, at least once a week, a good bath. His best drink is cold water. Let him have these, and every night a good sound sleep, and his work will be an exercise and a pleasure.

Drink is bad, and so is debt. I can see in our village how they go hand in hand; and there are many who are almost always in difficulties, in consequence of the sums

they have to pay for useless things; and many of the tradesmen who sell good and useful articles frequently lose large sums in consequence of the drinking customs. But bad as the debts are, and great as are the sums which are annually sacrificed, these things are a mere nothing when compared to the sufferings and distress which many of the people endure. How acute are their pains, how dark their prospects, and how severely their consciences smite them. There are some who are always groaning in chains, living in pollution, and dying in agony. We all see and feel the power of our great foe. I hear in the midnight his dreaded footstep, and from his dark and horrid dens the yells of his victims are heard, and some of the little children are drawn into his ensnaring nets. Young men and maidens are rushing on to ruin. Our battle is against Alcohol, the enthroned monarch of enslaved millions; and, with the help of Him who is strong and mighty, we will oppose this popular deceiver with the weapons which are not carnal, but which are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. We have snatched poor victims from his fiery grasp, and what has been done may be done again. Our past conquests are a sublime triumph.

I know, as a blacksmith, it is frequently necessary to strike very hard, and when I read my Bible I find some hard striking there, and in our temperance cause it is sometimes necessary that there should be a little hard striking too. But, as a blacksmith, I also know that sometimes it is necessary for the striking to be very gentle; one hard blow would spoil the whole. Most of our work is finished, not by the hard, but by the gentle blows; and so it is with our temperance cause. We must not be afraid to strike hard, but we must never forget to be gentle. I can tell you in a moment what sort of a blow a piece of iron requires or will bear; and so, I think, with a little thought and patience, we can ascertain how much the spirit will bear. Speakers have to deal with stubborn and with tender souls. We know that a soft answer turneth away wrath; and our Heavenly Father, though He can and does reveal to us the terrible things of judgment, yet He graciously unfolds to us the mercy of His love: thus we are led through the green pastures, and by the still waters, and the voice of religion is the voice of peace. In like manner we must strive to deal with the sons of men: we must not keep back the truth, but we must speak the truth in the spirit of love. We should hate the drink, and love the drunkard.

I shall never forget the language used by my own dear child

upon her dying bed. She took me by the hand, and said—“Father, my body is very weak, the world to me is passing away, and all its glories are dead. You need not be sorrowful, for I feel that I am very near to the world of eternal joy, and soon I expect to be in the happy and sinless land, with the angels, and with Jesus. I have had a refreshing sleep, and in my dream I thought I could see the glory and hear the music in the heavenly world. For your sake, dear father, I can, in the prospect of death, bless God for temperance, and, what is far better, I feel that you and dear mother are travelling towards the higher and the better world. Tell all those to whom you may speak to pray for divine aid, that they may add to their temperance godliness, for I have been thinking what a serious thing it will be if but one of the temperance friends should live a Godless Christless life. Never cease to warn the drinkers of the dangers to which they are exposed; but oh, my dear father, never shrink from proclaiming the soul-saving truth, that Jesus died that we might live.” And I promised my dying child I would remember her requests. Soon after this I watched her in her last moments. She was calm and happy, her face was illumined with a heavenly smile; her last words were full of hope and love, and her end was blessedness and peace. I often think of her. She was my only child, and—

“Day after day I think what she is doing
In those bright realms above.”

She loved the temperance cause, and was an earnest and devoted Sabbath school teacher, and, with the faithful and the true, she broke the bread and drank of the fruit of the Vine, in memory of the body and blood of Him who died for the sins of the world.

In her class in the Sabbath school there was a neat, pretty, clever little girl, who almost as soon as she left the school formed an acquaintance with wicked companions; she not only contracted a love for the drink, but she fell into the lowest depths of vice. At the age of seventeen she went to the public-house, from which she returned in a state of intoxication. In her wretched home she met with a dreadful accident, so that in a few hours she died. There were horrid and revolting circumstances attending her death. A general gloom pervaded the village; and when I go to the churchyard to look at the grave of my child, I pass by the grave of this fallen one, and thus I look upon the graves of the teacher and the taught. How different they are! At the grave of the teacher I hear the voice from heaven, which says, “Blessed are the dead

who die in the Lord!" but at the grave of the taught, I remember the solemn words, "The wages of sin is death," and "The soul that sinneth it shall die." When shall the young of our land be protected? When shall the drink-curse cease? And the voice says, "Never, while the drink remains. The serpent must be crushed."

I never knew how much I had been deceived until I saw some beer and wine analysed, and then I felt ashamed that I had lived so long in ignorance. I wondered then, and so I do now, that the doctors did not tell us these things: they ought to have told us that beer, gin, and port wine contain nothing which would justify us in calling them good. On the side of plain, practical scientific truth they were dumb; and to show their folly, and upon which side they are found, there are thousands of doctors who are now drinking, and recommending intoxicating drinks: and if we had waited until they had instructed us, we should have yet been in a state of danger and ignorance. I do not wish to be severe upon the doctors, but some of them have acted in such a ridiculous and contradictory manner, that many of their patients have treated them not only with indifference, but sometimes with contempt. When I began to abstain, my doctor shook his head, and told me it might do for a tailor, but it would never suit a blacksmith; whereas the tailor now says that it might do for a blacksmith, but it won't do for a tailor. But, contrary to the opinion of the learned gentleman, I know it does suit me; and from that day I have neither required the doctor nor the drink. I should feel almost ashamed of myself if I thought I could not work well, live happily, and enjoy good health, without the aid derived from alcohol; and I am told the hardest and the hottest work, such as the making of anchors and great guns, is performed by many who are staunch teetotalers. If I had a doubt upon the subject as to whether hard work could or could not be done upon temperance principles, I would freely express it.

It requires but the will and the effort, and then the working men would free themselves from a power which now oppresses them, and they would have at their disposal millions of pounds with which they could build houses, buy land, assure their lives, and establish businesses, which would benefit themselves and the whole community. We may talk of reform until we are tired, but it is my firm conviction that unless the people improve themselves, no earthly power can raise them. We want practical and individual reform. Liberty is sold in the

pothouse; the morals of the people are corrupted, and the mental power of the nation is diminished by the drinking customs of these highly favoured but degenerate times. We are all injured by alcoholic drinks. When our poor rates are demanded, are we not injured? When we see our neighbour straggling to a drunkard's grave, are we not injured? When we know the tap-room is full of the young and the old, who are mutually effecting their own moral and eternal ruin, are we not injured by it? When we see the poor ruined daughter prostrate upon her dying bed, with a dark and misspent past which affrights her, and a gloomy future from which she shrinks, are we not injured by it? When we read of the savage and atrocious murders which are almost daily committed, are we not injured by it? And when we know that by the same power kings have been deposed, ministers have been sacrificed, and millions of the people are enslaved, are we not injured by it? When we know that the sacred name is profaned, that Jesus is hated, that the Bible is sold, that vice is evolved, and virtue crushed, are we not injured by it? *Verily we are all injured by it.* Are we serious when the heavens frown? Yes. Do we laugh at the forked and dangerous lightning? No. We must be serious in the presence of such appalling manifestations of judgment and of power. What, then, should be our state of mind when the moral heavens are black with crime, and ourselves encompassed by open graves and the mangled bodies of the slain? I see a cloud darker than that which frowns in the sky, and I hear deep wailings of woe which are louder than the thunder of the desolating storm; and when I look down the dark centuries of the past, and contemplate the evil in the light of the judgment to come, my soul also exclaims, "How long, O Lord, how long? How long shall millions of strong sons and fair daughters pay their homage to alcohol?" The burden of my soul is this great foe. Strong drinks are the greatest barriers in the way of all that is pure, noble, and good. We must work against them with all our might, in order to banish them from the world. We must not keep them in our houses for the purpose of giving them to our friends, and I believe, if we are wise, we shall never have them recommended as medicines. We must oppose them as dangerous, dear, deceptive, adulterated, and poisonous compounds, and never lay down the weapons of our bloodless and glorious warfare until this tormenting and evil spirit shall be driven from the world.

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S SPEECH.

WELL, gentlemen, though I have still an impression that I can teach, I do not feel that I can talk much. As most of you are aware, I have kept a school in this village for more than half a century, and though I am now greatly feeling the effects of four-score years, I can still take a delight in hearing what is good, and I trust also, in my humble way, of doing good. As a schoolmaster I have had my troubles, sometimes with the scholars, and sometimes with the parents; but upon the whole I have reasons to be satisfied, for in almost all parts of the country there are some who have received their education from me, and when any of them come to their native place they are almost certain to pay me a visit. And I confess this sometimes makes me feel a little proud. Many whom I have taught are now fathers and grandfathers, their brows are wrinkled, and their hairs are grey; and this fact alone would be sufficient to remind me that I must be on the confines of the eternal world. There are some bright spots in the history of a plain village schoolmaster, but alas, alas! there are many dark ones, for some of those of whom I entertained the fondest hopes have been by strong drink cut down in the midst of their days. Of those whom I have taught, some have run into the paths of virtue, others have pursued the paths of vice. Some have become prosperous and wealthy, others have become miserable and poor. Some have become efficient preachers, and popular teachers, while others have spent their time in riotous living. Some are gentlemen, others are beggars. Some are philosophers, while others, notwithstanding all my efforts, are dull and ignorant. Some when they left school started for life, and God has blessed them; but others seemed reckless and determined to follow the road which leads to death, and in the fulness of their iniquity they have been taken away. So that I put it thus, gentlemen—some by their good conduct are useful, honourable, and respectable men, while others, by their evil deeds, have hurled themselves into dishonoured graves. Boys are very curious and difficult things either to manage or

understand; they have strong wills, and queer tempers; and they are often made worse than they would have been by foolish and over-indulgent parents. Some when very young are sharp, and quickly acquire knowledge, but before the age of manhood they become dull, and sometimes almost stupid; and some who when at school appeared dull and heavy, have in a few years evinced great strength of intellect.

I can confirm what I heard of the evils of drunkenness. It is frequently said, but I think very falsely, that the drunkard is no one's enemy but his own. I well remember a clever little fellow who came to my school; he always said his lessons well, he was regular in his attendance, and looked tidy and clean: at length it was observed that he did not come so regularly, and his face was not so clean, and his clothes did not look so well. I suspected that something was not right, and when I asked him he began to cry, and to say that his little sister was very ill, and that his mother had told him there was no bread in the house; and he said that his father had altered so. He used always to be at home, but now he was almost always out; he used to speak kindly, and now he was so ill-tempered, and he sometimes swore at him and his mother, and at his poor little afflicted sister as she lay upon her bed. His prospects were darkened, and his heart was troubled. Upon inquiry I found all the poor lad had said was true. I have always had a love for children, and when I saw him weep, my heart was filled with love and sympathy. We ought not to conceal the fact, that there are many infants and children starved to death by the power of strong drink. Babies are sufferers, and beautiful little boys and girls are filled with the deepest sorrow; their cheeks grow pale, their eyes become dim, hunger and want put their marks upon them; and thus the buds are nipped, the blossoms are scattered, the tender plants are trampled upon, and fair young flowers fade away and die, and the innocent wail of the children mingles with the wild guilty shriek of the parents, and, though essentially different, they both invoke the dire and avenging curse of Him who will pour out the vials of His wrath upon all those who forsake the ways of the righteous, and walk in the path of the ungodly.

I have been always fond of my garden. I have worked in it many a day, and, though I am now too old to do much, yet I like to do a little, especially amongst the flowers. When I was a child I loved them, and through all the changes of

life they have afforded me pleasure; but at my age I cannot expect to see them many more times. I do not see them so clearly as I did once, but I know they are as beautiful and as fragrant as ever, and I love them as delightful gifts from the hand of my Heavenly Father; and in my departing moments I should like for them to be near me, for they are beautifully figurative of Him who is the Rose of Sharon, and the fairest amongst the lilies. These flowers remind me of a circumstance which happened a few years ago. One bright calm summer evening, as I was crossing the field which belongs to the "Crown Hotel," I met the father of the little boy to whom I have referred. With that reckless boldness which characterises some drunkards he came staggering towards me, and, with a look upon which there still lingered a ray of moral light and intelligence, he said, "Look here, sir; look here;" at the same time holding up a very beautiful flower: then he smiled with the smile of an idiot, and said, "I do—yes, I do, sir—I do love flowers." In a moment his look became wild and desperate, and, with a terrible oath, he dashed it to the ground; and from his soul the last love of the beautiful had departed, and the deepest, darkest shadows fell upon him—his brain was fevered and fired by alcohol. The pit of woe, with all its horrors, was open to his vision; he saw the smoke of torment and the quenchless flame. Fiends tantalized him, serpents hissed at him, and a wild tremulous fear possessed him, and all visible things were inverted, perverted, or estranged. He staggered to his home, and wildly looked at his starving wife and his poor ragged boy, and, clenching his teeth and beating his breast, he sprang from his seat and frantically shouted, "I must, I must! they are coming, they are coming!" and, as he madly ran from his wretched home, he looked behind, and again shouted, "They are after me, they are after me! they will have me, they will have me!" And in this furious and horrible state he leaped into a well, and was taken out dead.

I have lived to see, gentlemen, that the evils of intemperance are not confined to the poor. Not long ago, while I was at work in my garden, the first gentleman of the parish paid me a visit, but his conversation was somewhat rude and unseemly; and he was so befooled by alcohol as to laugh at my age, at the same time telling me that my poor old bones would be soon resting in the grave. Though he was rich he was destitute of all the fine qualities which are essential to the gentleman. He thought that my removal by death would put my

school into his hands; but I have lived to survive him. When he came to me I was old, he was young; I was poor, he was rich; I was a schoolmaster, he was a magistrate; but he was a brandy drinker, I was not; and as I toiled on, and wiped the sweat from my brow, I thought I would not change places or conditions with him for all the world. His love for brandy increased; he drank it until he trembled; he drank it until he was helpless; he drank it in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; and at last, to slake his burning thirst, the bottle was placed by his bedside, and he drank it frequently in the night, and he drank it upon his dying bed: and while his beautiful gardens were filled with fruits and flowers—while the sun was all glorious, and the birds were singing—while the cascades were falling, and the fountains were playing, the spirit of this poor rich drunkard in gloomy terror passed away. At his funeral I saw the darkly-plumed hearse, and the well-trained horses, and the long mournful procession. I heard the deep sound of the solemn bell, and with hundreds of others I stood by his grave; and although I fondly and charitably hoped that in the last moments God might have had mercy upon him, yet I could not heartily participate in the assurance expressed of the sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life.

When I first heard of temperance I laughed at it, and thought it was a new-fangled doctrine full of absurdities; but upon reflection I could see it was a simple, beautiful, and effective remedy for one of the worst evils which afflict humanity; and I thought if it reclaim but one poor drunkard it may cause the angels to rejoice. And is it not delightful to think, by doing good in the right spirit, that we can add to the pleasure of those who surround the eternal throne? When in deep contemplation I asked what has strong drink done? almost every place upon which my spirit alighted was pregnant with a solemn reply. The nearest farmhouse said, My last inhabitant spent his dying breath in shouting for brandy: a humble cottage said, In the morning my owner left me, and went to a market town, where he drank freely of the tempting drink; in returning he fell out of his cart, a stage-coach ran over him, and he was brought home dead; and the little running brooklet gives forth a solemn sound, for it has but recently passed over the drowned body of the drunkard; and the river tells me of one who in passing from the public-house fell into its cold embrace; and in the shady wood there stands the tree from which

poor victim suspended himself; and over the dangerous cliff another hard drinker fell, and, though not killed, he was disabled for life.

We are very near another Christmas, and it should be to us a season of a pure and healthful joy. It is very pleasant in these long dark winter evenings to think of the Star of Bethlehem. It has been the light of the ages, and millions of youthful and aged pilgrims have gazed upon it with adoring love. It was the light which illumined the angels when they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards man." It is painful to think of the manner in which the majority of this nation celebrate the birthday of the Risen One. It is true that for a short time the doors of the churches and the chapels are opened, and loving, hopeful, and expectant souls repair to the sanctuary to worship God. But it is a high day for alcohol. Not only are all the doors of his licensed temples thrown open, where wicked men and degraded women flock to do him homage, but he is the enthroned monarch of almost all the private circles in the land. In the taproom and the gin-palace there are loud and vulgar shouts in his praise, and in the parlours and drawing-rooms the fathers and the mothers smile upon him, ministers and magistrates eulogize him, and the children look towards him with the feelings of hope and love.

We wonder not that so many young men should become drunkards; nor that so many ladies should fall into this degrading and shameful sin; nor that so many rich fathers should be burdened with troubles; nor that wealthy mothers should die with broken hearts. They have invited to their houses a false and treacherous foe; he injures them, and stings to death some of their children. I have found these drinks to be the greatest obstacle to education, and the great disease of society is the love which people have for them. And while John Bull thus foolishly spends his money, wretchedness and poverty must abound. We must go to the root of the evil, and the root of the evil is the drink. Men hide themselves from the storm, and tremble in the fierce glance of the lightning's flash, and shelter themselves from the drenching rain; but they rush recklessly into the presence of alcohol; they seem not only to have no dread, but to madly delight in the midst of his consuming fires—yea (I have seen it) to do him honour they turn away from the graves of the drunkards, and repair to the public-house to soothe their feelings and to slake their thirst. It is a humiliating conclusion, but it appears to me that some of the drinkers prefer dirt to cleanli-

ness, vice to virtue, and a miserable death to a peaceful and happy life.

Though I am old and infirm, my attachments are increasingly strong towards the temperance cause, and with advancing years I feel an increasing love for my native place. The scenes of childhood return to me, and now I can see as clearly as ever my father's look and my mother's smile; and there are times when the moments of my childhood appear to come over again—the blowing of the horn, the playing on the green, the Sabbath school anniversary, the merry marriage bells, and the solemn funeral knells, are sounds which have not died away, for I can well remember them all. Truly there is no place like home. Here I have lived, and here I wish to die; and most earnestly do I desire that the inhabitants of this highly favoured village may be wise enough to abstain; and then for this spot, which is so charming to me, and which is bound to my heart by the ties of love, the joys of life, and the sorrows of death, there will be brighter and better days. In a country life simplicity and sublimity meet. What can be more beautiful than the birds and the flowers, the blossoms and the fruits? what more musical than the gurgling brook, the running stream, or the gentle zephyr? or what can be prettier than the playful lambs, or the sheep by the green hill-sides, or when they graze upon its brow? or what more noble than the prancing horse? Perhaps, gentlemen, you call it weakness, but my ear is still sensitively alive to the music of the mower when he sharpens his scythe. The newly mown grass is so fresh and sweet, the fields of golden wheat are so beautiful, and the filling of the garners with the precious grain; and the great stacks of corn, and the old mill, and the parish church, and the different places of worship—they are full of interest to me; but I feel that I have looked upon many of these things for the last time: and, though none of us can tell when the messenger will come, yet, I confess, I have entertained a choice of the season of the year, in which, should it please God, I should prefer to die. It seems very hard to die in the spring, when the time of the singing of birds has come, and the natural world is full of hope, promise, and beauty; and the summer is resplendent with fruitfulness and life; but the autumn time is the time of the in-gathering. Upon this subject we must say no more; perhaps we have said too much. Our Heavenly Father will do all things well. He has led me and blessed me for fourscore years, and truly can I say that goodness and mercy have followed me all the

days of my life; and if, gentlemen, we never meet again—and something seems to tell me we shall not—no, no, I do not believe in visions nor omens, but I have a feeling or a presentiment which seems to say it is the last time. It is a very solemn thought. You will be here, but I must go away. Well, be it so, The angels are waiting for me; my work is nearly done; the time of my departure is at hand; and, with the help of my Heavenly Father, I hope with my expiring breath to pray for a continuance of the richest blessings to rest upon the temperance cause. It is God's work, and in life or in death He shall have all the glory.

THE SEXTON'S SPEECH.

BELLS, knells, graves, and spades are things with which I am familiar. Gravedigging is serious and sorrowful work. Though the work itself is pretty much the same, my feelings differ very much, and the feelings which I have as a gravedigger are not always to be accounted for by the state of my health or the condition of the weather. When I dig a grave which is to be the resting-place of the body of a little baby, or a tender hearted loving child, the work seems light and easy, and I think of the little one, how it has been taken from the evils of this sinful world; then my thoughts rise up to Heaven, and I think of its blessed and happy spirit there, and sometimes I can almost see it smile upon me; and then I ponder upon the words of Jesus, and what He said about them. The last grave I dug was for a sweet pretty little girl, who always met me with a smile, and her teacher told me that she died such a happy death. I cannot tell you how it was, but, while I was at work in the midst of the dead, I found myself singing the beautiful words of the poet,—

“ Not as a child shall we again behold her;
 For when in raptures wild
 In our embraces we again enfold her,
 She will not be a child,
 But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
 Clothed with celestial grace,
 And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
 Shall we behold her face.”

But in digging a grave for a child it is not always so. Of the one that was buried before, my heart said, “ Poor little thing ! ” for she was suffocated by the side of her drunken mother; and so her precious life was destroyed by the weight of a helpless body, which was poisoned, benumbed, and deadened by the drink; and I am told that thousands upon thousands in this manner pass away.

It is not long ago since we all heard of the death of poor young Mr. B. I knew how he lived, and I had heard how he died; yea, one who was with him told me it was terrible to witness such a scene. His mind was full of fears, and his horrid oaths

made his friends tremble. In his dying moments he shrieked out for the consuming flame; and, after taking brandy for the last time, he shouted, yelled, cursed, groaned, and died. A few days before his death I saw him stagger through the churchyard, and was shocked with the imprecations in which he indulged. What a pestilent, staggering, reckless, savage monster a drunkard is! When I took the spade and repaired to the spot which was to be opened to receive his body, my soul felt deeply sad. I knew that self-murder had been committed, for he not only ought not to have died, but he could not have died the death of the drunkard had he not killed himself by taking the drink. How busy alcohol makes the doctors, the turnkeys, the executioners, and the sextons! It was a dull gloomy day, and this added to the intenseness of my feelings; and when I turned up the sod I thought of him and wept. Some sextons believe that the spirits of the departed ones are near to them when they are digging their graves. Though I entertain no such belief, I do most positively affirm that the habits and life of the departed do make a great difference to me. I am always the subject of strange feelings as the grave deepens. It is, indeed, a narrow bed; and, as I proceeded in my work, I thought of his weeping parents, of his wasted life, of his murdered time; of his opposition to laws, both human and divine; of his days of idleness, of his nights of revelry and debauch; of his short life, of his premature death, of his cold corpse, and, above all, of his precious soul; and, while surveying his desperate and downward career, in the fullest exercise of my Christian charity, I could not look up to Heaven with hope. Gloom and darkness overshadowed me; and I must tell you, gentlemen, it is hard work to dig a bad man's grave. The sun had gone down with an angry look, and the shadows of night began to fall, and I heard the hollow moaning of the wind. I was nervous and sensitive, but not afraid. The clouds were heavy and the rain began to fall, and when my sad task was nearly done, I was suddenly startled by an unexpected, but very vivid, flash of lightning. I shall never forget it—for an instant the grave seemed on fire, and the blue glare of the electric light flashed from the surface of the spade; and immediately the loud crackling thunder followed, and I thought it sounded like the angry voice of the Great Eternal; and, after I had thrown up the last lot of earth, standing on the side, I looked down into the grave, and while my soul was filled with hatred against the drink, I could not but feel a deeper

love for the poor unfortunate drunkard. I went home that night with drenched clothes and a heavy heart.

I feel at home in the churchyard. I call it the silent village, and though I know all the inhabitants are dead, there are some who seem to speak to me, and I have found myself talking to the graves as I have passed by them. I well remember when our late good vicar died; I was permitted to see him in his last moments; his life was full of good deeds, and his end was peace. He took me by the hand, his face at the same time beaming with a heavenly smile, and he calmly said to me, "John, you have many times heard me speak of the love of Jesus: through life He has been my Guide and Comforter, and now I am dying it is my happiness to know that He is present with me, and soon, very soon, I shall see Him as He is. He is my Strength and Support, and in Him alone will I trust." I turned from him to conceal my feelings, but with the most touching tenderness he said, "Never mind, John; though you will not hear me preach again, I believe, through the exercise of precious faith, that you are travelling to the happy land, and that there we shall meet again, where all tears shall be wiped away, where there are no graves, where sighing and sorrow are unknown, where there are no partings, and where there is no more death." And when he had given me his dying blessing, with a heart too full for utterance, I looked upon him for the last time. That night the messenger came, and the sad news went round the village that the good man was dead. The bell tolled, and the people wept. I cannot describe my feelings when I had to dig his grave. My heart felt as though it would break; and yet I could rejoice, for I felt assured that his happy spirit was rejoicing with the saints and the angels in the presence of his Saviour and his God. I stood at the chosen spot with the spade in my hand for several minutes; I looked at the vicarage, and knew it was a house of mourning—all things appeared changed. Then I looked into the garden, where we had often been together, and where I stood I could see the drawn window-blind of the chamber where the good man lay. Then I gazed at the church, and thought of the pulpit wherein he had stood for so many years, to impart to the hungry the bread of life; and then I called to mind some of the mourners he had comforted, and some of the naked he had clothed, and some who were starving whom he had fed; and a gentle, calm, clear, heavenly voice appeared to say, "He rests from his labours, and his works do follow him." The sun shone, the

birds sang, the flowers bloomed, the dew was on the grass, and the tears were in my eyes, yet I did not mourn as those without hope; and with such feelings I began to dig my pastor's grave. When I had moved the green turf, and could see the length and the size of it, I thought of his once manly form and loving smile, and as I slowly, for I could not do it quickly, removed the strong stiff earth, I had pleasing thoughts of Him who has said, "I am the resurrection and the life." But I felt as though the dear vicar was with me, and one time I thought I could hear his footsteps, and that he was speaking to me. But no, all was silent, the great enemy, Death, had done his work. Yet I could hardly think it possible that he would speak to me no more; and I could not forget him upon whom I had looked so many times, from whose lips had dropped rich gospel truths, whose eyes had always beamed with love, and whose words were the words of kindness and peace. The day was fine, and nature was arrayed in her summer garb, and I thought of the appropriateness of his last text, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." He lived and died in light, he was buried in light, and now and for ever will his happy spirit be where there is no night, but one unclouded and eternal day.

Although the digging of this good man's grave was very painful, I believe it did me good, for it forms a part of my Christian experience; and always when I pass by it, and frequently when I do not, I think of his goodness and bless his name. He once said to me, "John, what do you think of the ringers and the ringing?" and I promptly replied, "I am ashamed of both. The bells always ring pretty well at first; at all events, they manage to follow one another in a somewhat orderly manner; but when old Alcohol gets into the brains of the ringers, the ringing becomes a jumble, the little bell sounds when the great bell should be heard, and two, three, and sometimes four all sound at once; in fact, the bells are made to act as though they were mad. And if they could speak, I feel assured they would say, 'We are ashamed of ourselves; but we are obliged, by the stupidity and drunkenness of the ringers below, to act as though we also were stupid and drunk.' Ah, sir," I said, "it may be painful for you to hear it, but there is a great deal of drinking going on in the belfry, and I am afraid that some will have reasons to regret through all time and eternity that they ever became ringers. I like to see a young and loving couple married, and I like to hear a good merry peal in honour of the event; but I am ashamed to

think that at such a joyful time there are some who take a pleasure in getting drunk."

Gentlemen, perhaps you will think it strange that I have expressed a fondness for the churchyard. There I have spent much of my time, and yet I think I am not a dull man; and sometimes in that solitary place I am happy and glad, and very frequently I have indulged in a good hearty laugh, and I think it does me good. There is a time to laugh and a time to weep, and I sometimes feel the power and the blessedness of that good hope which enables me to smile in the midst of the dead. While pondering deeply upon the slaying and destructive power of the drink, I took a quiet walk through the churchyard, and in the departing glory of the day I meditated amongst the tombs, and the graves spoke to me, and the life and the death of the departed impressed me. Each grave seemed to be the centre of infinite mercy and eternal justice. And I thought of that solemnly glorious day when all who are in their graves shall come forth, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. The first grave that struck me was the resting-place of a wife and a mother. I saw her married. She was young and beautiful, with a handsome fortune. Her husband was a professional man, and their prospects were bright and cheering. But in their house the drink was freely supplied, and very soon the young wife contracted a love for it, until at last it was generally known that she was a confirmed drunkard. She lost all control over herself and her children. At length she became wild, delirious, and desperate, and one cold winter night she sprang from her bed and wandered towards the nearest public-house, thirsting and shouting for alcohol; until at last, after a fearful debauch, she slept the sleep of death. They have put a fine marble monument over her grave, from the inscription of which you would infer that she lived an exemplary life, and had died in peace; whereas the simple truth is, she committed self-murder by the drunkenness in which she indulged. Turning a few yards to the right, I saw the grave of one who for a number of years was a preacher of the Gospel. He was a kind-hearted, good-natured man; the poor loved him, and he spoke the words of comfort to the afflicted and the dying. His friends pressed him to drink, and he, believing it to be good, yielded to their wish, and he drank it until he had contracted a great love for it, and that love overpowered him. He lost his standing as a minister, and those who gave him the drink were the first to

speaking against him. He fell so deeply that I have seen him staggering in the street, where he became the sport of the vulgar and the rude. His sun went down behind a dark cloud, and the black tempest of wrath gathered about him, until he became fearful, cheerless, and hopeless; and one night, as he was staggering from the public-house, he fell into the river and was drowned. I dragged him from the stream, I tolled the bell, I dug his grave, I attended his funeral, and in the midst of weeping friends I sent up a silent prayer that God would bless the efforts we are making to drive strong drink from our country and from the world. Turning towards the left, I saw two little graves, and of them I will relate an incident. One moonlight night I saw a man standing on this spot, and upon approaching him I discovered that he was the subject of intense grief. Of course I knew him as the father of the quiet little sleepers, and I was well acquainted with the circumstances under which the poor children had died. It was pretty well known that the poor things had been starved, for their father had spent both his time and money at the public-house. But since their interment he had become a temperance man, and the night when I saw him in the churchyard he had been speaking at a temperance meeting; and upon his returning, his mind being filled with serious thoughts, and the way to his home lying through the churchyard, he had turned out of the path to look upon and to weep over the graves of his little ones. He thought of his great cruelty, and how he had neglected them, and of the sufferings through which they had passed, and of the painful death; and, turning to me, he said, "Ah, John, bad a father as I have been, I feel thankful to God that I have seen my error. But these dear children—I felt as though I could not keep from their graves. It is so strange, I feel to love them much more now they are dead than I did when they were alive. It was the drink which deadened the feelings of my fatherly heart; by these graves those feelings appear to be quickening into life. I feel a strong impulse, and an almost overpowering love. Had it not been for drink I should have protected and loved them when alive; I would have fed them and nursed them, and in their last moments I would have been with them; but the drink fiend took me from my home, and steeled my heart against them, and now I stand by their graves self-convicted and self-condemned." And as he stood there, with his eyes full of tears and his heart full of love, in the silence of the night, in the presence of death, and with the calm

bright moon shining upon him, he sent up to heaven an earnest prayer that he might be kept from the power of intemperance, and that he might be led in the straight and the narrow way, so that at length he might meet the happy spirits of his beloved ones in the mansions of eternal glory. And to that prayer I responded a deep and full "Amen." He looked at me, and the tears streamed down his cheeks; and all that I felt I could say to him was this, "Your little ones are in the higher and the better land, and I trust that now you are delivered from the curse and slavery of intemperance, that your feet may be directed into that way which leads to everlasting life, so that after death, in accordance with the wish you have expressed, you may meet them in the realms of holiness and peace." He shook me by the hand, said "Good night," and went to his home.

There are times when the graves seem as though they would speak to me, the dead appear to live, and I feel to be surrounded by intelligent and reflective spirits. I have known the inhabitants in these homes of the departed, and though they are gone there are many of them who yet speak to me. In my lonely wandering I paused at the grave of one who had laughed at me and persecuted me because of my temperance principles. He drank to the full, his blood was inflamed; he met with a small accident, from which a healthy constitution would have speedily recovered; but inflammation and mortification ensued, and in a few days he died. From his grave I turned towards another, it was that of an only son. He was a pleasant good-natured lad, he liked company, and was induced to associate with those who were fond of the glass and the song; they were all respectable young men, and he thought there could be no harm in occasionally spending an evening with them. The trap was set, he was pressed to drink, and some who could drink freely without appearing the worse for it challenged him to take a little more, until his strength was gone and his reason had fled. This was the first dark shadow which fell upon him. But it was kept as secret as possible, so that even his mother had no suspicion of the excess in which he had indulged. He was the accepted lover of a fair and beautiful young lady, and of course was frequently at her father's house. He was one of the guests at the marriage of her eldest sister; the wine and the whisky were freely supplied. He took them, but it was not observed that he was so much under their influence; he mounted his horse, and not more than two hundred yards

from the house he was found dead. Some said it was not the drink, but it was the effect of the fresh air; but we know what it was. A few yards from his resting-place is the grave of her who was to have been his wife. When she heard of the sad and fatal accident she swooned and was speechless; and when she partly recovered she talked wildly. Her mind was confused, her sentences incoherent and broken, and from that fearful shock she never recovered. She one day came to look at his grave, and the sight was enough to melt the hardest heart. Her face had upon it the paleness of death, her eyes were restless and vacant, her strength, health, and beauty had all departed. She was sensibly mad; and turning to me, and pointing to the grave, she whispered, "It was the drink! it was the drink!—he is dead, and I am mad!" And with a bursting heart she and her friend went away. In a few months from that date we received the intelligence of her decease. In that dark night the star of her hope went down, and she died of a broken heart; and thus her sad death was caused by the fatal drink. As I said before, it is hard work to dig some graves. If I should be present at the next meeting I will tell you more of my wanderings amongst the dead.

At the conclusion of the sexton's speech the meeting was brought to a close; imperceptibly the fire had gone out, and the lamp burnt dimly; all had been deeply interested. They had heard much and had thought more. The solemn realities of life and death, of time and eternity, had passed before them, and the marriage bells and funeral knells had sounded in their ears. The wind was hushed, the rain had ceased, the wild dark clouds had passed away, and the twinkling and brilliant stars filled the heavens with their glory. As soon as they had emerged from the schoolroom they shook hands, and wishing each other a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year, each one went to his home. The breaking up of this meeting, however, was rendered somewhat painful by the aged schoolmaster remarking that he increasingly felt that in this world it would never be his happiness to meet them again. And as he was impressed so it came to pass; in a few days the aged pilgrim died in peace. Only a few moments before his death he told the clergyman that this little fireside meeting was one of the best he had ever attended, it was to his mind full of temperance and godliness. And having said this, with a faith firmly fixed upon the Rock of Ages, he fell

asleep to awake with God. It was a great funeral, for everybody loved the veteran schoolmaster; and the next Lord's day the worthy vicar, in a very eloquent and impressive sermon, improved the death of the good old man; and many shed tears, when they thought that they should see his face no more.

In that village the good work goes on, the monthly meetings continue to be held, and with all the earnest and true we join in the prayer that the great stumbling-block—strong drink—may be taken out of the way.

THE VOICE OF CHRISTMAS.

CLAD in my folded and flowing garments of snow, with the chilling breath of the boreal blast, with the golden stars bespangling my brow, with light in my eyes, with love in my heart, with my hands full of gifts, while the fires blaze, and the bells ring, amidst all these manifestations of joy, and responsive to the welcoming of the midnight songs, as the sent of God, and the friend of man, your old friend Christmas comes. For more than eighteen centuries I have paid my annual visits, and the rich and the poor, the peasants and the kings, have alike welcomed me to their homes and their hearts. I have been a delighted guest at your warm and cheerful firesides, and greatly have I enjoyed both your music and your mirth. But I have somewhat against you, for almost always when I come, I have ever in your dwelling-places to encounter a great foe—I mean the evil and malicious Spirit of Alcohol. His dark deeds are registered in heaven, and it is known from whence he came, and whose servant he is. I never pay you a visit without being obliged to look upon millions whom he has injured, and upon a host whom he has slain. By my presence you are reminded of the grandest and most important event which has ever transpired in the history of time or eternity; and throughout the land I am compelled to witness in the minds of myriads, a perfect obliteration of every high and noble thought. The ill-used, inflamed, and beclouded eyes of the inebriate can behold no beauty in Him who is the fairest amongst ten thousand, and the altogether lovely; his ears are so deadened that the celestial music has no charms for them. It is only the Christian citizen who by faith can see the King in his glory. Though in reality I am obliged to leave you at midnight, yet in spirit I remain with you for several days, and I cannot refrain from saying, "O England! I am ashamed of your folly and your crime; for during my short stay I behold scenes of the deepest wretchedness, and from all quarters my ears are saluted with the sounds of sorrow and woe. With my keen glance I frequently discover some to be under the

influence of alcohol, who would generally be considered perfectly sober. It is not only a great pity, but it is a great shame, and a greater sin, that the glory of my solemn festival should be marred by such debasing and abominable deeds. Better, far better would it be that no Christmas should be celebrated, than for special efforts to be made to purchase and belaud the poisonous compounds by which the nation is degraded and the people polluted and enslaved. In the olden times, in the monkeries and the nunneries, shameful and revolting scenes have transpired, but now every year such scenes are not only paralleled, but they are multiplied and surpassed both in the private and public drinking habits which almost everywhere prevail. To me your drinking customs are foolish, loathsome, and offensive. I come to repeat the good tidings of great joy, and to excite in your hearts a deeper and more reverent love for Him at whose birth the heavens were filled with angelic music and celestial glory—whose life was a reflex of heavenly purity and love, and whose painful and lonely death brought life and immortality to light. At the mention of His name let men and angels rejoice; let all the noisy clamour of the world be still; let the booming of the cannon and the clashing of arms be heard no more; let all the bickerings of strife come to an end; let the moans of the wretched and the groans of the drunkards cease; let no lewd utterance be heard, but let your souls wait patiently; and while in this sweet, silent, and confiding mood you shall hear the gentle and loving voice of the Good Shepherd saying, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," and then full and harmonious songs shall arise to our Immanuel, and the hills and the valleys shall become vocal with the melody of rapturous and adoring praise to Him who is our Saviour and our God. Then in my presence how the truth would flourish, and in triumph your beloved country might lift up its head and rejoice, and the churches and the chapels would overflow with the happy and the redeemed of the Lord. But now numberless scenes which constantly recur when I am with you are dark, black, revolting, and terrible. Many of your bright social circles have a dark edge, and much of your mirthfulness must be turned into sorrow. Thousands of young men, after having spent an evening with their friends, under the influence of alcohol go staggering to their homes; and sisters, innocent and unsuspecting, frequently acquire a love for the insidious and tempting drink, to obtain which millions of pounds are foolishly spent; and the public-houses are

crowded with the babbling and the profane, while the lewd laugh and the wild shriek of estranged and besotted women fall upon the startled ear. It is high time that this revolting and murderous carnival should cease, in order that man might be blessed and old night once more regain the peacefulness of ancient silence. Preach and practise temperance, the literal and spiritual meaning of which is the proper use of good things, and total abstinence from what is bad. Cry aloud and spare not in favour of abstinence from every drop of that drink which is a mocker, and at which the Bible tells us not to look. Such drinks are bad, and their fruits are bad; and as total abstinence from them is the temperance of Heaven and of nature, so when you cease firstly to pervert, and secondly to destroy, the blessings of Providence in their manufacture, it will become the universal temperance of man. Those who turn the corn and the fruits into alcohol have departed from the right way. In the plainest English, the vinous fermentation always involves the turning of sweet and nutritious food into poison, and in this awful poison stream millions float down to everlasting death. Before I take my flight for another year, listen. During the past year multiplied thousands have died drunkards, and multiplied thousands of moderate drinkers have become drunkards. Listen: In the year to come thousands of poor drunkards will die, and thousands of those who are now moderate drinkers will be drunkards before you welcome me again. For ages and for ages this terrible and double death work has gone on, and so long as man commits the crime of destroying the fruits and the corn, so long will the avenging curse of Heaven descend. This is righteous moral retribution, and all the dealings of God with man prove that it must be so. Suffering must follow in the track of sin. In parting let me say, Work on, God has blessed your labours. Work on—drunkards have been reclaimed. Work on—sow the seed, and the harvest will come; and then in my future visitations we may all be jubilant with joy, for we shall behold the moral and spiritual splendour of that day when the bright sun of heaven shall shine upon a sober and renovated world.

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