

The Last Hymn.

The Sabbath-day was ending in a village by the sea,
The uttered benediction touched the people tenderly;
And they rose to face the sunlight in the glowing, lighted
west,
And then hastened to their dwellings for God's blessed
boon of rest.

But they looked across the waters, and a storm was raging
there,

A fierce spirit moved above them—the wild spirit of the
air;

But it lashed and shock and tore them till they thundered,
groaned, and boomed,
And alas! for any vessel in their yawning gulfs entombed.

Very anxious were the people on that rocky coast of
Wales,

Lest the dawn of coming-morrow should be telling awful
tales,

When the sea had spent its passion, and should cast upon
the shore

Bits of wreck and swollen victims, as it oft had done
before.

With the rough winds blowing round her, a brave woman
strained her eyes,

As she saw among the billows a huge vessel fall and rise;
O, it did not need a prophet to tell what the end must be,
For no ship could ride in safety near that shore on such a
sea.

Then the pitying people hurried from their homes and
thronged the beach:

O, for power to cross the waters and the perishing to
reach!

Helping hands were hung in terror, tender hearts grew
cold with dread,

And the ship, urged by the tempest, on the fatal rock-
shore sped.

"She has parted in the centre! O, the half of her goes
down!

God have mercy! Is his haven far to seek for those who
drown?"

Lo! when next the white, shocked face looked with terror
on the sea,

Only one last clinging figure on the spar was seen to be.

Never to the trembling watchers came the wreck tossed by
the wave;

And the man still clung and floated, though no power on
earth could save;

"Could we send him one short message? Here's a trumpet,
shout away!"

'Twas the preacher's hand that took it, and he wondered
what to say.

Any memory of his sermon? Firstly? Secondly? Ah, no;
There was but one thing to utter in that awful hour of
woe.

So he shouted through the trumpet, "Look to Jesus!
Can you hear?"

And "Aye, aye, sir!" rang the answer o'er the waters
loud and clear.

Then they listened. He is singing, "Jesus, lover of my
soul,"

And the winds brought back the echo, "While the nearer
waters roll."

Strange, indeed, it was to hear him, "Till the storm of
life is past,"

Singing bravely o'er the water, "O, receive my soul at
last."
—Selected.

What Came of a Drink!

BY J. HUNT COOKE.

In the year 1849, on the third day of October, a traveller from Richmond, Virginia, to Philadelphia, got out of a train at the refreshment station at Baltimore. He was tired with the journey, and still had some distance to go. A friend whom he met there invited him to take a drink. What harm could there be in that? Was it not the part of good fellowship to do so? Who but a churl—a fellow who ought to be treated with contempt, some bigoted, miserable teetotaler—could raise an objection? The two friends—with good intentions—went to the bar and had a drink. What was the result?

The gentleman who was thus tempted was a poet

of the very highest promise. His career had been wild and bad. His name was Edgar Allan Poe. His tales had revealed rare genius. One or two poems he had written were radiant with promise. Every literary critic was assured that if he would become steady, and settle down to a good life, he would be one of the brightest stars of American literature.

But the counsels of wise men and the influence of good friends had no effect. While in Richmond he had been brought to penitence for the past, and vowed reformation. He signed the pledge, and joined a temperance society, to enable him to resist his great foe—strong drink. He gave a lecture on total abstinence, which was attended by the best people in Richmond, who rejoiced at the change and were full of hope.

A lady, whom he had long loved, now consented to an engagement, and arrangements were made for the wedding. All his friends were satisfied that the man had changed, and meant to work and live a good life.

Before the marriage took place, he had an invitation to Philadelphia, for some literary work. Life was bright, and all promised well. But, while staying for a few minutes at Baltimore, a well-meaning friend persuaded him once more to open the door to the demon which had blasted his life up to that hour, but was now subdued. What inducements were used, what strong assertions that one glass could do no harm were made, what jests at being a milksop were employed, what sneers at teetotal fanaticism were indulged in, we cannot tell. At length Poe only just turned the key in the lock—he took a drink!

There are foolish persons who say they have no sympathy for a man who cannot take just one glass or two, perhaps, and stop there. No wise lover of his fellows will say that. Some of the very best men cannot. It is often the finest brains which are driven into insanity with a few drops of alcohol, which speedily destroy the equilibrium of the whole system, as a little snake poison would do.

Poe could not stop at one glass. At Havre de Grace he was found so disorderly that he was taken back to Baltimore, in the custody of the conductor of the Philadelphia train. There he did what numbers have done—ran riot in drink—completely mastered by the demon he had been foolish enough to set free. In the course of a few days he was taken to a hospital in an insensible state. On Sunday morning, October 7th, he awoke to consciousness. "Where am I?" he asked. A kind-hearted doctor, who was by the bedside, said, "You are cared for by your best friends." After a pause, Poe solemnly replied, "My best friend would be the man who would blow out my brains." In ten minutes he was a corpse!

The next day he was interred in the burial-ground of Westminster-church, and America lost one of the most promising and brilliant writers she ever possessed.

What became of the friend who induced him to take that drink at the Baltimore refreshment booth? What did he think of it when he learned the results? What will he think of it in eternity? If angels have any insight into futurity, what must they have felt if permitted to witness that scene at the refreshment bar? Surely some demon sent a thrill of hellish joy throughout the pit as it saw the man lift the glass!

Oh! it is terrible to think what a brilliant light in English literature that glass quenched! And one is reminded of a certain great poet, who lived many centuries, previous, who said—possibly seeing a similar evil in his day: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink."

The Two Words.

ONE day a harsh word rashly said,
Upon an evil journey sped,
And like a sharp and cruel dart,
It pierced a fond and loving heart;
It turned a friend into a foe,
And everywhere brought pain and woe.

A kind word followed it one day,
Flew swiftly on its blessed way;
It healed the wound, it soothed the pain,
And friends of old were friends again;
It made the hate and anger cease,
And everywhere brought joy and peace.

But yet the harsh word left a trace
The kind word could not quite efface;
And though the heart its love regained
It bore a scar that long remained;
Friends could forgive but not forget,
Or lose the sense of keen regret.

Oh, if we would but learn to know
How swift and sure our words can go,
How would we weigh with utmost care
Each thought before it sought the air,
And only speak the words that move
Like white-winged messengers of love.

—Sunday-School Times.

"Don't Step There."

A MAN started out for church one icy Sunday morning, and presently came to a place where a boy was standing, who, with a choking voice, said:

"Please don't step there."

"Why not?"

"Because I stepped there and fell down," sobbed the little fellow, who had thus taken upon himself to warn the unwary passers-by of the danger into which he had fallen.

There are many men in the world who have good reasons for giving such a warning as this. The man who has trod the dark and slippery paths of intemperance, as he sees the young learning to take the first glass of spirits or wine or beer, has good reason to say to them, "Don't step there; for I stepped there and fell down." The man who has indulged in gambling till he is despised by others, and abhorred by himself, has good reason to say to the young when they are entering on the same course, "Don't step there; for I stepped there and fell down."

How many there are to-day, in prisons and convict settlements with reputations ruined and lives blasted, who could say to the young man tempted to enter the paths of dishonesty and wrong-doing, "Don't step there; for I stepped there and fell down."

Let us be warned ourselves, and lift a warning voice to others.—Selected.

Cherish Your Girlhood.

DEAR girls, don't be so often wishing you were grown-up women, that you will neglect your girlhood. In the rush and hurry of these fast times there is danger that you will reach and strain after "young ladyhood" too much. Be girls awhile yet. Be tender, joyous, loving, obedient and industrious. Womanhood, with its privileges and power, its burdens and trials, will come soon enough.

On this point one has wisely said: "Wait patiently, my children, through the whole limit of your girlhood. Go not after womanhood; let it come to you. Keep out of public view. Cultivate refinement and modesty. The cares and responsibilities of life will come soon enough. When they come you will meet them, I trust, as true women should. But oh! be not so unwise as to throw away your girlhood. Rob not yourself of this beautiful season which, wisely spent, will brighten all your future life."