



The Family Circle.

THE SCHOOL OF SORROW.

I sat in the School of Sorrow,
The Master was teaching there,
But my eyes were dim with weeping,
And my heart oppressed with care.

At last, in despair I lifted
My streaming eyes above,
And I saw the Master was watching,
With a look of pitying love.

To the cross before me he pointed,
And I thought that I heard him say
My child, thou must take thy burden,
And learn thy task to-day.

Then kneeling, the cross I lifted
For one glimpse of that face divine,
Had given me strength to bear it
And say "Thy Will, not mine,"

And now may the glowing sunlight
From the heavenly home stream down,
Till the school tasks all are ended,
And the cross exchanged for the crown.

—Selected.

JOE DAVY'S VICTORY.

BY ALDRID HARE.

"I've joined the Church of England Temperance Society, and flung away the bottle."

"I wish, with all my heart, you had."

"Well you've often rated at a fellow for not doing it, and now he has done it there isn't a word of praise for him."

"What have you done?"

"Why, signed teetotal."

Mrs. Davy did not believe this announcement of her husband's. She saw that he was excited, and concluded he had just enough beer to make him lively; in which case he would delight in teasing her. He sat down, and she continued her writing. If Joe Davy had not been a drunkard he would have been a thoroughly happy and prosperous man; at least he had everything this world could give to make him such. Ten years before the time I am writing of he had married, and his father had settled him in a small grocery shop in an ever-growing suburb of one of our large seaport towns. For a short time all went well with him; the business steadily increased; his wife proved an excellent tradeswoman; they were young and strong, and together were able to do a great deal of work. But, unfortunately, Joe Davy had contracted a habit of occasionally drinking more beer than was good for him, which habit was quite unknown to his wife until she had been married to him some months. By degrees these fits of drinking became more and more frequent; poor Mrs. Davy fought against them, but she was powerless, and at last gave it up and applied her whole energies to keeping ruin from their door.

I need not trace the downward track until it had reached the stage of which I am now writing. Suffice it to say that he was more often drunk than sober, that the entire management of the business was left to his wife, and that between her and him there had grown a coldness and reserve which was daily drifting them farther apart from each other. No wonder then that she took little notice of him when he came in and made the above assertion. She was rather surprised that he had come home so early as half-past nine, and still more so when he lighted a candle and went to bed. But she was settling the day's accounts, so only gave it a passing thought.

The following day, Mrs. Davy was extra busy; Christmas time was near, and she had large quantities of fruit to clean and weigh into pounds, so she did not know that her husband never left the house all day; as usual they had their meals separately, and if they happened to be together in the kitchen no words were exchanged. But in the evening when the shop was closed she found him sitting by the fire reading a newspaper, and with his slippers on—a sure sign that he did not intend going out again. Silently she prepared supper, and in silence they sat down to it, and began to eat it. After a short time Joe broke the silence by saying,

"You didn't believe me last night, missis, when I said I'd taken the pledge."

"No, indeed," replied Mrs. Davy. "But is it true?"

"Yes, it's true enough. I and another chap signed last night."

"Shall you keep it?"

"We mean to."

"Whatever made you do it?"

"Why we were lounging about—Street, when we came to the schoolroom lighted up. 'What's going on?' said Will Bateman to a man standing at the door. He answered, 'A meeting.' 'What, missionary?' said Will. 'No, it's about you Hull fellows.' 'Let's go in,' I said, for I thought it was a League meeting, and wanted to hear what they had to say for themselves. Chapman, who was with us, and is always a bit of a coward, said, 'But can you get out again easy?' 'Yes,' said the man, 'only keep close to the door.' And he opened the door into the room; we slipped in and stood close to it. At first we didn't understand what was going on, but after a time Chapman whispered, 'It's a teetotal affair? That's the Rev. Smith in the chair.' 'Let's go.' 'No,' replied Will, 'we've nothing better to do; let's stop and hear their lies.' With that he moved to a form; we followed him, and sat down. I don't know who the man was who was speaking but whoever he was, he had a rare gift that way, for soon we were all listening with our mouths wide open as if his words were food he was going to throw into them. I can't exactly recollect what he said, but I know very soon Will was crying like a bairn, and Chapman was nudging me and saying, 'Let's get out of this place.' I moved further from him. Whereupon he rose and left the room. After a bit, the gentleman stopped speaking and the Rev. Smith got up and asked if any person would sign the pledge. 'I will,' shouted Will, quite loud, and up he got and walked up to the platform. I followed him. He sat down and wrote his name, and then I wrote mine, and then we both walked out of the room. Will went home crying, and I came here, feeling as if I was drunk, though I hadn't tasted a drop all day."

Davy had turned his chair from the table at the beginning of this account, and gazing into the fire, seemed more as if he were going over the scene again to himself rather than relating to another person. He would scarcely have gone on so long had he been able to see his wife. At the first she had laid down her knife and fork, then an elbow had been put on the table for support, and, finally, her head had fallen on her hand, and she was feeling just as she did once when she had fainted away. She put out her other hand to reach a glass of water which was near her plate; the movement recalled her husband to the fact of her being there, and made him look round. He was frightened. Her hand trembled too much to let her hold the glass, and there was enough of her face visible for him to see that it was deadly pale. He went up to her, and putting one arm round her waist, raised her up with the other, saying in a tone of voice she had often heard in years gone by, but in later times, never, "What ails you, Ellen?"

He put the water to her lips, and then, taking her handkerchief out of her pocket, gently bathed her temples with it. She quickly recovered; and directly he saw the danger of fainting had passed, he left her, and returned to his chair. He dared not speak. What could he have said? He felt so guilty before her. She was bewildered and overcome by a sense of relief from a heavy burden. She had often felt that

"The burden laid upon her was greater than she could bear."

and now that it was suddenly and unexpectedly loosed from off her, she felt she could not bear the freedom. There they sat, without moving, neither perceiving that the fire was out, and that the kitchen was becoming very cold. The clock's striking twelve aroused Mrs. Davy. She glanced at her husband. How wretched and forlorn he looked. Certainly an object of pity for any one, and especially for the woman, who, in spite of all, loved him still. She would like to have told him how she loved him, and how deeply thankful she was for this change in him, and she longed, too, to comfort him, and to encourage him, but words would not come; somehow she seemed to be in a nightmare where she

could see, know, and desire, but was powerless to act.

She rose from her chair, and moved the supper things. Action was good for her, and she soon began to feel her ideas clearing. She thought; "He must be told that I forgive him, or perhaps he will doubt it, and be driven back to badness, and then the chance of his reforming may be lost for ever. Oh, my Father, teach me what I ought to say, show me what I ought to do." The next moment an impulse seized her, and she acted on it. She walked up to her husband, put her arms round his neck, and laid her face against his. And that was all. No words of explanation nor forgiveness ever passed between them.

But this was only an armistice; there was yet a great deal of fighting to be done before Mr. and Mrs. Davy might feel sure that the enemy was driven off the ground, and that peace was signed. Happily his work was in his own house, therefore he could keep himself out of temptation's way, and away from the jeers of old companions; but he could not keep himself from craving for the stimulants he had vowed never again to touch, and sometimes the longing drove him to madness, and at such times his irritability of temper was so great that even his long-suffering wife was at the point of losing patience.

At last the climax came. There was one more encounter fiercer than any of the rest, and the victory was won. It was on one very hot summer's evening about six months after Joe Davy had taken the pledge. He had been "very queer" all day, and Mrs. Davy, understanding the symptoms, had watched him with much uneasiness. When the shop was closed she would have liked to have gone for a walk into the country, but dared not risk the letting her husband see and smell a beer shop, so she brought out the account-books, and tried to get him to help her with them. That failed, he would not look at them; and his countenance was so sullen, and his voice so savage when he spoke that she was more afraid for him than she had ever before been. She saw the strait he was in. What could she do to help him out of it? It struck her that perhaps a weak stimulant might assuage the craving for a strong one. Anyway she would try. She shut up the books with the remark, "Settling accounts is too hard work for a hot evening like this," and set about preparing supper. She had sufficient cooked food in the house, but with this she would not be satisfied, so she went into the little back kitchen, where in the summer she had a fire, but which had been let out after it had boiled the kettle for tea, rekindled the fire, and fried some ham and eggs; also she made some strong coffee. All the time she kept up a cheery conversation (at least if a monologue may be called a conversation, for it was entirely sustained by her). When the table was set, he got up, and seemed to turn from the sight of food in disgust. She was standing in a small scullery between the two kitchens, and saw him glance towards the outer door which was close to her. In an instant she fetched the frying-pan, to put it on the sink, and in moving it managed to spill on to the floor some of the melted grease. Of course this had to be cleaned up immediately, and down she went on her knees to scrub and brush. Davy was walking restlessly up and down the front kitchen, and had actually made up his mind to make a rush at the door, and be off, but now he was hindered by his wife's proving a barricade, for she had so placed herself that he must either stride over her, or ask her to make way for him. After a short time he resumed his seat, and when her floor was as clean as she could wish it to be she rose from her kneeling posture, quickly washed her hands, and joined him. She moved the table so near him, that he only had to slightly turn to be in front of it, and there was soon under his nose the savory smell of the ham, as well as the fragrant one of the coffee. The latter tempted him, he raised the cup to his lips, and drained its contents at a gulp. She refilled it; he again emptied it; and this was repeated several times. He would not look at the food. They did not speak, and she dared not move lest he should take advantage of there being a clear course, and rush out of the house. Daylight faded into twilight, which deepened into night, and yet they did not move. The moon rose, and shone full in at the window, cast-

ing her soft, silvery light over a scene calm and peaceful; for the man and his wife were sitting like statues; he with his chair tilted, leaning its back against the wall, his chin resting on his breast; she, with her arms crossed on the table, and her face resting on them. All looked quiet; but what a mighty battle was being fought! A soul was struggling for mastery over the flesh and the devil on one side; on the other a soul was wrestling with its God. Mrs. Davy was praying the prayer of one who feels that in the direst necessity all earthly power is of no avail, but who believes in a Father who is Omnipotent. To him she poured out her soul, begging for the salvation which her poor husband was in such urgent need of.

As time slowly passed, and no ground seemed to be gained, she became desperate, so desperate, that her prayer no longer formed words, she simply looked up to her God in mute agony.

She was aroused by a sob which shook the entire frame of the big strong man, and which ended in a flood of tears. He was saved. He, who was "in all points tempted like as we are," had given him the victory. Never again did that dreadful craving seize him, nor even the desire in a milder form. From that night total abstinence has been easy to him; and his life is now being spent in trying to persuade others to follow his example. He does not labor in vain.—*C. E. T. Chronicle.*

HOW TO AROUSE A MISSIONARY INTEREST.

Rev. C. W. Kilbon, of Zululand, says that one of the ways of arousing missionary interest at home is for the churches and pastors to seek promising and suitable young persons in their respective congregations and set them to thinking in the line of the gospel ministry and mission work. He illustrates this by reference to the Congregational Church in Oakham, Mass., where at least eight young men were led into the ministry during the pastorate of one man, five of whom became either home or foreign missionaries. Many young men are doubtless lost to the ministry and missionary work because they will not put themselves forward. They feel it would be presumptuous, in view of its responsibilities and their natural qualifications. He suggests, also, the importance of the theological seminaries having it a part of their plan to furnish missionary instruction through a special but permanent department. The field of study, he says, is wide enough in range and important enough to warrant the establishment of missionary professorships in each seminary. Pastors at home would be vastly better fitted too for their local work by the training and intelligence gained in such study.

TESTIMONIES WORTH SOMETHING.

The veteran missionary, Rev. James Chalmers, said recently in an address in London: "I have had twenty-one years experience among natives; I have seen the semi-civilized and the civilized; I have lived with the Christian native, and I have lived, dined, and slept with the cannibal. I have visited the islands of the New Hebrides, which I sincerely trust will not be handed over to the tender mercies of France. I have visited the Loyalty Group; I have seen the work of missions in the Samoan Group; I know all the islands of the Society Group; I have lived for ten years in the Hervey Group; I know a few of the groups close on the line, and for at least nine years of my life I have lived with the savages of New Guinea, but I have never yet met with a single man or woman, or with a single people, that your civilization, without Christianity, has civilized." Testimony such as this is worth volumes of theory. A remarkable testimony to the work of the American missionaries in China comes from the pen of Colonel Charles Denby, the American minister at Peking. After visiting every mission in the open ports, he says: "It is idle for any man to decry missionaries or their works. . . . I am not particularly pro-missionary, but as a man I cannot but admire and respect them. I do not address myself to the churches; but, as a man of the world, talking to sinners like myself, I say that it is difficult to say too much good of missionary work in China."