

# "Her Chance."

ABOUT thirty years ago two girls were graduated from the same school in a quiet town in one of the Middle States. Each was clever, good tempered, and attractive, and the daughter of a farmer, who could give to his children a comfortable home, but no fortune.

The mother of one of these girls (we will call her Mary) declared that her girl should "have her chance." An outfit of silk, velvet, and evening dress, Paris hats and jewelry, was provided by selling off part of the family acres; and her mother set out with her on a round of visits to the springs and other fashionable resorts.

The girl was shown off to every eligible young man, precisely as a horse would be exhibited to a buyer, but in vain. The effort was renewed summer after summer, until the mortification and shame which the girl had felt at first were worn away, and she became at heart a hard, vulgar adventurer, whose sole object was to make a brilliant match; in other words to sell herself for a good price.

Just as she was beginning to grow old and sored with disappointment, she succeeded in marrying a man of sixty with a large fortune. His habits were dissolute and his temper intolerable. Her two children, having grown up in an atmosphere of show and pretence, unwarned by a spark of love, truth, or religious faith, naturally were indifferent to their mother. The son became a spendthrift and drunkard, the daughter an almost imbecile, fashionable woman. Mary has the stately house, the servants, the equipages, for which she planned and struggled so many years. But she has nothing more.

Her classmate, leaving school, entered at once into the work and life of her home. She was the friend and companion of father and mother, the teacher of her little sisters.

"She shall be fitted to become a wife and mother," her mother said, "if God sends her that great happiness. But she shall not go out in the world husband hunting. The hate should not chase the hound."

According to this homely philosophy, she remained at home, among her own friends and neighbors, and married a young man who had no wealth, but industry and honesty, whom she heartily loved. They live still in her native village. Their small income goes far there. They have comforts and luxuries; their children are healthy, intelligent, successful men and women, and all devoted lovers of their mother.

Mary sometimes sees her classmate in town, in her old-fashioned country carriage, with rosy cheeks beneath her gray hair, and pities her because she never "had her chance."

Girls, remember your chance in life is something higher and deeper than the chance of being sold as from an auction block to the highest bidder.—*Youth's Companion.*

## How the Parson's Chaise Carried the Town.

"THERE goes that 'ere bell!" said Aunt Samantha, laying down her flat iron and hurrying to the door. "Yes, there she goes!"

Aunt Samantha stood at the door among her vines listening to the mellow tones of the old church-bell that echoed across the fields and then through the forests, and finally died away amid the roar of the surf tumbling on the white, sandy beach.

"Goin' to be another children's temperance meetin'?" soliloquized Aunt Samantha. "Now, I wonder what good that 'ere will do! Here they sell ardent spirits in all the stores, from Squire Tobin's to Abram Dolittle's, and some of our most respectable people, the Milnes and such like have it on their tables. The parson keeps a stirrin' up our people 'bout it, and says if he can't teach the grown-up folks he will take the children. There he goes now! I—I—mean to speak to him."

"Where goin'!" said a heavy male voice behind her. It was the property of John Goodwin, Aunt Samantha's widowed brother, for whom she kept house. He had one child, Philip.

"Goin' to ask the parson about them children's temperance meetin's."

"Let temperance alone," growled John Goodwin. "Some water is best when you don't begin to stir it. Goin' to stir it and it riles tremendously."

If he had only said "rum" is best when let alone, his speech would have been a capital one. He did not say it, though.

Along the road an old chaise went swinging and bobbing, pulled by a sleepy old horse good for a ten-hour nap in the middle of the road any day. The horse was pulled in, gladly halting, when Aunt Samantha with beckoning hand stood at the roadside.

"Good afternoon, Miss Goodwin," was the salutation of a sonorous voice inside the chaise, and a good-humored bright-looking face, rimmed with white

hair, was projected several feet forward from the shadowy recesses of the deep old chaise, advancing at last into the outside light.

"Good afternoon, Mister Tenney." "Anything I can do for you? You all well?"

"Oh! yes, but—but—I jest wanted to say, don't—don't you think you are givin' yourself unnecessary trouble in holdin' these temperance meetin's for the children? An't you just a wearin' yourself out?"

"Do you feel any the worse for them?"

"Oh! my health is good. I rarely have to tell any one I enjoy poor health."

"I don't know who does enjoy that, but don't you worry about me. I'm good for it."

"But—but," said Aunt Samantha shifting her position and moving on the real point of attack, "does it do any good, this stirrin' up things? I don't believe the squire fancies it. You know how I feel; I'm not agin temperance. There's the children—now I speak plain, Mr. Tenney but you know my motives—what good does it do to fill the children's minds with thoughts 'bout drunkards, and such things? Why not get the drunkards together and gin 'em a dose?"

"Ahem!" Mr. Tenney cleared his throat, and that to him meant the ejection of any lumps of hard feeling that might be choking his voice. He knew how to control his feelings. He had been in Soundbury twenty years, and, as some one told him, he "wouldn't have stayed a year if he hadn't been a lard man to pick a fuss with." He was quiet but resolute, and planned and managed to have his way in the end.

"Now, Miss Goodwin," said the parson in a tone so pleasant and kindly that it made Aunt Samantha "awful sorry" she had said anything—"now, Miss Goodwin, of course your meaning is very kind, but, see here—old drunkards won't come near me. They will listen to others, but somehow I can't make them. They'd tar me and ride me out of town if I gave out a meeting for them. I don't care for the tarring, but you see I couldn't do them any good in that case. Squire Tobin might persuade them or some big speaker waving a green banner and shouting 'Fire!' might attract them. Others of our people I can't make over and persuade. However, I can take the children and influence them, and by and by they will be the parents, the citizens, the voters, and through them I can accomplish somethin'. Yes, Miss Goodwin, it won't be done in my day, but when I am gone I expect some day my chaise will carry the town. Good afternoon," bowing in his affable way. He bowed after a fashion, too, that made Aunt Samantha think she was as good as Victoria of England. (How Aunt Samantha liked that, democrat though she was.)

"What did he say?" asked John, the growler. When he had heard his sister's answer he said: "How 'dicklerious, the parson's old chaise carrying the town! Why, it will hardly carry him, let alone the town. ha! ha!" John laughed heartily at his own wit, Samantha muttering, "You sha'n't abuse him, John; he is good as gold."

Yes, many people thought him "good as gold," though they didn't always relish his opinions. People often endure the ideas of the reformer because they respect the character of the man.

The parson quietly adhered to his purpose. His old chaise went bobbing about in the children's cause, so that the chaise and the children's temperance meetings were closely identified. The old church-bell kept swinging, repeatedly calling the children together. By and by the chaise halted for a long, long rest, and the bell that had turned over merrily now tolled out in slow, sad, sweet notes the tidings that Parson Tenney had gone to his long home.

"A good man left us," moaned Aunt Samantha, wiping her eyes.

"Yes," somberly echoed John, "though rabid in some things."

"Your Pl lip thinks a lot of him," said the weeping Samantha.

"Yes, all the young fry went arter him. Philip has the parson's ideas."

The years went on—five, ten, fifteen. Aunt Samantha became an old woman and John an old drunkard.

"Nothin' will save him," moaned the sister to her neighbor, Mrs. Billings, "if they can't shut the saloons. Shut them, and you shut John's mouth."

"Well, I've got good news for you, Samantha," replied Mrs. Billings.

"Why, what is it?"

"They have formed a society, and it is made up of youngish men and youngish women, and they're a-goin' to agitate and agitate, they say, till they get people to vote no-license and carry the town. So there's a 'crumb of comfort' for ye."

Mrs. Billings brought another "crumb of comfort" the next day.

"Samantha, what do you suppose they call the new society?" Parson

Tenney's Wide-Awakes, and John's Philip is the president."

A third "crumb of comfort" was brought the third day.

"Samantha, what do you suppose they've got for an emblem on that 'ere society's banner?" Parson Tenney's old chaise.

"I'd gin a lot to see that," cried Samantha.

See it she did with her own eyes, that were not too old to afford the sight.

The "Parson Tenney Wide-Awakes" turned out one day carrying that beloved banner. People thought of the old clergyman's words. They felt his influence. They crowded the meetings that the society held and they filled the ballot-box with no license votes on election day.

"Wall, I give in. Parson Tenney's chaise has turned out big enough to carry the town," said John Goodwin, among the first to confess.

He was among the first to reform.—*E. A. Rand, in National Temperance Advocate.*

## Mary's Trial.

"GIVE me just one more chance, Mary; only one. Try me six months, and if, during that time, you ever see me the worse for wine, give me up, and I won't complain of the sentence. Don't be hard upon me, there's my kind hearted little girl."

"I dare not, I dare not, indeed," said Mary, sadly, "if you will abstain totally I will marry you gladly at the end of a year, but if not, I dare not link my fate with yours. You know, dear Harry, when you once taste wine you cannot resist the tempter; you are older, and better, and wiser than I in most things, and I do not want to preach to you, but do be persuaded by me in this. Give up wine and intoxicating drinks altogether; make the effort once, and you will never regret it."

"And be the laughing stock of all my friends!" interrupted Harry, rising from his chair, an angry spot glowing upon his cheek. "No, Mary; if I am not good enough for you as I am, I am very sorry, but it can't be helped; I shall not make a fool of myself to please you, and if you care so little for me as to turn me off because I don't quite come up to your absurd ideas of temperance and sobriety, I hope you will soon meet with some one else more deserving of your affection."

With these words, Harry Sinclair took up his hat, and strode haughtily from the room. With quick steps he left the house, and walked up the street; he was angry with Mary, and angry with himself. "I wish that confounded champagne had been at the bottom of the channel," he muttered, "but she can't care for me if she will throw me over for such a trifle, it is all a whim, and she will repent her hasty words and be all forgiveness and amiability if I keep away for a few days. She must forgive me and call me back when the fit of vexation is gone, and in future I will try to keep out of her way when I have had too much. Confound the wine! What an ass I was to call last evening; but Mary will get over it right enough, if all I have heard of woman's constancy and endurance be true."

Ah, Harry Sinclair, you do not know the little heart you so confidently called your own, only an hour ago. Look back into that room, and one sight of Mary's face will convince you that the sin you think so lightly of, must prove forever an indispensible barrier between you and her pure young life. Mary stood long gazing at the door through which Harry had passed, and she felt that they had parted for ever. Not without much sorrowful thought, had she decided upon her conduct that day, for Harry had won the first warm love of her girlish heart, and it was very hard to bid him go. Affection pleaded a thousand excuses for his folly, and hope whispered, "he will reform in time, experience and your love will surely win him into the paths of virtue."

For a moment, when she heard Harry's retreating steps, the pleading voice nearly prevailed, and she rose to call him back, but a disgraceful scene came before her mental vision, the same Harry, her Harry, as she had witnessed him the night before, with flushed face, disordered hair, and unsteady steps, and heard the dear voice tremble in the maudlin accents of intoxication. "Oh! no, no, I dare not," the poor girl murmured, bowing her head upon her clasped hands, "I will never be a drunkard's wife, so help me, God!"

When she raised her head the trial was past, the victory won, and although for weeks and months she mourned over Harry's unworthiness and her own blighted hopes, with a keen pang of sorrow and disappointment, her thoughtful nature could not understand; her resolution never again wavered. Five years have passed since that day, and Mary Lee is now a happy

wife and a mother. Harry Sinclair loved the wine cup better than his betrothed bride, and they parted, as we have seen. Three years afterwards Mary married Arthur Lyndhurst, and, blessed by her husband's love in a happy, peaceful home, has learned to thank God for giving her strength to decide rightly in the great trial of her youth.

Harry Sinclair, though deeply mortified and a good deal grieved at Mary's rejection, for he really loved the gentle girl as much as it was in his selfish nature to love any one, soon sought and won a less conscientious, or, as he said, a less fastidious bride.

Lucy Dale was an orphan, living with a relative who cared little for her happiness, and still less for her principle. When Harry Sinclair offered his hand, Mr. Dale gave immediate consent, and congratulated Lucy and himself upon a match so eligible in every worldly point of view, as it appeared to be, never troubling himself to inquire into the young man's private character, indeed, had he known it, it is very probable he would have seen nothing either to censure or to fear.

Lucy was thankful for the chance of leaving her unhappy home, and though she did not know sufficient of Harry Sinclair to love him well, she had no scruples in accepting him for her husband. They were married, and went on the continent for a month or two, during which time they tasted of every pleasure that came in their way. The ceaseless variety, excitement and novelty, charmed poor Lucy into transient happiness, and Harry, proud of the attention and admiration his young wife excited, was as devoted to her as any lover-husband could be.

But they had not been at home a week before the quiet of domestic life became intolerable to Harry. One after another his old haunts and companions were sought out; but with even increased avidity for the short respite, he returned to the unlawful pleasures he had indulged in before his marriage.

Neglect and unkindness, harsh tempers and often harsh words, wearisome days and nights became poor Lucy's position, and she pined and drooped under the unaccustomed trial. Her life had ever been clouded by the selfish negligence of her guardian, but she had suffered from no absolute unkindness and was free to spend her time how and when she pleased; now she must bear the consequences of her husband's intemperance, his peevish, spiteful words, his selfish, exacting demands upon her time and patience.

O! young girls, pause before you take upon yourself the fearful responsibilities, the awful doom of a drunkard's wife: you who have been brought up amidst scenes of intemperance as many, alas, amongst the most delicately nurtured in the land are brought up, be warned by what you have seen. Let no consideration of wealth, no promise of happiness, no prospects of escaping present trials induce you to marry a man addicted to drinking. Be assured no lot however painfully cast, however full of sorrows and anxieties can be so hard to bear as that of a drunkard's wife. The friends, the children, the servants of such a man may suffer, but it is upon the wife of his bosom that the terrible curse most surely falls. Before the world, and even his own family, he may conduct himself with propriety and consideration, but she must have all the ill-humor he is ashamed or afraid to show to others, this can tell the sorrow, the disappointment and dread she must daily endure! Sorrows too bitter and varied to be described, disappointment in all the bright hopes of her youth, and dread a continual dread for herself and her children, and most of all for the wretched cause of it all.

You who are blessed with good and temperate parents, who have never beheld your homes the scene of midnight revels, nor heard there the bacchanalian song, thank God for His mercy, take warning by the experience of others, and shrink from the society of those who love such scenes, as you would from some deadly plague. Use your influence, as women can and should, to keep your brothers and sons from their dangerous haunts, make home pleasant to them and your own society as agreeable as you can, and be sure you will be blessed in your generation, and reap a rich reward.

But to return to our story. We have said little about Mary's happy home, though it would be a pleasant task to paint her joys, in contrast to the sorrows of Lucy Sinclair. The scope of this story would not permit it, so suffice it to say she was richly blessed. One evening Arthur Lyndhurst came home to dinner with an unusual cloud upon his brow; Mary noticed it with the quick eye of affection, but, attributing it to some business anxiety, made no remark, feeling assured that if there was anything she should know, her husband would certainly tell her at a fitting opportunity.

When the cloth was withdrawn and the servant gone, he said, "Dear Mary, I have some bad tidings for you. Is my little wife brave enough to hear them?"

"Brave enough for anything, Arthur, that does not seriously affect you or my baby boy."

"Well, darling, I was called this morning to the death-bed of an old friend of yours."

"Who? Not Harry Sinclair?"

"Yes, Mary."

Mary's head sank upon her hands with a mournful cry, "Oh, not dead! Not called to his last account unreclaimed!"

Arthur passed his arm caressingly round his wife, and drew her head upon his shoulder, "God is merciful, dear Mary," he said, "We must not limit His power or His grace, but it is very sad. You know how wild Harry has been lately, more reckless, if possible, I think, than before his marriage. Last night he and young Yates were coming home late, from a wine party at Grainger's. Harry drove a rather spirited horse, and, dashing carelessly round a turn in the road, ran up against a bank, and upset the trap. James Yates escaped with two broken ribs, but Harry was picked up insensible and carried home. Dr. Taylor was with him all night, and this morning his poor young wife, wishing for further assistance, sent for me; I was with him for two hours, but nothing could be done, his brain was injured, and he died at four o'clock."

"And his wife?"

"She is nearly distracted, I never saw such violent grief; and what is so painful, nothing can be said to comfort her. At such a time, in the presence of such an awful visitation, common-place expressions of sympathy and condolence seem to me worse than mockery, and how can we bid her look to the future with hope?"

Mary shuddered and clung to her husband, and for some time she remained in awe-stricken silence. Arthur continued, "you must go and see her, Mary, in a few days, she will need a woman's sympathy, and they tell me she has neither mother nor sister, and very few friends here, as Harry's reckless habits debared people from visiting the house."

"I might have been in her position if God had not preserved me," said Mary raising her tearful eyes to her husband's face. "I once thought that if I married Harry, my love might reclaim him. It would have been a fatal mistake, for if his pretty pleasing young wife could not win him from vice, how could I?"

"God has been very merciful to us both, darling, and we must thank Him by devoting our lives more entirely to His service. When I looked at poor Harry's lifeless frame this morning, I thought his fate might have been my own. I was very easily led into temptation when I was younger, Mary, and when I first went to College, was, I grieve to tell you, a sharer in many a disgraceful scene of riot and intemperance; but God's grace and my dear mother's prayers saved me. One morning after a particularly riotous wine party, I and Herbert Grey, (your friend Herbert Grey) horrified at the depth of sin into which we had been led, step by step, made a solemn resolution to flee the tempter altogether, and signed the pledge; most of our companions laughed at us, and many treated us over after with dislike and contempt, but we never lost a true friend, and I thereby gained one worth all the rest. I owe to that step, through God, my precious wife; for, as long as I was one of that wild set, your brother never sought me; after that he became my warmest friend, and you know the consequences of that friendship. Nearly every day of my life I have thanked God for the decision of that morning; and in the midst of to-day's heart-rending scene, offered a fervent thanksgiving for my darling wife and myself. Dry your tears now, my dearest one, and let us leave this sad event in God's hands."

Mary tried cheerfully to obey, and if her brow was saddened and her joy chastened for some time by the shadows of the past, our readers will believe it only tended to enhance the sense of present security, and to increase, if possible, her love and reverence for the good and noble husband God had given her in the place of the mistaken choice of her youth.

Lucy Sinclair found in them both true friends. Mary's gentle nature was to trust and lean upon, and Lucy learned many sweet lessons hitherto quite unknown, from her earnest piety and simple faith. Harry had left her with one little son, and him she resolved to bring up in habits of sobriety and virtue; young as he is now, the salutary effects of that careful training are discernable, and we trust his mother will find in his growing manhood, sources of joy and gratification unknown to her in the few troubled years of her married life.—*E. W.*