



### Temperance Department.

#### BOB'S TALKING LEG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHALK YOUR OWN DOOR."

"That wooden leg of yours must be rather inconvenient."

"Maybe, sir; but I walk with it better than when I had the nateral pair complete."

Bob was our crossing-sweeper, and a sort of public messenger—self-established, but recognized in time as one of the institutions of the Bank. The road just opposite our main entrance was rather wide for a country town, and it was here Bob kept a path carefully swept in all weathers.

When employed by the Bank or one of the tradesmen with a message, Bob would leave his broom leaning against the letter-box, and go his way quite certain that the most mischievous boy in the place would not interfere with it. Bob was so good-natured and kind to all that even his broom was respected.

He was a bit of a character, and generally wore a post-boy's cap and an old red hunting coat when on duty. But these were only sort of trade signs, and work done, Bob put aside his "uniform" and assumed the garb of a respectable laborer.

And a laborer he had been once upon a time—a man well-known in the town, and not a little notorious for his drinking; but he shall tell his own story. Listen to him as he relates it to me.

"Walk better with a wooden leg than with two sound ones!" I said; "how can that be? I cannot fancy a wooden leg would be better than either of mine."

"I was not speaking of your legs, sir," replied Bob, dryly, "but of the pair I had. They were not given to walking very straight."

"That must have been your fault, Bob," I said.

"Well, yes, sir," he said, "of course it was; but I was speaking in a sort of meddlesor, you see."

"I hear you are fond of metaphor," I returned; "but tell me about this leg of yours. How did you get it?"

"Drink gave it to me," replied Bob; "and I must say that it ain't very grateful to drink in return; for although it makes noise enough in ordinary, it knocks double as loud whenever I'm nigh a public-house. It says 'Don't' as plainly as you can, sir—meaning, don't go in. I was once nearly led back into the old ways and was going into 'The King's Head' with a friend as I hadn't seen for years, but this leg wouldn't go in; t'other went over the step right enough, but the wooden one tripped up, and down I went. 'All right,' I say, 'you knows how I got you, and I'll go back again,' and out I went, dragging my friend with me.

"Of course," he added, "I don't mean to say as the leg knows what it's doing—that's my meddlesor way of speaking; but it's there, and it is always stumping out the same story, 'Don't drink,' 'Don't Drink.' Just you listen to it.

He stumped rapidly up and down in front of me, and really the leg and his sound foot gave out sounds not unlike the words he had spoken.

"You hear, sir," he said, "the wooden leg says 'Don't' and t'other says 'drink.' Put 'em both together and you've got good advice—'Don't drink.'"

"Undoubtedly," I replied; "But will you tell me how you came to lose your limb? It is a quiet day, and you are not likely to be interrupted for a few minutes."

"It's soon told," said Bob. "Eight years ago I was a bricklayer's laborer—a smart, active fellow when I hadn't a drinking fit on; but I used to break out for the week and fortnight at a time, and leave my work, and starve them at home in the way of drunkards generally. When the drink's in, kindness and love and industry is out, which is a piece of meddlesor I'll thank you to make a note of."

I promised not to forget it, and, with his hands crossed on the top of his broom, he went on with his story.

"When sober, I worked as a runner. I

headed a gang of laborers, and timed 'em as it were. If there isn't a runner they don't keep up to the work, and get into confusion. One day, when I was a little the worse for drink, I went to the works, and kept at it all right until eleven o'clock, when a man from a public-house close by came round. I had two pints of him, and that, with what I had taken, finished me. The next time I went up the ladder I lost my hold, and the sky seemed to turn right over; then I heard a shout, and I lost my senses.

"When I came to," he said, "I found myself in a bed at the hospital, with a sensation of being as helpless as a child. At first I didn't feel any pain, but soon my leg began to throb, and I was going to put my hand down, when the nurse as was close by stops me.

"'Don't touch it,' she said; 'you've injured yourself.' They gave me some medicine, and it soothed me, and I went off to sleep. When I woke again several grave-looking gentlemen were standing about the bed talking, but they stopped as soon as it was known I was awake. I asked for my wife, and they said she would come soon to see me. To cut a long story short, sir, one of the kindest told me that my leg must be taken off, or I should lose my life.

"'And what am I to do in the world with one leg, sir?' I asked.

"He told me to leave all to the wisdom of God; but I didn't know much of religion then, and found no comfort in it. That night they gave me something, and I lost my senses. While I was in that state my leg was taken off, and I shan't forget the feeling when I came round and found it gone.

"And yet it wasn't exactly the feeling in the leg that told me so, for at first I fancied it was still there; and what is more, I feel it now, and a very curious thing it is. But I'll get back to the hospital, where, after my leg was taken off, my poor wife used to come and cry over me as if I had been one of the best of husbands, instead of one of the worst; but women, speaking in meddlesor, are angels on earth, they are.

"With my wife a gentleman used to come. He was grave and quiet and kind, and I recognized him through having often seen him down our street visiting the sick and poor. I wouldn't have nothing to do with him in the old days, but lying there maimed and helpless, I was glad enough to listen to him, and I'm thankful to this day that I did so; for there I first really understood what salvation through the Saviour meant for me and other sinners, and learnt to see the blessings of a sober life.

"I was a long time getting well, for my constitution was terribly set up, and it was supposed at one time that I could not live; but prayer and faith saved me, and I got about at last full of good resolves and hopes for the future.

"Being only a laborer, I wasn't fit for much with a wooden leg; so after casting about, I thought I'd take this crossing—the man who had it afore having just died of drink—and try to get a little public messengering. The young gentlemen inside the bank has their little joke, and calls me the 'Dot and carry one,' but I don't mind that. I shall not object to my leg so long as it keeps on saying 'Don't,' and the other leg may say 'drink' as often as it likes—Don't drink. I've told lots of people what my legs say, and some as do drink thinks it funny to call me 'The man with the talking leg.'

"And this wooden leg have done some good to others too. When I came out of the hospital and stumped round to my mates, and told 'em what I'd suffered and that I'd signed the pledge, five of 'em did the same, and three have kept it to this day. The other two went back, and one is dead and t'other nobody knows where. He left a wife and three children behind him.

"When first I took my stand here I got hardly any messages. I had a bad name and people mistrusted my leg, but when they got to know that it was a leg that wouldn't go into a public-house, work began to roll in. On Saturday I'm running about all day, and I lose a lot at the crossing no doubt; but the messenger money is fairly earned, while a shilling a day gained at the crossing is very fair pay. I sweep it in the morning about seven, then again at nine, and so on every two hours if I am here, and if you put it all together you won't make more than an hour's fair work of it. I like the messengering, as it's honest labor, and I'm trusted, and it fits in with t'other, so that I'm hardly ever idle."

"And what do you make per week?" I asked.

"One way and another about as much as I did as a laborer," Bob replied; "and the missus does a bit of washing and clear-starching." (Bob himself was renowned for the linen he wore), "and we've got three children, and a little picture of a home. Mr. Sawyer, the photographer, he took me here one morning, and he put a lot of my pictures in his window. I've got one at home he gave me, but it ain't quite right. He ought to have done the jacket red, and it came out white; but the leg it took splendid, and that's the chief pint. They do tell me that the publicans hate the very sound of my leg, as the noise it makes is a sort of accusation against 'em, and I do know that it is often cast into their teeth by angry customers.

"So you see, sir," said Bob, in conclusion, "that I walk better in every way since I had this wooden leg, and I'm content to travel so until it shall please God to call me away to Heaven where Jesus has perfected all things, and where He will reign forever."

A voice from a house on the opposite side called Bob from me, and I walked away, musing upon what I had heard. The story was not without profit to me, and I trust it will be of benefit to the reader who has yet to realize the deadly work drink is everywhere doing in this fair land of ours.—*British Workman.*

### THE DRINK TRAFFIC AND TAXATION.

When an opponent of Permissive Bills, local option schemes, and other proposals for the extinction of the liquor traffic, finds himself at a loss for an argument in favor of the present system, which lines our principal streets with public-houses, and plants one at every corner, he almost invariably takes refuge in the plea that a gigantic liquor traffic is, at all events, a good thing for the public Treasury. Of course, it is the fact that the revenue derived from the trade in intoxicants is enormous. "Aye," exclaims the defender of things as they are, "what would you do without it?" This is generally regarded as an extinguisher. The other day Mr. Sheridan, M.P., found himself debarred from attending a licensed victuallers' dinner, and as he appears to have felt it desirable that he should send something more than a bare intimation of his inability to be present, he wrote in condemnation of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Permissive Bill. Then he said: "But should such a bill pass, from what source could a Minister make up the loss to revenue? No Government would stand a day that proposed to put these duties on tea, sugar, tobacco, or articles of food. Whence, then, could the millions come from? Income tax alone could supply them. But would the people submit to such enormous taxation—to strain all the resources of the nation so violently that no margin, no elasticity, would be left for the exigencies of any sudden necessity? No, they would not. It should be the policy of the licensed victuallers to induce Mr. Gladstone to renew his intention of abolishing the income tax. Then you would see the end of the Permissive question, unless private subscriptions would provide the vast funds necessary to make up the loss of duty and the fund for compensation." A statement fuller of fallacies it would be difficult to construct. To say that the income tax alone could be made to supply the millions that are now extracted from the liquor traffic is preposterous, and the idea that if Mr. Gladstone would "renew his intention of abolishing the income tax" there would be an end of "the Permissive question" is farcical. There are a hundred ways in which the loss of revenue might be made up, the most just and least oppressive of which, perhaps, would consist in a revision of the land tax.

There are many points which Mr. Sheridan, and those who hold with him the view to which we are calling attention, ought to consider before they conclude to be insuperable the revenue difficulty that troubles their minds. The Government now receives more than thirty millions per annum from wine, spirits, malt, and license duties; and there is no doubt that as all these duties are collected through the trade, fifty per cent must be added for traders' profits. All these taxes are as capital invested in the business, and are made to yield at least as much as we have stated. On account of taxation alone,

therefore, the people are paying forty-five millions a year for their liquor. The adoption of the Permissive Bill by the people—and not merely, as Mr. Sheridan seems to suppose, its enactment by Parliament—would, of course, put an end to this gigantic payment. But it would not therefore be necessary to raise forty-five millions from other sources. The Government only get thirty millions, and by collecting that amount direct from the people, instead of through the trade, fifteen millions would be saved at a single stroke. Mr. Sheridan evidently never thought of this. Besides, the abolition of the liquor traffic would be immediately followed by a decrease in the public expenditure. Millions per annum would be saved on our police forces, gaols, workhouses, and lunatic asylums. There would be an immediate and a growing decrease in local expenditure, and therefore in the rates, so that the tax-payer would gain every way. Then there would be the advantage, in the more direct taxation, of making the people to know and feel what they were really paying for the purposes of Government, and a far more economical expenditure might be expected to follow.

In saying what we have said, it must not be supposed that we are advocating the total and immediate suppression of the liquor trade. We believe that to be wholly impossible; but we are anxious to show that the revenue difficulty need not stand in the way of even sweeping changes. It is monstrous to contend—as Mr. Sheridan, by implication, contends—that we must continue to endure drunkenness, and the rivers of evil which flow from it, merely because some fresh scheme of taxation would be required. To take up that position would be to preclude ourselves from doing anything toward diminishing what is on all hands admitted to be one of the greatest curses with which England is scourged, for at least half the trade, and therefore half the revenue, is due, not to the moderate use of alcoholic drinks, but to their gross abuse.—*Leeds Express.*

### WHY NOT.

"There's no use trying; I know I can't do it," pleaded a son when urged by his father to go forward in a certain line of duty.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," solemnly repeated the father, at the same time thrusting a generous pinch of fine-cut into his mouth.

"Then, father, why don't you stop chewing tobacco?" was the quick, if not quite respectful rejoinder, of the lad.

Why not, indeed? We have heard a great many Christian men mourn over their inability to break away from old-time habits in the use of the weed. We ask, with the boy: Is not the grace of God sufficient for this thing?—*Church and Home.*

A NOTABLE PAUPER died a few weeks ago in Charlton work-house, England, at the age of sixty-four. His name was Charles Cartwright. He was a man of education, and had once possessed wealth. He had run through two fortunes, one of \$200,000, and one of \$400,000, spending the money chiefly in ostentatious living, and when utterly destitute had gone to the work-house, where he lived quietly and contentedly for many years, earning a few luxuries for himself by writing poems for the country papers and sermons for neighboring clergymen. Occasionally his friends would take him away, and grant him an allowance; but their efforts were always useless, as he instantly resumed his old habits, frequented the dearest restaurants, smoked the most expensive cigars, and drove about in cabs. At last he died in the work-house, having never, the clerk thought, been unhappy, though the chairman on that point snubbed the clerk, asking if he supposed that any contented man would ever write sermons.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever.