



## Be Ye Sober!

(Eliza Cook.)

'Be ye sober!' if ye covet  
Healthy days and peaceful nights;  
Strong drink warpeth those who love it  
Into sad and fearful sights.

'Be ye sober!' cheeks grow haggard,  
Eyes turn dim, and pulse tide blood  
Runs too fast, or crumbleth laggard  
When there's poison in the flood.

Shun the 'dram' that can but darken  
When its vapor gleam has fled;  
Reason says—and ye must hearken—  
'Lessened drink brings double bread.'

Though your rulers may neglect ye,  
'Be ye sober!' in your strength!  
And they must and shall respect ye,  
And the light shall dawn at length.

But let none cry out for freedom  
With a loud and feverish breath  
While they let a foul cup lead them  
To the slavery of death.

—Selected.

## 'It Did Hurt!'

(By Rev. Charles Herbert, in the 'Alliance  
News and Temperance Reformer'.)

'And you really mean it, doctor?' said Jim  
Banks, unbelievably.

'Mean it! I should just think I do. I tell  
you that without a doubt, if you don't give  
up this drinking, you'll live perhaps a couple  
of years at the outside.'

'And if I do?'

'Then I should think it likely with good  
food and regular hours at night you may live  
many years.'

'I shall 'ave to give it up all together, then,'  
grumbled the unwilling man. 'I ain't one of  
them as can have a pint a day and no more  
like.'

'Well, why not?' sharply queried the doc-  
tor. 'You've been without it three weeks now,  
and you've got over it. So you'll be nothing  
less than a born fool if you start again.'

'All right!' exclaimed Jim, suddenly, 'I'll  
give it up, you see.' And the doctor, looking  
incredulous, left the room.

Jim Banks had been a hard drinker for  
many years. He was a master builder, tak-  
ing his work by contract, but there was not  
a laborer in his employ that was on a lower  
level than he. It need not have been, either,  
for he was a man with a slab forehead, and  
restless eyes that told of the busy brain with-  
in. He had made his way by his superior  
gifts from a mere laborer himself, and mar-  
ried the daughter of a highly respectable man  
in the little town of Lockton. They might  
have been very happy, with their boy and girl,  
for the boy was quick and intelligent and won  
golden opinions at school, and the girl had  
been educated far beyond her station, and was  
the very apple of her father's eye. But when  
Jim staggered home at night in drink, the  
drink always set free an abusive and filthy  
tongue; and the children, especially his girlie,  
shrank out of his way. As usual, the habit  
produced the very opposite man to the real  
one, for a quieter, more naturally reserved,  
even gentle man than Jim when sober it would  
have been hard to find. The years had rolled  
on one by one, till fourteen had elapsed and  
left his wife grey and bitter-faced with the  
open shame of it all, for in Lockton every-  
body knew everyone else's business and dis-  
cussed Mrs. Banks's burden, scornfully,  
concerning her husband, pityingly, concerning the  
wife.

She had set up a laundry on her own ac-  
count sooner than be dependent on his er-  
atic earnings, and out of what she made she,

with her father's assistance, had done quite as  
well for the children as she might if her hus-  
band had been more help. But she could not  
save them from the disgrace. She could send  
Elsie to a splendid school at Setham-on-Sea,  
the big town near at hand, but she could not  
stand between her and the pride-stabs the  
child received if her father met her in the  
town and drunk as he was, spoke to her  
when she was with some of her school com-  
panions. No mortal language existed that  
could picture her frenzy when Elsie came  
home and sobbed over the shame that she felt.

At length Providence had cried 'Check!' to  
her husband's career. It had nearly been a  
finish to the game. He had been very ill, and  
his life was despaired of; but his wife had  
nursed him, marvelling if at last they were  
going to be free from the shadow that had  
darkened the home for so long; yet all the  
time wishing that the man she used to care  
for might not go unrepentant to his grave.  
And now he had pulled through she had  
nothing to look forward to but the heart-  
fretting copy of the past.

'You can get down a bit to-morrow, the doc-  
tor says, Jim,' she announced, mechanically,  
climbing the stairs to the room where for  
three weeks he had lain restlessly, a terrible  
handful to nurse, and yet, ill as he was, not  
half the trouble that he caused when he was  
well.

'So he told me,' he said, surlily; 'and he  
thinks that in another fortnight, if I'm care-  
ful, I shall be able to go to work.'

'Yes,' she answered, in a quiet, matter-of-  
fact tone; 'and then I suppose we shall have  
the old story over again.'

'Not me!' he responded. 'I ain't fool enough  
to go and throw away my life, and the doc.  
says he'll give me only two years if I break  
out again.'

'All right!' she said. 'Then if I'm here  
three months before the two years are up I'll  
see about getting the mourning ready.'

'Yer don't believe I'll keep off it?' he chal-  
lenged.

'Not you!' she said.

'Very well,' he answered, sturdily. 'Those  
that live longest will see the most.'

If anything were wanted to complete the  
effect of the doctor's warning, the scepticism  
of his wife as to his powers of resistance sup-  
plied it. There is a considerable strain of  
sheer cussedness in most men, and Jim Banks  
was an Essex man to boot, so he came down-  
stairs and got about amongst his fellow-men  
with a grim, set look around his lips. Those  
of his friends who had known him in his  
youthful days, when he went in a good deal  
for boxing, knew that look. It meant that  
his fighting spirit was roused, and he would  
fight to a finish. And he did.

If the struggle were a hard one, no one  
ever knew it; Jim unburdened himself to  
never a soul, only sometimes he would get  
home extra early and take his little Elsie on  
his knee and sit by the fire for an hour, never  
saying a word; and once she showed her  
mother a bruise on her arm that her father's  
tight grip of her had caused, and Mrs. Banks's  
sympathy was stirred, not for the girl, but  
for the man who made the bruise, for she was  
beginning dimly to understand that a fight  
was on.

But the winter time was soon over, and  
with the spring-leap Jim Banks became a  
new man. He had always a perfect passion  
for gardening, and he was in their garden  
now, early before he left and as late as he  
could see; and being one of those men who  
could do nothing by halves, he took to the  
culture of his flowers as he had taken to  
drink, and the weeks fled on apace, and the  
garden became the talk of the whole neighbor-  
hood. He had gone mad over it, and spared  
no expense nor pains. The very rooms in  
the house were filled with the choicest plants  
he could buy, and nothing made him happier  
than to send some choice specimens by Elsie  
as a present to her school. But bitter past  
experience prevented Mrs. Banks from indulg-  
ing many hopes; and she only marvelled  
when the stage-interlude of this garden-  
orchestra would be over and the curtain  
would ring up on the old scenes again.

In her own mind she gave him till Christ-  
mas. That would be the end, as at last  
Christmas he had had his illness after a  
wilder break-out than she had ever known.

and she waited for the coming of that festive  
season with a sinking heart.

It was Christmas Eve, and Jim came home  
later than usual, giving his wife an hour or  
two's scare. But he was perfectly sober, and  
the first thing he said was:

'Moy's brought the coal yet?'

'No,' she said; 'what coal?'

But just then there came a thumping on  
the door, and there stood the coalman with  
two tons of coal for Mrs. Banks.

'My Christmas present ter yer, missis,' said  
Jim.

And so taken aback was his wife that she  
forgot to thank him. Perhaps it was the lump  
in her throat that choked it back. But Jim  
sat down by the fire and waited, while the  
shed was filled as full of coal as its owner  
was once filled with liquor.

'Sit down,' he said to his wife. 'I want ter  
speak ter you.' And he fumbled in his pocket.

'I got this for sonny,' he pursued, showing  
her a silver watch. 'And there's another in  
the other pocket for Elsie. And here's a gold  
brooch for you.'

'Must have cost a sight of money,' she said,  
awkwardly.

'Better nor doctor's bills, nor undertaker's,'  
he jerked out. 'I don't think as how you'll  
want that mourning next year. That's all  
drink money, and so's the coal.'

'You must have saved a lot, I know,' she  
said. 'But haven't you left nothing for your-  
self?'

'Oh, my share's the flowers, and the prizes  
I got. And I want something else.'

'What's that?'

'Why, I want you to own up as how you  
were wrong. I can keep away from the  
drink, can't I? There's the proof, ain't it?  
Two ton of coal, that brooch, them watches,  
and my flowers! Ain't you satisfied?'

She laid one hand on his shoulder uncon-  
sciously as she asked:

'Was my saying that what made you do  
it?'

'Jest at first,' he said; 'leastways, you and  
the doc., but after a bit I felt a different  
man like, and folks seemed different to me.  
It used to be "Jim," and now it's Mr. Banks.  
Didn't know at first that I'd keep it on after  
I'd proved to you that I could do it, Sarah,  
but I ain't a-going back to plain "Jim" no  
more, and "Jim" drunk at that. Will you  
own up you were wrong?'

'Yes, Jim. I'll own up I was wrong for  
once. But don't I wish that crowds of poor  
wives had a chance to be wrong in the same  
kind o' way.'

'Poor things!' he said. And then he was  
astounded to see his self-contained wife sud-  
denly give way and rock to and fro weeping.

'Why!' he cried; 'what's wrong now?'

'You—you said "poor things,"' she sobbed.  
'And that's what folks used to say about us.  
And, oh, Jim, Jim! It did hurt!'

'In order to live, the American saloon must  
have at least one hundred thousand boys  
every year.'

## Disregarding Advice.

'Be sure, Herbert,' said a father to his  
son, 'not to go beyond your depth in the bay;  
the surface looks very fair and sparkling,  
but there is an ugly eddy beneath that may  
prove too strong for you.'

'How do you know, father?' asked Herbert.

'I have tried it,' was the reply. 'It nearly  
overcame me; but I could swim and so got  
beyond it. Remember what I have told you,  
and beware of the undertow.'

Herbert went into bathe, and was very  
careful for some time to keep near the  
shore. At last he thought, and said to his  
companions, 'It cannot be very dangerous  
here; it as smooth as glass, and I could  
easily return if it should prove rough under-  
neath, for I can swim now.' 'You had bet-  
ter not go,' urged his friend; 'my father  
also knows the river very well, and he says  
the undertow is very dangerous.'

'I will only go a little way, and if I find  
it dangerous I will come back,' and he start-  
ed vigorously for the middle of the stream.  
But his companion, watching him, presently  
saw him throw up his arms wildly, and  
heard his shout for help. Alas! help came  
too late. The treacherous undertow had got  
him, and he was drowned!—League Journal.