

## Selections.

## A NATION'S NEED.

God never fails to find the man  
When mighty deeds are waiting  
For full protection of His plan,  
Some new, sublime creating.  
When wrong has trampled o'er the land,  
And burdens hard oppress it,  
The men are there on every hand  
To go in and possess it.

To-day His voice is heard, and some  
Have listened to its calling;  
O men heroic, listen, come;  
On you the need is falling;  
Come to the field of active strife,  
With brain and heart on fire;  
A nation looks to you for life,  
In you is its desire.

Put self aside, O man, to-day;  
Be blind to all ambition;  
'Tis God who calls; no hand can stay  
His will till its fruition;  
Your strength is needed in this hour,  
When truth and best endeavor  
Are called to wield a mighty power,  
And build to last for ever.

Come at the call; some future day,  
When human wrongs are righted,  
Our land reclaimed from error's sway,  
Its heroes shall be knighted;  
And priceless coronets of fame  
No kings of earth are wearing,  
Shall bear untarnished every name,  
In all its triumphs sharing.

—Good Templar's Watchword.

## THE PLEDGE.

The pledge! the pledge! who can with-  
stand,  
To send the pledge throughout the land?  
The harbinger of peace and love,  
Noah's olive branch and turtle dove.  
The pledge! the pledge! a sunny ray.  
In darkest night and cloudy day,  
A beam to chase Egyptian night,  
And loud exclaim, "Let there be light."

The pledge! the pledge! a sovereign  
balm,  
On direst ills it works a charm;  
The blotted face, the poisoned blood,  
Are by its power made pure and good.  
The pledge! the pledge! a fairy wand;  
To broken hearts a holy bond;  
The widow's tears no longer flow,  
The children's cheeks with pleasure glow.

The pledge! the pledge! a flag of truce,  
Domestic war and strife reduce,  
Where'er that blessed flag's unfurled  
A blessing comes to all the world.  
The pledge! the pledge! the Gospel's  
friend,  
Both ragged homes and hearts to mend,  
A strength temptation's power to fight,  
To mend the wrong, and help the right.

The pledge! the pledge! oh, say not so,  
It bringeth the statesman woe,  
Cannot the wheels of State go round  
But where a sacrifice is found?  
The pledge! the pledge! the State will  
save,  
The gaol destroy, and close the grave,  
All trade and commerce help revive,  
And want and shame no longer thrive.

The pledge! the pledge! enlist yet more!  
What floods of happiness in store!  
What gardens rise in desert waste!  
What impure hearts again be chaste!  
The pledge! the pledge! a hurrying  
throng  
Come forward to undo the wrong,  
Each pledge a link in mighty chain  
That giant drink ne'er use again.

The pledge! the pledge! enlist yet more!  
What! Not contribute e'en a score?  
What! Stand aside while others work?  
Will you the hour of trial shirk?  
The pledge! the pledge! a glorious year,  
A million hearts their ransom bear.  
Along the age its influence shed  
An untold good when we are dead.

A. J. G.—In *The Temperance Worker*.

## LILLIAN'S STORY

"You have often asked for the story of my life; shall I tell it to-night, Hugh?"  
"Yes, Lillian, I should indeed be grateful if you will tell it now."  
"Then excuse me just a moment, please," she said, as she left the room.  
When she returned he knew that she had been weeping. She carried in her

hand two watches welded together; one, a lady's tiny gold timepiece, the other, a gentlemen's silver watch.

"Those are the watches you brought back from the railroad wreck where your mother lost her life," Hugh said tenderly.

"Yes, Hugh, not only my mother, but my father as well," was the tremulous reply.

"Your father! Why, I thought he died years ago."

"No, he did not, and this is what I want to tell you about. Poor father! Poor Mother!"

Controlling herself with a great effort, she went on:

"Father was a very popular young man at the time he married mother; good looking, brilliant and wealthy, and mother was the only daughter of rich parents, beautiful and beloved. The course of true love appeared to run smoothly for them, notwithstanding what is said to the contrary. Not a cloud could be discerned in their roseate sky, unless it might be that Edward once in a while took a social glass, and gambled now and then for pastime, but he had promised to quit all these evil habits as soon as they were married, and mother, loving him, believed him."

Hugh opened his mouth as if to speak, but Lillian said gently: "Hear me through, first, please."

"They had a brilliant wedding, and the fortunate couple received congratulations of the hundreds of guests. Unalloyed happiness attended their pathway for the first year of their married life. Father neither drank, played cards nor billiards. Finally, however, he said it looked so silly for a great strong man like him to abstain from these things altogether when there was no danger, whatever, that he would ever carry them to excess. He always felt so womanish, he maintained, when he refused a social glass, or to take a hand at cards or billiards; but he promised faithfully that he would be moderate, very moderate in all these things."

"With a sinking heart, mother heard these arguments, yet hoped for the best. She could see how he, as a popular, rising young lawyer, would look at these things, and could not find it in her heart to blame him very much, after all. Besides, he was so tender and loving to her, and she so devotedly attached to him, that whatever he said appeared right in her sight."

"Time went on; they had been married three years when their first baby was born—little Edward. Proud parents never lived. When father went to the office that morning, the boys demanded that he 'set it up' to them. And he 'set it up' in wine; then towards evening, something stronger, drinking with them to keep them company. The result was that he went home thoroughly intoxicated for the first time in his life and before any one could prevent him, had gone into mother's room to see his son. The shock threw mamma into a fever, causing her life to hang in a balance for many long weeks. When she regained health, she learned that her first-born son was dead and buried. She never recovered from this blow, yet not one word of reproach did she give my father, who once more pledged his word to her that he would never again taste a drop. He fulfilled his promise until he was sent to Congress, then he began drinking again, not heavily, oh! no, only 'gentlemanly.'"

"Returning from the Legislature, he stopped once more, but only to begin again. Mother kept the real state of affairs from me as long as possible, saying always, 'Your father is sick, dear,' or 'has another of his bad spells,' when he was under the influence of liquor."

"In my earliest childhood, I remember that we lived in an elegant home and had all that heart could wish; but when I was about twelve years of age, the magnificent old homestead was sold, and we moved to another city, and began living in a much more moderate style. We were all very happy, and for a year father had none of his spells. Then, I remember, he was gone for two weeks, and when I questioned mother as to where he was, she would only weep and kiss me tenderly, replying, 'God will soon bring him back to us, my darling.'"

"Then one night he did come when they thought me asleep. Opening the door, he entered softly, and going up to my mother, took both her cheeks in his hands, and bending over kissed her lips, saying:

"Don't say a word, darling. I confess to you I have been off on a spree, but I could not help it."

Then mother only said: 'My own beloved husband, I am so glad to have you home again.'

"One day, three months later, I went into his office noiselessly, and saw my father grasping the table with both hands, while he declared, 'I will conquer this burning thirst; this awful craving, so help me God.'"

"He started upon seeing me, yet seemed relieved, and observed: 'I am not well, keep close to me until we go home.'"

"Not long after that I heard him tell mother to lock him in his room and not let him out until he told her to. 'I am weak again,' he said piteously; and mother understood."

"Again we moved, but this time, instead of making things better, they seemed to grow worse. Father drank quite heavily from that time on and did not try to disguise the fact, although I never saw him intoxicated. He would go away from home for a few days, quite regularly every two or three months, then be sober for several weeks after his return."

"There is no need of rehearsing to you the awfulness of those years. Mother was an angel, and father often told her so. I have heard him say time and time again, 'I wish I had died before I brought this sorrow to your life. Look at your hair,' he would murmur, stroking it fondly, 'almost white, when there should not be a gray thread to be found. Look at your cheeks,' kissing them lovingly, 'pale and wan, when they should be plump and rosy. My own dear wife, I hate myself worse than a viper for treating you so, but you cannot know of the awful burning in my veins; I get positively crazy for the accursed stuff, and forget everything, even my love for you, my darling.'"

"Mother never seemed to blame him, there was only love and pity in her heart for him, but she carried a heavy burden all the time."

"At last, one sad morning when we arose, we found that father had gone. He had left a note on the dining-room table telling mother not to attempt to find him, that he was going far away, either to make a man of himself or end his life; that he could not endure to remain there and see his wife and daughter, whom he tenderly loved, suffer on his account. He had deeded all the remaining property to mother, also left several large outstanding bills for her to collect. Every effort possible was made to obtain news of his whereabouts, but all to no avail, and we spoke of and mourned him as dead. You said once that mother always seemed so sad and quiet, do you wonder at it, now?"

"No, dearest, no. But what is the remainder of the story?"

"Just three weeks before that awful collision we received a letter from a nurse in a hospital in —, saying that father was alive and kept calling for his wife, Marie. Mother went at once to him, and remained until he was able to start home. Her presence seemed to be the medicine he needed, for he began to improve as soon as she bent over and kissed him, saying: 'Edward, I've come to take care of you.' Nothing of the past, present or future was alluded to until he had fully recovered. Then each told all that befallen them since they last met; and mother wrote it to me, for I never saw her after that," said she with a moan.

"Father's life had been a checkered one; a succession of ups and downs. At one time he would think he was thoroughly reformed; at another, that there was no salvation for him. He was carried to the hospital because of a hurt received in a drunken fight."

"I am not fit to go back with you, leave me here," implored he of mother one day.

"Leave you here! no, indeed, I am going to take you home with me—and keep you, too, sir. We'll live our honeymoon over again, and will play that our daughter Lillian is our hired girl, for you remember that was the name of the first servant we had in those early, happy days."

"Oh, Marie, you are an angel, now as ever," murmured father, stroking her hair as he used to in the olden times.

"Gazing in his loving eyes, she said, 'I have been praying earnestly about it and have faith to believe that you have touched your last drop of liquor, Edward.'"

"Then they both knelt down and mother thanked God for restoring him, to her, pleading for the forgiveness of past sins, and asking for strength and grace for the future. Father joined in and added his petition to hers; and the Lord answered his prayers, though in a way they little dreamed of. Two days after they started for home as happy as bride and groom could ever be. They had been traveling three days when that awful collision took place."

"George Bartells, who barely escaped with his life and who was on the train, tells the rest."

"I had been noticing your father and mother for some time. How supremely happy they seemed to be! Our coach was not crowded, hence they had two seats to themselves, and your father had turned one so that he sat facing your mother. She had just been laughing heartily over something he had said, when we felt a sudden, severe shock. Your parents each appeared desirous of protecting the other, for both sprang to their feet, and simultaneously threw their arms around each other. Then came the awful crash and they were buried beneath a wheel; and I knew no more."

Lillian's frail form swayed with emotion, and it was several seconds ere she could finish Mr. Bartell's story.

"When I returned to consciousness, I found that I had been dragged from the burning mass—for there had been an explosion and fire—but your father and mother, with others, had been almost instantly burned. Hastening to the doomed spot where I last saw them, I found only these two watches welded together, showing the effects of the fire, otherwise unharmed."

Lillian said softly, "This gold watch was father's wedding present to mother," and opening the flattened lid, she held it to Hugh who read the words, "To death do us part."

He arose and walked back and forth in the room while the manly tears coursed down his cheeks, though he said not a word.

"Little did my parents realize that death would unite them more truly than marriage vows had ever done," murmured Lillian, through her tears, "and I think God took this way of answering their prayers."

"You do not care to talk longer now, darling," said Hugh, as he respectfully lifted her hand to his lips. "May I come again to-morrow evening?"

"Yes," was the low reply.  
There was visible embarrassment on the part of both as Lillian ushered Hugh into the parlor the next evening, but it soon disappeared, however, and they began speaking on subjects that neither of them were at all interested in, when Hugh spoke out:

"Come, let's talk."  
"Well aren't we?" replied Lillian, with a smile.

"No, indeed we are not. Lillian, how long will you keep me on probation?"

"Keep you on probation! What do you mean? I surely am not keeping you at all. I have dismissed you."

"You are mistaken. You haven't dismissed me, for I am not the same fellow who was here yesterday. He used to drink occasionally and play a game of cards or billiards, but I don't. I pledge you my word, before God, that I am done with these things forever. Test me; prove me; keep me on trial for one year, two years, three or seven years; only give me promise that at the end of that time you shall be mine. Oh, Lillian, do not say me nay. Let your own love plead for me. Your heart shall never be wrung as your mother's was, I promise you upon my knees. Wear this little plain band ring," slipping it on her finger, "as a badge of friendship, for one year (the date is on it) then if you can trust me, let me replace it by a diamond, will you?"

He spoke calmly, though his face spoke the volume of love that he forbade his lips to utter.

She held out her hand and grasped his, saying simply:

"My own, true knight."  
Two years from that evening they were wed, and Hugh's present to his bride was a beautiful jeweled watch, on which was engraved the words: "Till death do us part."

"This shall be a reminder to me as well as a pledge to you, my darling," he whispered softly. — ELLA BARTLETT SUMNER, in *the Union Signal*.