

**How the Holland Town was Taken.**

BY THE REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

DAY after day the battle roars  
Around the Holland town;  
Its flag defies the Spanish hosts  
That strive to tear it down.

One night, the moon shines large and white  
Far up the blue, blue sky.  
Do townfolk cry: "Oh, moon, we sleep,  
And trust your watchful eye"?

Then see, oh, moon, beneath the wall  
That Spanish soldier prowls!  
The moon? 'Tis dumb as Trappist monk  
Beneath his silent cowl.

That spy has found a crevice small!  
With eager hands and brown  
He tears on this side, then on that,  
And peeps inside the town.

He slips his snakish body in;  
He softly steals around!  
So still it is! No sentinel  
Slow strides the moon-white ground.

He wriggles back—now moon on high,  
That muffling cowl throw down!  
Loud shout, "To arms!" ere he can bring  
A host to take the town!

Alas! that traitor moon is dumb!  
A host of burglars creep  
Unchallenged through the broken wall  
While weary townfolk sleep.

Soon, hear that startling cry, "To arms!"  
And what a deadly strife!  
The townfolk fight, but all in vain,  
For country and for life.

Do you that sleepy town upbraid?  
Temptation is the hole  
Through which, on tiptoes, steals the foe  
That will lay waste your soul.

**In Prison and Out.**

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

**CHAPTER X.—BLACKETT'S THREATS.**

A PARISH coffin and a pauper's grave were all the country had to give to the dead mother, whose son, in the ignorance and recklessness of boyhood, had broken the laws twice, and been each time visited with a harsh penalty. "That servant which knew his lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." There is Christ's rule. Do we, who sometimes pride ourselves as being the most Christian nation on the face of the earth, abide by that rule?

The mother was buried; and what was to become of Bess? No one was bound to take any care of her. She was old enough to see after herself. There was the workhouse open to her, if she chose to apply for admission; but, if she entered it, it would be to be sent out to service, as a workhouse girl, in the course of a few weeks or months, untrained and untaught, fit only for the miserable drudgery of the lowest service. There was not strength enough in her slight, ill-fed frame to enable her to keep body and soul together at laundry-work, which was the only work she knew anything of. There was no home, however wretched, to give her shelter, if she continued to sell water cresses in the streets. True, Blackett offered her the refuge of his lodgings, and Roger urged her eagerly to avail herself of his father's kindness; but Bess shrank away with terror from the mere thought of it. Blackett had been the object of her daily dread ever since her childhood, and no change in his manner towards her could inspire her with confidence.

When she came back from following her mother's coffin to its pauper's grave, she stole past Blackett's door into the empty room beyond, and sat down, worn out with grief and weariness, on the bedstead where her mother's corpse had been lying for the last three days. She had lived in the room alone with it, and she felt more lonely now that it was gone. Silent and motionless as it had been, with its half-closed eyelids, and the ashy whiteness of its face gleaming even in the dusk, it had been a companion to her, and she had not been afraid of it. Now it was gone, she was indeed alone.

There was not a single article of furniture left in the room, except this low, rough pallet-bedstead, with the dingy sacking, bare of bed and bedclothes. Everything else was gone. There was now no candlestick left, no teapot or cup, no flat-iron or poker,—not one of the small household goods of the poor. Bess had

carried all the few possessions left to her, in a miscellaneous lot to get what she could for them at the marine stores. She would have carried off the bedsteads if they had not been too heavy for her, or if her mother's corpse had not been lying there.

Euclid, her only friend, had not been near her these three days. The truth is that the poor old man was passing through a great and severe struggle, and it was not over yet. He had grown in a measure fond of Bess, and his heart was grieved to the very core for her. But what was he to do? he continually asked himself. What could a poor old man like him do? He was terribly afraid of taking any additional weight upon his over-burdened shoulders, especially now he was in sight of the goal. For the last year or two, as he felt the infirmities of age growing heavier, an unspeakable dread lodged in his inmost soul, lest, after all, he should fail in his life's aim. Could he endure to see Victoria buried as Mrs. Fell was? He had lurked in a dark corner of the staircase, and watched the rough and reckless way in which the rude, slight box, that could hardly be called a coffin, was bundled out of the house, and carried off along the street, followed by Bess alone as the only mourner for the dead. It had given a sharp and poignant prick to his hidden fears. How could he burden himself with the care of Bess while there was any chance of such an ending to his career, or, worse still, to Victoria's? If Victoria had been buried in her own coffin, as his wife and the other children had been, he might have taken up with Bess. But she seemed no nearer the grave than at the beginning of the winter: her health, or rather her complaint, whatever it was, remained stationary. No: he must not sacrifice Victoria to Bess.

Poor Bess! But as she was sitting alone in the gathering twilight, bewildered with her sorrow, she heard the door softly opened, and as softly closed again. It was Victoria who had come in, after crawling feebly down the long flights of stairs, which she had mounted four months ago, in the autumn, for the last time as she thought. She could not speak yet, and she sat down breathless and silent beside the desolate girl. There was a mournful stillness as of death in the room, though all around were echoing the busy, jarring noises of common life.

"I don't know much," said Victoria at last in her low, weak voice; "but I've dreams sometimes, lyin' up there alone all day, and I seem to see quite plain some place where the sun is always shinin', and folks are happy, and there mother is. I saw it last night, betwixt sleepin' and wakin', as plain as I see you. And your mother was there, Bess; and someone, I couldn't see his face, was leadin' her to where the sun was warm and bright, and choosin' a good place for her to rest in; and he looked as if he was watchin' for any little bit o' stone in the way, for fear she'd hurt her feet, like we might do wi' a little, little child, just learnin' to go alone. And, O Bess! your mother turned so as I could see her face; and it was very pale, but very peaceful. There wasn't any more pain in it."

"Is it true?" sobbed Bess.

"I don't know much," repeated Victoria. "I never went to school; for father couldn't pay for my schoolin', and there wasn't any law to make him. He'd have done it gladly; but watercresses isn't much for a family to live on, and die on. But I think it must be true; or how could I see it? I told father what I'm tellin' you; and I said to him, 'Father, it don't matter very much about bein' buried in our own coffins, if we get to a place like that after all.'"

"And what did he say?" asked Bess.

"He made a noise like 'Umph!' and went off," answered Victoria.

But Bess was thinking no longer of Victoria's dreams. Her thoughts had gone in again, brooding over their own sorrow; and she moaned with a very deep and bitter moaning.

"Oh! what shall I do?" she cried. "What shall I do?"

"I came to fetch you upstairs to live with us," answered Victoria very softly. "Father'll be glad enough when it's done. You'd be as good as another daughter to father if I was gone; and nobody knows how soon that may be. He's a bit shy and queer just now; but that'll be gone when it's all settled. You shall help me upstairs again, Bess; and when father comes he'll get somebody to help him carry these bedsteads up for you and me to sleep on. It'll be better for me than sleepin' on the floor, you know."

"When Euclid reached home an hour later, he paused before going upstairs, and knocked at the door of Mrs. Fell's room; but there was no answer. He tried to open it; but it was locked. Where could little Bess be? he asked himself in sudden terror. She must be come back from the funeral by this time. Was it possible that she had taken shelter with Blackett? The old man's withered face tingled, and his frame shook as with ague, as

the thought flashed across him. Whose fault would it be? It was he who had forsaken Bess in her misery, the fatherless, motherless, brotherless girl.

He stood outside the closed and locked door, thinking of her light footstep and pretty face, tripping along at his side every morning for the last two months. He had not known how closely she had crept to his heart until now the dread was beating against him that she was gone to Blackett. The old man's gray and grim face grew grayer and grimmer. His conscience smote him sharply. And now what must he do? What did he dare to do? It would be like braving a lion in his den to face Blackett at his own fireside. Yet probably Bess was there.

"God help this old tongue o' mine!" said Euclid half aloud, as, after some minutes of hesitation, he turned with desperate courage to knock at Blackett's door.

"Come in!" shouted Blackett with a surly snarl.

Euclid opened the door, and stood humbly on the threshold. It was a room less bare, but more squalid with dirt, than any other in the house. The woman who had been the mother of Blackett's three sons, had long ago disappeared; and what little cleanliness and comfort had once been known there, had gone with her. The air was stifling with the fumes of tobacco and spirits, and Blackett was smoking over a fireplace choked up with ashes. Roger, who was bound hand and foot with strong cords, had rolled himself out of easy reach of his father's kicks, and was lying in a corner with an expression of terror and hatred on his face. But Bess was nowhere to be seen.

"Come in, and shut the door!" shouted Blackett.

"Mr. Blackett," said Euclid, shutting the door behind him, with the long-sleeping courage of manhood stirring in his old heart, "have you seen aught of Mrs. Fell's little Bess?"

"Ay, have I!" growled Blackett with an oath. "Victoria's been and fetched her up to your rat-hole; and now I give you fair warning, old fellow, if you go to harbour that girl, I'll make this place too hot for you. I'll keep a eye on you going out and coming in, and you'll repent it sore. Get out o' this like a shot, or I'll begin on it at once."

But Euclid was off like a shot before Blackett had finished his threats, and was mounting to his garret with a suddenly gladdened heart. "Thank God! thank God!" he repeated to himself, step after step up the long staircase. He had hardly heeded Blackett's menaces, though they lodged themselves unconsciously in his mind, and came back to his memory when his first gladness was over. Bess had fallen asleep for sorrow on Victoria's bed; and he stooped over her, and laid his hard brown hand gently on her head, as if to welcome her to her new home. "God bless her!" he murmured.

"I sha'n't care if you can't bury me in my own coffin," whispered Victoria, "not a bit."

"We'll see about that, Victoria, my dear," he answered with tears of mingled joy and fear glittering in his eyes. "Please God, he'll let me do as much as that!"

(To be continued.)

**BLACK VALLEY RAILWAY.**

BY MRS. WILBUR F. CRAFTS.

I HAVE lately been taking a trip to the far Northwest, and I have drawn a sketch of some of the scenery along the way. Certainly as often as every five minutes I saw some of this "scenery" as I looked out of the car window. If you should take a journey to the Yellowstone Park you would be shown the wonderful Obsidian Cliffs, mountains of glass, produced by volcanic action; you would wonder at the greatness of God as you should look at them.

But as I rode along on the train I wondered at the meanness of man as I looked at the glass bottles lying all along the way, with the labels "Lager Beer" on them, and the corks all gone, because they had been emptied of their contents. What a row of cliffs those same bottles would make if they should all be gathered into heaps. I believe they would rival in height those Obsidian Cliffs in the Yellowstone Park. What a monument they would make to the drunkards, thousands of them who die in our country every year.

As I looked out of the car window I was reminded of the Black Valley Railroad. Perhaps you have never heard of it, so I will tell you the names of some of the stations: Weepington, Wailingville, Tear River, Foolsport, Slaughterfield, Wallowditch. More and more I thought about

this Black Valley Railroad, and felt myself to be riding on it, as the train filled with firemen on their way to a tournament. They threw cards about. They spit tobacco juice on the floor, so that the car was filthy. They drank from whiskey-bottles, which they had in their pockets. Their jokes were so vile that I filled my ears with paper. They staggered up and down the aisles, not actually drunk, but just to show how they would do when they would come home on "Friday night." I said to the conductor, "This is no place for a lady." He replied, "It is just the same in all the cars in the train."

NO LIQUORS SOLD WHILE PASSING THROUGH NORTH AND SOUTH DAKOTA.

At another time on my journey I saw this card hung up in the car. No mistaking that railroad for the Black Valley Railroad. There were no stations along the way with the sign "Saloon," to remind one of Foolsport, Wailington, etc. It might have been named the "Happy Valley Railroad." I looked out of the window; the glass bottles were not to be seen. I thought of a story I had heard about a woman who was seen almost constantly on the street picking up something, and putting it into her apron. When asked what she was doing, she replied that she was "picking up bits of glass to save the little children's feet," the little ones that have to go barefooted, you know. I thought of this, and I said to myself, How much suffering and sorrow these States that will not allow liquor to be sold in their borders are going to save their boys and girls.—*Youth's Temperance Banner.*

**JUNIOR LEAGUE.**

HOW OLD MUST I BE TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

The League assembled, put the question, "How old were you when you first loved your parents?"

Bring out the answer: "Always;" "Four years old;" "Six years old," etc. How many now love their parents? Hands up!

How old did you have to be to trust your parents? How many do? Hands up!

How many obey your parents? Hands up! Then you can be Christians. To love, trust, and obey God is to be a Christian.

How many will try to be Christians?

Sing: "Come to Jesus just now,  
He will save you just now."

**BIBLE LESSONS.**

- "One thing is needful."—Luke 10. 42.
- "One thing thou lackest."—Mark 10. 21.
- "One thing I know."—John 9. 25.
- "One thing I do."—Phil. 3. 13.
- "One thing have I desired."—Psalm 27. 14.
- "Who was the first man?"—Gen. 2. 7, 19.
- "Who was the oldest man?"—Gen. 5. 27.
- "Who was the meekest man?"—Num. 13. 3.
- "Who was the strongest man?"—Judg. 16. 6.
- "Who was the wisest man?"—1 Kings 3. 5, 11-14.
- "Who was the most patient man?"—Job. 1. 22.
- "Who was the Son of man?"—Luke 19. 10.

Each one of the above can be made the subject of a ten-minutes' talk in department of Spiritual Work.

**NOT SO BAD AS DRINKING.**

DR. B. W. RICHARDSON has the last word in the Idler's Club Symposium on the subject of smoking. It is not, he considers, so bad as drinking, but it is radically bad. It disturbs the circulation; it often impedes digestion; it interferes with the fine adjustments of the senses, and sometimes it impairs the lenses of vision altogether. Moreover, it generates a craving for itself in the nervous organism, always an evil sign, and indirectly it calls up, not infrequently, hereditary evils, like cancer, which would lie latent if left alone. "Think of this when you smoke tobacco," says this authority, "and say is the habit not one more honoured in the breach than in the observance? Without either malice or uncharitableness my vote is emphatically against that practice."