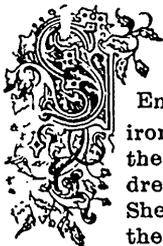


AN INCIDENT.



SCENE of the Incident: The prison, City Hall, San Francisco.

Enter through the massive iron door into the corridor of the prison, a lady, quietly dressed and quiet in manner. She is invited into the office of the Chief Warden and courteously received by him.

"How can I serve you?" he asks.

"Please tell me how many arrests for drunkenness were made in this city for January last?"

"He opens the Book of Doom, and replies: "Eleven hundred and ninety-six."

"For February?" she inquires.

"Eight hundred and thirty-five."

"And for March, please?"

"Ten hundred and twenty-one. We haven't the figures yet for April, but they are about the same. Any special reason why you want to know?"

Before the lady can answer an awful howl, like the wail of a lost soul, rings through the corridor which up to that moment has been silent. It is the voice of a woman. She is locked in a cage near by as though she was a wild beast. Then she cries:

"O my God, my God! Cannot I see my children? Why am I here? I meant no harm to anybody. Oh, let me out! For mercy's sweet sake let me out!"

Her voice dies into a sob; then, as she realizes her utter helplessness, the madness of her condition again overpowers her self-control, and her screams redouble. They are shrill with keen agony, and then subside into a moan so pitiful that one would have a heart of stone not to weep for her.

"Not used to this," said the officer to the lady, whose flesh is creeping with the horror of the situation.

"No, nor ever could be. Is this an old offender?"

"No, she was a pure woman, once. It is the old story: the saloon, poverty, the brothel, the down grade, lost."

"And are there children?"

"Yes; even drunkenness cannot kill the mother love."

The lady was meanwhile making a rapid calculation from her figures.

"Three thousand and fifty-two arrests in three months," she says. "What an army of Drunks! And of this proportion, how many are women?"

"About one-twentieth, I think, but a drunk's a drunk, you know. Sex does not cut much figure, only the women seem to feel it the most when they sober up."

At that moment a young woman with a two-year-old child is admitted into the ante-room.

"Is Jack sober yet? Can I see him?" is her eager inquiry.

Jack, the father of the little irresponsible creature, is allowed to come from his cell. His face brightens as the child leaps into his outstretched arms, and doubtless, in the depth of his soul, he curses the appetite which lures him from his home, and the saloon which gives him the opportunity of its indulgence.

"Three thousand and fifty-two arrests for drunkenness, in a single city in three months! Whose will continues this dreadful condition of affairs?" muses the lady, as she passes from the interior of the gloomy prison into the light and fragrance and beauty of Golden Gate Hall.—*Pacific Ensign*.

There are pictures, something like the above, in almost every city in Canada. There is soon to be a vote of the people to say whether the strong drink shops are to be allowed to continue. Will our young readers do what they can to get their fathers and older brothers to vote against allowing the liquor traffic to be lawful in Canada.