

Temperance

How Charlie Cured the Thirsty Man.

(By Randall Chetwynd, in 'Alliance News.')

'Mother,' said Charlie, as he nestled lovingly by her side, 'Nurse knows such a funny man. At least, she knows his wife. I heard her telling cook last night, when they thought I was asleep. "Poor Harriet," she said, "I am so sorry for her. Night after night her husband goes to the "Castle and Banner," and stops there drinking and drinking instead of going home. And she and the children never have enough to eat, and are always hungry, because he spends such a lot of money on drink." Nurse and cook seem to think he must be a dreadful bad man, but I feel sorry for him, 'cause he must be always so very thirsty to drink so much as that. But why does he spend money for drink? Do you s'pose he doesn't know about water? and hasn't ever seen that new fountain in the square? What do they drink at the "Castle and Banner" mother?'

His mother sighed as she held her little son closer to her. For it is a hard task, and thankless, to open the eyes of our children to the knowledge of good and evil.

The stuff that they drink at the "Castle and Banner," darling,' she said, 'is stuff that you have never seen. When people drink it at first it makes them feel cheerful and happy. They get excited and forget everything that worries them. But after a little while it makes them silly so that they don't know what they are doing; and the next day after drinking it they are sure to have a headache and maybe quite ill.'

Charlie's blue eyes were round with wonder. 'What funny stuff!' he cried. 'But I s'pose the men don't know it will make them silly and ill after, and so they drink it once; but when they find out how naughty it is, then they don't drink it any more. Don't you think so, mother? Only cook said the man she knows drinks it every night. I s'pose he can't ever have heard of water, but it does seem funny!'

'No, darling,' said his mother, sadly, 'it isn't that. They do know about water, but they like beer best. They like the way it makes them feel at first, you see.'

'Although they know it makes them bad afterwards!' cried Charlie.

'Yes,' said his mother, 'they don't think about that.'

The boy shook his head gravely. 'Did you ever talk to any of them, mother?' he said.

'No, never, my darling,' said his mother. 'There seems so little a woman can do,' she went on, 'to help the cause of Temperance, except by example, and bringing up one's children to abstain.'

She was speaking more to herself than to the child, yet Charlie seemed to understand. 'I know one thing a little boy could do,' he said, 'and that is, show the men that go to the "Castle and Banner," the new fountain in the square. You see, mother, if you've never talked to any of them you can't be sure they know about water, and I really can't believe that men would be so silly. Why even a little boy would know better than that. Don't you think, mother, that p'raps they haven't seen the fountain?'

He looked wistfully at his mother, and she hadn't the heart to contradict him. After all the knowledge of the wilful misery of the world would come soon enough to her dear wee laddie.

As Mrs. Russell was sitting alone on the evening of the same day the room door opened, and nurse appeared, her face white and anxious.

'If you please, ma'am,' she said, 'I can't find Master Charlie anywhere. He was playing in the day nursery when I went to put baby to bed, and when I got back he was gone. His hat was gone too, so I thought he must be in the garden, but I've hunted everywhere and can't find him. I never knew him do such a thing before, ma'am.' And nurse began to cry.

Mrs. Russell rose hastily from her seat.

'Why! whatever can have happened to the child!' she cried. Then, like a flash the memory of the morning's conversation came to her.

'The dear little innocent,' she thought, 'he has gone to the "Castle and Banner" to show some poor drunkard the fountain. He knows the way, but would anyone be rough with him; my little lad!' 'I think I know where he must be, nurse,' she said, aloud. 'Fetch me my hat, and I will go and find him. You can go back to baby.' And hastily donning a simple sailor hat she sallied forth.

About ten minutes before this a tall man, shabbily dressed, yet with the look of one who had seen better days, was entering the 'Castle and Banner,' when he was startled by a clear childish voice addressing him.

'If you please, sir, are you very thirsty?' it said. 'Because there is such a nice fountain in the square, and you can have as much drink as you like there for nothing, and it won't make you silly, and you won't have a headache to-morrow.'

The man looked down angrily, but his face softened as he met the gaze of Charlie's innocent eyes. 'Who sent you to tell me that?' he said, gruffly.

'No one sent me,' said the child, 'but I felt sure that nobody would be so silly as to drink the nasty stuff they sell in here if they knew there was water. So I came to tell you.'

The man was evidently of a far better class than the ordinary frequenters of a public-house. And something in the situation seemed to appeal to his sense of humor. He smiled grimly as he spoke again.

'I have heard of water, my little man. But somehow or other I like this best.'

'Oh! do you?' said Charlie, wistfully. 'Then doesn't it ever make you silly?'

A hot, painful flush spread duskily over the man's face. 'Sometimes it does, not often,' he said.

'Water never does,' said the child eagerly. 'Oh! "please," sir, let me show you the fountain.'

'Well, all right,' said the man, half reluctantly. 'I can call in here on my way back,' he muttered to himself.

'Oh, thank you!' cried Charlie delightedly, and slipping his little hand into the man's he turned to go.

But the hand he clasped was drawn away. 'Don't do that,' said the man. 'Your mother wouldn't like to see you holding my hand.'

'Oh, yes, she would,' he said in surprise; 'why shouldn't she?'

'Because I am poor, and wear old clothes,' the man replied, 'and have been a bad man, too.'

'I'm a bad boy, sometimes,' said Charlie, confidingly, 'and I wear very old clothes when I'm playing in the garden. I like to hold your hand, 'cause I think your a nice man. Mother says we ought to love everybody, 'cause God is our Father, and loves us all. P'raps you've got a little boy at home, about as big as me. If you have you know how God loves you, by how you love him.'

'I've got a little boy at home,' said the man in a subdued voice, 'but he isn't as big as you; he's only eight years old.'

'I'm only eight years old, too,' said Charlie. 'P'raps your little boy isn't so big as me because he doesn't have enough to eat. Nurse says she knows a man whose little boys don't have enough to eat because he is thirsty, and spends almost all his money on the nasty stuff to drink. I expect your little boy will grow bigger now you're going to drink water, don't you?'

The man's face was pale with emotion; the child's innocent chatter had touched his heart. But they had reached the fountain, and he was thus spared the necessity of replying. It was growing dusk; a man was lighting the lamps round the square. To his dying day Roger Carter never forgot the scene, or the bright earnest little face of the boy, as he filled the drinking cup with water and handed it to him. He drained it eagerly, for he was really thirsty, and with the taste of the pure, cool water, old memories rushed back on him. Once again he saw himself an innocent child like the boy before him. He thought of his own boy at home. Would he grow up like his father? God forbid!

'Well,' he said, 'that's the first drink of cold water I've had for many a long day.'

'There,' said Charlie, triumphantly. 'I was sure you'd forgotten all about it. Have some more, do.' It won't make you silly,

and you won't have a headache to-morrow. I know, because I drink it myself. And there's nothing to pay for it, so you will have more money to take home for your little boy to-night, won't you?'

It was at this juncture that Mrs. Russell found them. She was not at all surprised to find her son conversing with a disreputable looking man, but she was surprised to find in that man the husband of an old schoolfellow of her own, whom she had not seen for years.

The recognition was mutual, but while Roger Carter hung his head, and tried to slink away, she came forward with outstretched hand, and a bright smile of welcome.

'This is, indeed, a pleasure,' she said. 'It is a long time since we met. And how is Myra, Mr. Carter?'

'I have lost her,' said the man. 'She died two years ago, and since that time I have been going steadily downhill. I am ashamed for you to see me, Mrs. Russell.'

'He'd forgotten about cold water, mother,' piped out Charlie. 'And he was very thirsty, so he had to drink the nasty stuff. But he's always going to drink water now, and then his little boy will have plenty to eat, and grow as big as me. You are aren't you,' he went on, 'now you know how nice it is?'

'I am, God helping me,' said Roger, earnestly. 'You have cured the thirsty man, Charlie, because you cared. Plenty of people have preached at me, but no one ever really cared before.'

So there was something that even a little boy could do.

Three Beers a Day.

- 1 Barrel of flour,
- 50 Pounds of sugar,
- 20 Pounds of corn starch,
- 10 Pounds of macaroni,
- 10 Quarts of beans,
- 4 Twelve-pound hams,
- 1 Bushel sweet potatoes,
- 3 Bushels Irish potatoes,
- 10 Pounds of coffee,
- 10 Pounds of raisins,
- 10 Pounds of rice,
- 20 Pounds of crackers,
- 100 Bars of soap,
- 3 Twelve-pound turkeys,
- 5 Quarts of cranberries,
- 10 Bunches of celery,
- 10 Dozens of prunes,
- 4 Dozen oranges,
- 10 Pounds of mixed nuts,

FOUR BIG BARRELS HEAPED UP: and in the bottom of the last barrel, a purse with two pockets. In one pocket a five-dollar gold piece marked 'a dress for mother,' in the other pocket a ten-dollar bill, marked 'to buy shoes for the children.'

Men of Greater New York! Look at that list.

What is it?

That's what three beers a day for a year would buy.

Do you hear that, drinking men?

Three beers a day would buy that whole list, and a five-dollar dress for mother, and ten dollars' worth of shoes for the children thrown in. Every drinking man in Greater New York that buys three beers a day could send to his home such a Christmas donation every year.

Fathers, look at that list.

Show it to mother.

Show it to the children.

Ask them how they would like such a donation for Christmas next year.

Three beers a day will buy it!

The extent to which the consumption of liquor enters into the problem of the social life of France may be seen from the statement that a member of the French commission for the study of questions affecting the working classes, declared a short time ago that he and his colleagues, in the conscientious discharge of their duties, took a number of meals at different restaurants in Paris and other cities frequented by laboring men, and they noticed that fully two-thirds of the money paid for meals by the customers of these establishments was paid for liquor. Paris has now at least twice as many public houses as before the war of 1870, and probably the same proportionate increase holds with reference to other sections of France.