

ONE GLASS.—I knew a prominent New York lady who gave a great reception to a new pastor from across the water, four or five hundred people being present. Many of the young men, Sunday school teachers, etc., became so boisterous that the hostess was greatly mortified, and resolved never again to offer wine at her public entertainments. A prominent New York merchant, originally an Englishman, never sat down to table without his wine and brandy, and his three sons, in consequence, all grew up drunkards. One became so abandoned that his father cast him out of the house. At last some temperance people brought about his reformation, and he came to see his father on New Year's Day. The old gentleman said: "My son, I'm delighted to see you again. I'm glad you've reformed." Thoughtlessly he said: "Let's drink to your better life one glass of sherry." The young man hesitated a moment, and then thought he would drink just one glass. The old appetite revived, and that night his father found him dead-drunk in his stable.—*W. E. Dodge.*

THE SIZE OF THE QUESTION.—It cannot be laughed down; it is useless to sneer at it; it is more important in its effect upon natural prosperity and wealth than any other that can be named. Liquor costs every year more than our whole civil service, our army, our navy, our Congress, including the River and Harbor and the Pension bill, our wasteful local governments, and all our State, county and local debts, besides all the schools in the country. In fact, this nation pays more for liquor than for every function of every kind of government. The liquor bill is more than \$800,000,000. All the functions of the government together cost not more than \$700,000,000. This is a formidable bill, but the direct cost of liquor is not the worst of it. The evils which it engenders are incalculable. The sorrow, the degradation, the crime of which it is the parent, who can estimate?—*N. Y. Tribune.*

Tales and Sketches.

HER REWARD.

BY ERNEST GILMORE.

The superintendent felt very anxious to find a teacher willing and able to manage six rough, ignorant boys, whom he had picked up here and there about the town. He announced his desire before the school, but found no response; each teacher seemed to have his hands already full, and no scholar in the advanced classes appeared to feel equal to the undertaking. At last he requested the minister to ask from the pulpit if there was anyone in the congregation who would venture to lead some black sheep into the fold. If there should be one such, he would like that one to report after the dismissal of the congregation.

There was one in the church who listened to what the minister said, in whose mind a train of thought ran speedily. This person was a little woman dressed in mourning. Not much of her face was visible, because of the crape veil folded about it, but the glimpse one could get revealed a face sweet and earnest, but heavily marked with grief. And no wonder. She was not only a widow, but her only child—a bright and winsome son—had gone astray; at the present time she did not even know his whereabouts.

The minister's eyes grew moist as Mrs. L—— touched his arm after service, and said firmly: "I will try to lead the black sheep if you think I'm capable, but, you know, of course that I have a black sheep of my very own wandering off somewhere." With a voice husky with deep feeling, the minister said, "Yes, yes, I know, and I hope and pray that his feet may soon turn toward the fold. As for you, God bless you, that you are willing to lead these others while your heart is heavy and bleeding." The following Sabbath, Mrs. L—— was introduced to her class, surely a decidedly unprepossessing one, and rather formidable too. In ages the boys ranged from twelve to sixteen. The twelve-year-old boy was both awkward and ignorant; he seemed too stupid to learn anything except mischief. Then there were three boys about fourteen, regular street Arabs, their eyes gleaming with an intelligence of an undesirable kind. The remaining two were not repulsive, although they were not encouraging scholars. They were twin brothers, bright, but rude, and deplorably ignorant concerning the Saviour who had died for them. They paid very little attention to what Mrs. L—— said, and they were constantly whispering, while their eyes wandered off on a tour round the pretty room. Most teachers would have been discouraged with such a class—and justly so; even Mrs. L—— felt somewhat dismayed but she reasoned wisely: "Faint heart never won a battle yet! it seems to be my duty to lift up these poor boys. If I shirk my duty, I ought not to expect that anyone else could take it."

It did not take long for Mrs. L—— to find out that the stupid boy had been beaten upon the head by a drunken father, until it was no wonder he

was stupid. Her heart went out to him there. She visited him in his wretched home, and comforted him, and after awhile had the satisfaction of seeing him reach out his hand to clasp the Saviour's. As for the Arabs, two of them did not come after the second Sabbath; they had gone off on a ship; so she never knew whether the little seed she had sown in their hearts had taken root. The remaining Arab reached the "green pastures" and the "still waters" before the close of a year, and after that he moved steadily upward, leading some of his associates with him.

At the end of two years you would not have recognized the twin boys. They were eighteen now; great, noble-looking fellows, with a purpose in life, and faithfully pursuing it. Through Mrs. L——'s influence they had attended a night-school, and had progressed rapidly.

Five years have gone. It is New Year's Eve; the snow is beating drearily against the windows of Mrs. L——'s home. She feels strangely desolate to-night. For two years she has been an invalid, and it is four years since she has heard from her only child. Just a little after dusk, the minister who had asked God to bless Mrs. L——, entered her home, and saw the servant, doing her mistress's bidding, packing a basket for some poor neighbor.

"Don't send all the chickens off; you'll need some here," he warned, and then he entered the invalid's room, where she sat sick and sad. "I've a little story to tell," he said; "please promise not to interrupt. I will make it short, but it will be eloquent in fruitful suggestion. Some years ago a heart-broken Christian woman undertook to lead some wanderers home. Her task was no light one, but she did not shirk it. Sweetly, but firmly, she picked up the golden opportunities, and made a gleaming crown that will shine upon her forehead in the glorious hereafter. But," and a strangely tender quiver came into his voice, "she'll have some reward for her labor even here. Two of the lads—twins—young men now, found in a great wicked city, two years ago, a widow's only child. When they learned whose child he was they labored untiringly to lift him from the depths of degradation, where they had found him. It was wearying work, but they never slackened their love or their zeal. 'It is her boy,' they said, 'he must be saved.' And a year ago he was saved from the gulf of intemperance. He longed then to return to his mother, but he would not until he felt sure that he could stand firm. Now his feet are upon the Rock."

Mrs. L—— put out her hand beseechingly. All the pain had faded from her face, and in its place there shone only joy unutterable.

"Where is my boy?" she asked.

"Coming."

The jingle of bells was heard at the door, then quick steps through the hall, and three young men entered—the rescuers and the rescued.

The happy mother felt that her reward had come.—*Westminster Teacher.*

HOW LITTLE GRACIE CLOSED A SALOON.

Gracie was only six years old, but beautiful and loving. When her father wanted her to come into his saloon that he might introduce her to the men lounging there, and hear them praise her beauty, she would say: "No, papa! make the naughty men go away and then I'll come." There was a children's Temperance Society in the town, in charge of the Women's Temperance Union, and little Gracie and her brother still younger, were invited to attend. The father consented, for he liked to see Gracie dressed up and have people notice her.

Gracie had never seen any one pray before, and when the leader talked about God, and asked them all to bow their heads in prayer, Gracie bowed, awed into the most solemn reverence. Months passed; Gracie had learned to pray, and often talked to her father about the child Christ, and wanted him to pray; but he only laughed and called her a little saint. One day Gracie was taken very ill; the doctor was sent for, and when he saw her he said she was very sick. "Will I die?" "I hope not." "You needn't be afraid to tell me, 'cause I'm ready: I asked Jesus to take me if He wanted me." The father, who stood at the foot of the bed sobbed out, "Oh Gracie! you don't want to leave your papa, do you?"

"Yes, I do if He wants me to come, 'cause he has the best right to me!"

The customers came and went, but the saloon-keeper heeded them not, for his dear Gracie was on her little bed panting her life away. What cared he for money, now that the light of his life was going out? One day on his coming up out of the saloon Gracie opened her eyes, and turning on him an imposing look, said:

"O, papa, is the saloon open? Are the men drinking? Do close it up, papa. I know I will feel better if you will."

"I'll do it, darling—anything to make you feel better."

The saloon-keeper's heart was almost breaking: the bar-tender was ordered to clear the saloon and close the doors.

"Darling, the saloon is closed," he said bending over her a few minutes later.

"Thank you, papa! It makes me feel better already," and a glad smile came over her face. Every few hours Gracie would ask: