



Temperance Department.

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE.

"I don't see as there's anything else to be done," said Stephen Cartright, "when things are so clear and wages so low, it's a very hard upon a man to have to keep them as is old enough to work for themselves. I don't see as they can refuse him at the workhouse, and goodness knows he'd be more comfortable like there than here. It's like Matty to be so against it—it's just her high notions, and she was always fonder of that boy than any of the others. However, now wages are lowered, she must listen to reason. I don't see that she can help it now. And the speaker paused and lifted his cap, as if the thought of the coming contention had made him feel warmer than was agreeable. It was a sultry day in August he was experiencing all the influence of the heat, and had disposed of his scanty dinner without feeling much the better for it. Suddenly he resumed the seat which he had left, and at the same moment was heard coming nearer a sound as of little pattering feet.

"Sukey, Sukey," cried Stephen, "come here. I want you, and a fair little girl, of about five or six years old, came hopping on one leg into the room.

"Take this bottle, child," said the father, "and go to the corner, and get me four-penny worth of gin, tell them I will pay on Saturday night—do you hear."

"Ess, daddy," replied the little girl, and taking the bottle in her tiny hands, she went skipping and jumping out of the door, alas! not for the first time, on the same errand.

And yet neither Stephen Cartright nor his wife were drunkards; they would have held up their hands in virtuous indignation had any one dared to accuse them of this vice, but it was the truth that more money went to that same shop round the corner than to the butcher or linendraper. And the result was, that the children (five in number) were dirty and ragged—too much so to be sent to a decent school of any kind, and were growing up without education, save that dreadful one imparted by the fellowship of the streets. It is true that Stephen's wages barely exceeded a pound per week, and his wife was not able to earn much, but affairs might have been made better had it not been for the travels to and fro of the green bottle, together with a certain disreputable of work exhibited by the husband and father. He sat now, with his hands in his pockets, idly waiting the return of his daughter with the gin which was to give him the false courage necessary for him to open the subject now occupying his thoughts to his wife, who would (as he knew) be very angry.

Some years before this time this poor family had met with a severe misfortune (as it then seemed, in the person of his eldest son, a boy whose quiet and orderly habits even as a little child had particularly endeared him to his mother. While passing along a bye-street with several of his small companions, he had been obliged to fly with the rest from a runaway horse, and had fallen upon the curbstone in such a manner as to cause a compound fracture of the leg. Whether the violence of his constitution operated unfavorably in the cure the parents never knew, but, although every attention was paid to the little sufferer at the hospital, he was rendered by the accident a cripple for life. He was now fourteen years old, but utterly unable to render any assistance in his own support, and the father, feeling himself overburdened, had, although fond in general of his children, more than once entertained thoughts of applying to the parish workhouse for the admission of his son. He had even once mentioned the subject to his wife, but had shrunk back from the horror which she had expressed at the idea.

As he sat now impatient of the protracted absence of his child, he fancied he could hear an unusual bustle at the other end of the street. After some minutes he rose, and went to the door, just in time to prevent a knock. A middle-aged woman stood there, accompanied by a crowd of all sorts and sizes.

"There be a little girl, master, has met with an accident, and she says she lives here."

With one cry Stephen Cartright pushed the woman aside, and dashed into the street, gazing wildly before him with eyes that seemed bereft of sight. In the arms of a gentleman lay the poor little creature, her head and face bandaged so that her features were barely distinguishable.

"My child, my child," moaned Stephen, "oh, what is the matter?"

The crowd fell back as he approached, and the gentleman, still moving quickly on with his little burden, told him that she had slipped

over a stone on the pavement, with the bottle in her hand, and that some of the pieces had entered the face.

"I will tell you more when we reach the house," he said, and in a few moments more they arrived.

Poor Susy was laid on her bed, attended by her (sister) and bewildered mother, while the father listened to the account given by the gentleman (a doctor, to whose aid she had been taken) of the occurrence.

"There is great blame to be attached to those who allow children to carry bottles," concluded he, "this is the third accident of the kind this month. You have to thank God for your girl's eyesight, and that she has not been killed outright," and after some directions to the distressed parents, he left them.

The family of the Cartrights lived on the basement floor of a house in a poor neighborhood, their home consisting of two small rooms, the back one serving as a bedroom, the front as a kitchen, parlor, and all. As Mrs. Cartright entered the latter (after seeing the little girl asleep in care of her father) she was accosted by an eager voice, saying in a whisper,

"Oh, mother, mother, will Susy die? Who sent her with the bottle? What shall we do?"

"I don't know," replied the woman, bursting into tears. "I suppose your father did, while I was out, and you were minding the baby. I almost feel like giving up."

"Hush, mother," said the boy, "let's hope that God will spare her."

The woman only replied by repeated sobs, until perceiving how much she distressed her crippled boy (for he it was), she dried her tears, and promised to hope for the best.

Some weeks passed, during which time the kind doctor paid many visits, but going straight from the house-door into the bedroom, he did not see any of the family except the mother and the patient. Calling, however, one Saturday morning, about a month after the accident, he was asked into the front room, where, on a chair by the window, sat the crippled boy. As the doctor entered, he tried to rise, an instinct of politeness which instantly attracted the visitor. "Sit down, my little fellow," he said, kindly, "are you one of the family?"

"My name is Richard Cartright, sir," answered the lad, raising his thoughtful eyes to the face of the gentleman; and then, meeting his sympathizing look, he went on, with the easy-awakened confidence of youth, to tell him of the disaster that had darkened his life.

"What troubles me more than all, sir," he concluded, "is that I cannot earn my own living, but am a burden on my father, and don't know at all what is to become of me. I can read pretty well, and am beginning to write, for a boy that I know comes in sometimes to teach me, but he can never stay long—so I don't get on quickly. If it had only been my arm that was broken, I might go to the Sunday-school, as he does."

I don't know that the arm would have been much better, said the doctor, thoughtfully. I should like to help you, my poor fellow; but I fear it must be a question of time."

The boy's eyes sparkled, but he was silent. "What have you here?" continued Mr. Westburn, looking at two or three pieces of paper lying on the table.

I have been trying to draw, sir, faltered the lad, "but it is not worth your looking at."

Not much, certainly," said the other; "but all things must have a beginning. How should you like to be a schoolmaster, Richard? I do not think there is anything in your case against that."

But the boy could not reply, he could only gaze in delighted amazement on the face of the firm person who had ever given any hope for the future, and, seeing this, the doctor continued, "We must manage it somehow, my man, and you must work hard at your studies. I think I can see a way."

Mrs. Cartright now came in with the patient, who was fast recovering from the effects of her accident. The wounds had healed more quickly than had been expected, and though the dear little face would always bear the marks of them, there was reason to be very grateful to the Almighty that she had so far escaped. This was to be the doctor's last professional visit, and after some gentle words to the child, and many thanks on the part of the mother, he departed, leaving behind him one heart full of joyful and limitless anticipations of a useful and prosperous future.

In his prayers that night, Richard Cartright, hoping, dreaming, yet scarcely daring to expect the realization of the prospect opened to him, begged God to bless the kind friend who had chased the gloom and darkness opposing his mind, ever since increasing years had rendered him painfully alive to the obligations, which he had never, until now, hoped to fulfil.

It was on the Sunday of the next week that Stephen Cartright sat with his wife and family in the small parlor. There was a thoughtful look upon his face, something which told of a

resolution taken, but he said nothing, even to his wife, whose countenance, though bearing marks of the increased toil of the last few weeks, was radiant with joy at the recovery of her little one, and the secret, yet undisclosed, of her son's brightened lot. Then came a tap at the house door, which Stephen himself opened, admitting Mr. Westburn.

"I have to apologise," said the latter, "for intruding on your quiet Sunday; but I have called to inquire at what hour I can see you to-morrow on particular business?"

With much secret wonder Stephen named the time at which he usually left work, and Mr. Westburn, promising to see him then, bade them "Good day," and departed. On the morrow the astonished and delighted father heard of the plan adopted to benefit his son, which was to raise a subscription for the price of an invalid chair, in which he could be wheeled daily to a good free school in the neighborhood, where they would educate and train him to be a certificated teacher.

It was after this communication had been made, and the merits of the case descanted upon, that Stephen at length turned to his disinterested friend.

"God's ways are wonderful, sir," he said. "Who would have thought that from so much of evil could come so much of good? If that terrible accident had not happened to my boy he might have been wild-like and given to drink. At any rate, it is likely that he would ever have been a scholar and a gentleman. And though I don't deny that I've had hard thoughts, as I've had to keep him so long, that wickedness is over now, thank God. And even poor Susy's misfortune has brought good too. I've never been a tipsy man, sir, though I thought nothing of a glass or two every day. But since my liking for this makes us poorer, and has even been the means of injuring my child, I will at once sign the pledge. As I was praying to God (as I did, sir), for her to recover, it came into my mind that I had not quite done my duty to my wife and children. Says I to myself, 'Stephen, you must alter your conduct, and there's three things you must do. First, you must work harder, and earn more money, for you know you can do so. Second, you must not spend money in gin and beer; and, third, you must pay more attention to your wife and the young creatures as God has given you.'"

You'd hardly believe, sir, how particular my mother was with me. I ought to be a better man; but perhaps, please God," he added, reverently raising his cap, "her prayers may be answered yet. We've had great troubles, but maybe it is only to bring us to a sense of our sins."

"I do not doubt it," said the doctor, "but beware of delaying to put your good resolutions into practice. Assemble your family morning and evening, let them join you in prayer, read God's Word to them, and ask Him as a Father, to guide and guard you all, for the Redeemer's sake. Never neglect this duty, but perform it in spirit and in truth, and your labor will be light. You may form the best resolutions, but unless you constantly approach Him in prayer for aid, you will be apt to fail. We have no strength in ourselves, but He says that asking we shall receive," and with this exhortation the kindly doctor departed.

About a fortnight after this time there was seen at the door of the Cartrights all the signs of a very pleasant bustle. Many neighbors stood around admiring the new chair, bought with the money contributed. As the clock struck nine, Stephen came out, accompanied by his son, and it was then seen that a pair of light crutches had also been purchased for the latter.

As his father assisted him into the chair, a cheer rose from the bystanders, and many pressed round him, uttering their good wishes. To Richard this was a trial, but as he met no unkindly glance, he soon recovered composure enough to thank them. It had been arranged that to the brother next himself—a sturdy boy of twelve years—should devolve the task of wheeling him to and from the school, and they set forward, the neighbors continuing their well-meant remarks until they were out of sight, and well on their way to the scene of Richard's future labors. It is useless to try and describe his feelings, for only those who have been brought out of darkness into Heaven's blessed sunshine can imagine them. As he came within sight of the school, he fell as if in an illusive dream, from which he would presently awake to the saddest of his former position; but his mind soon regained its tone, and he thanked God and prayed earnestly that he might ever prove a true and faithful servant to the Lord Jesus.

And he succeeded in all things, in due time attaining the highest point to which he had aspired, improved health and spirits attending him even at the outset of his career.

When capable, he entered upon a situation in a large public school in one of the home counties, and, faithful to his vow, was ever a humble follower of the Redeemer.

His parents, mother, and sister, were his first care, but the poor, the sick, and afflicted

were always sure of his sympathy and help, as far as over his strength and means allowed.

Garrulous Stephen Cartright was never weary of relating to any one who would listen to the oft-repeated tale, the story of the great change that had brightened his son's life.

"Aye," he would exclaim, again and again.

"We are altogether foolish and blind, trusting in our own wisdom, and never discerning good from evil. The two biggest misfortunes of my life, as I then considered them, have, indeed, proved to be, through the mercy of the Almighty, but 'blessings in disguise.'"

Temperance Record.

COMMUNION WINE

BY P. H. BRAGER.

Shall we use fermented wine at the Lord's table?

This seems still to be an open question. One party contends that no other wine is, or has been, known in Bible lands, indeed, that nothing else is wine, and hence that Christ must have used it, and set the example for His Church.

On the other hand, are those who say that several different words are used in the original, to designate what is called wine in our translation; that wine is, on the one hand unsparingly denounced as producing the same evils that we witness in the present day from strong drink, and on the other, classed with the good fruits of the earth, like corn and oil, and they consider it irrational to believe that these opposing descriptions refer to the same article. Besides, with regard to the cup at the Supper, they believe that the prohibition of leaven at the Passover must have included fermented wine as well as fermented bread, and that Christ could have used neither at the institution of His own memorial rite.

We need not question the sincerity or Christian character of either party, nor join in their mutual strictures upon the learning and logic of their opponents. May we not find a basis for agreement in action, without waiting for either of those parties to bring the other to their own views of Biblical criticism? If every person who takes the intoxicating cup at the communion table, were, as a consequence to fall into drinking habits, go away from Christ, and be finally lost, probably no Church would fail to find some other way to fulfill the Master's command. That some do thus fall, there is unfortunately no room to doubt. One of the latest instances I have met with in my reading, is that of a Methodist local preacher, a reformed inebriate, who was sharply rebuked by his official superior for refusing to drink such wine at the Lord's Supper, and who finally yielded, took the cup and fell to rise no more.

I, myself, at a camp-meeting, have heard a reformed drinker acknowledge, that after months of abstinence, the burning thirst for intoxicating drinks was still with him. Yet at that same meeting the Lord's table was set out with fiery alcoholic wine. If this man, and such as he have not yet fallen, must the snare continue to be set for their feet until they are taken and destroyed? How many victims must be ruined in this way, before the Churches will be convinced of the necessity of removing the stumbling-block out of the way? Would ten thousand be required? or would one thousand be enough? or would even hundreds satisfy the demand?

Let the Churches which adhere to this dangerous practice inform us how many "bodies and souls of men" they hold as an offset to their special views in this particular.

On such points as the public speaking of women, and the singing of uninspired hymns, various Churches have yielded in practice, on grounds of practical expediency, without any new light on Scriptural exegesis. May not all Churches still more properly abandon a practice which is proved to be dangerous to many a weak brother for whom Christ died?

One proposes that any person knowing himself to be in danger from this cause shall absent himself from the Communion. But Christ says, "Drink ye all of this." Another recommends that any Church having reformed inebriates among her members use the unfermented fruit of the vine. To this, I say amen; and last some should be in danger of whom we are not aware. I suggest that all Churches follow the same example.—Zion's Herald.

"Murder-mill" was the name by which an Indiana lady called a certain rum-shop. She was prosecuted therefor, but won the suit, being able to prove her allegation a true one.

At a recent dinner given in Glasgow by the liquor sellers, the toast of "Theology of all denominations" was drunk with great enthusiasm!

"Woolloomooloo Band of Hope" is a new temperance association in Sydney, Australia. It is a serious matter to take a name like that on one's self.