



Temperance Department.

A TERRIBLE CASUALTY.

"Yes, it was a terrible thing; a great shock to us all. His poor wife and those darling children. Just a chance, as one may say, or perhaps, as the preachers would put it, a mysterious dispensation of Providence. Did you ever see such beautiful flowers? I declare that solid column of tuberoses, to symbolize a life broken off in the middle of its career of promise, is just perfection. How handsome he looks, too. I see by the inscription on the plate that he was only just thirty. What a casualty." So rattles on one of the "five hundred friends" who throng George W.—'s parlors—or rather those of his wife, perhaps of his creditors—on the day of George's funeral. "But how did it happen? I have not heard the particulars. Just saw the notice of the funeral, and hurried up."

"Haven't heard? Oh, it happened this way. The family were all out of town, and George, poor fellow, attacked with some slight summer ailment, went down stairs for medicine, and it is supposed took poison by mistake. When the stupid servant found him he was in a terrible condition, and by the time she brought a doctor it was too late to save him, though he lingered in great agony for three days—long enough for his heart-broken wife to come and see him, but not for him to recognize her."

"What a dreadful casualty!" says the friend, and the service proceeds: "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," spirit—where? That depends.

Was it a casualty? This is the true statement of the case. George W.— was a good fellow, a handsome fellow; the pet of drawing-rooms till he married the prettiest girl of his "set," and the pet of dinner and supper parties afterwards. He had even been a church member once in his boyish days; but that was long ago, and had been put away with other "childish things." Now he was a man, a father, a rising young lawyer, generous. "Nobody's enemy but his own," his friends said—a cabalistic phrase which has come to have but one meaning. His wife never suspected the habit which had been gaining upon him so rapidly for the past few months when she departed with her little ones for their summer's country rest and refreshment, saying: "Now don't mope in the house, George; go out and enjoy yourself; see your friends and have a good time." And he took a "good time," according to his definition of the term. There was no one at home whose opinion he valued now, and night after night he stumbled in with barely sense enough to get to bed, sleep off the effects of one carouse, and begin another next day.

"Aren't you going this thing too strong?" asked a friend who saw him to his own doorstep the night of the "casualty." "You'll find it hard to knock off when the old lady comes home."

"Mind your own business, and don't call my wife names," said George, as he closed the door without bidding his friend good-night.

Somehow that night's sleep did not come as easily as usual, and after tossing wearily for hours, the poor victim exclaimed: "I'm awfully thirsty. I believe I am in a fever. I must have another drink." So he groped down the stairs, found his way to the sideboard, and a great draught of brandy followed all that had been already taken that evening. Then another, and another. Reason was quite gone, sense almost, as the fated wretch discovered the bottle to be empty. "Here's another," he stammered, as his trembling hand grasped a similar flask, and raising it to his lips he drained at least a wine-glassful of some poison he kept in the house, and which had accidentally been placed on the sideboard.

Was it a casualty, this substitution of one poison for another, the quick for the slow? Was it a casualty that, stupefied with drink, the dying man sank down without a thought of calling for assistance, and was found in the morning past all human aid? Are the heaven and hell which are to come after death casualties; or is it as sure as the word of eternal truth, "no drunkard shall enter the kingdom of heaven?"

Ah! there is no chance in this life. "As a man soweth, so shall he reap;" and the seeds of the social wine-cup are like the dragons' teeth of the ancients, and spring up, sooner or later, a crop of armed enemies ready to hunt their powerless victim to the sure end of a drunkard's grave.—*Good Words.*

FOUR HUNDRED MILLION TOTAL ABSTAINERS.

Ex-Bailie Lewis of Edinburgh, in addressing a meeting at Dunfermlin, is reported by the *League Journal* to have made the following points:—He declared that eighty million bushels of grain were used annually in the country in the manufacture of drink, and contended that if the grain were destroyed by any other agency the country would not tolerate it. He called special attention to the fact that large masses of the population were becoming disintegrated from the congregations of every denomination, and that the Church was losing its influence in the country to an alarming extent. There was no denying the fact that to the false position occupied by the Church towards the drink traffic this was largely attributable. As an illustration, he stated that Mr. Bradlaugh, the high priest of infidelity, had been lecturing in Edinburgh a few nights ago. Several Christian gentlemen took exception to his teaching, and contended that the pauperism and deterioration which prevailed were not traceable to "over-population" but to drinking and drunkenness. Mr. Bradlaugh flippantly retorted by reminding these gentlemen that this was a sorry compliment to their Christianity—there being 400,000,000 Buddhists whose religion prevented them indulging in drink, while the Christian religion did not prevent them doing so; on the contrary, he found there were not a few publicans and brewers elders and office-bearers in the churches. Surely the fact of our common Christianity being held up to reproach from such a quarter in crowded meetings of workingmen, is sufficient to constrain our ministers and kirk sessions to look this grave question fairly in the face, and at whatever sacrifice put to silence the cavillings of the atheistical and profane. The unthinking portion of the people did not read the gospel as contained in the Bible, but they unfortunately read another gospel as seen in the lives of professing Christians. He wondered much at the inconsistency of such men as Mr. Chamberlain, the member for Birmingham, who, in deploring the evils of the drinking customs of the present day, stated that out of every twenty moderate drinkers one at least became a confirmed drunkard; and yet, strange to say, Mr. Chamberlain was not an abstainer. In concluding, the ex-Bailie enjoined on his audience total abstinence, not only as a scriptural but as a Christian duty. The address was listened to with marked attention.

INTOXICATING WINE AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

A correspondent of the *Christian World* writes as follows:—

Has it ever occurred to our Christian brethren who maintain so firmly the use of the intoxicating wine at the Lord's Table to consider how many are shut out from the privilege of communion by their conscientious objection to partaking of an alcoholic wine? I know it will be said they voluntarily exclude themselves. Yes, 'tis true, they might join the church and pass the cup, while they partook of the bread, and, when in the church, might seek for an exchange of the wine; but, then, as others before them have found, in the one case they would be called singular beings, or suspended—as were five elders of a Scottish congregation—for passing the cup untasted, and in the other case charged as disturbers of the churches. Surely, seeing the ravages of intoxicating drink in the Church, as well as in the world, it would be a little matter for those who like alcoholic wines to yield and follow the advice of the great apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. xiv. 1-4). Many years since I was asked by a member in communion how I could reconcile the use of that which produced such terrible evils on the most sacred occasion by giving a place for it on the Lord's Table. I could not then, and I cannot now; the reconciliation rests with those who adhere to its use at that table. Mr. Wilson on "The Wines of the Bible," to which your last number refers, may satisfy some minds as to the use of an intoxicating wine; but the researches of the Rev. D. Burns and Dr. Lees in their Bible Commentary give to others a firm basis for maintaining their appeal for the substitution of an un-intoxicating wine; and in the plea for the fruit of the vine, and the sequel to it, by the Rev. Wm. Reid, of Edinburgh, based upon Scriptural authority, "he reasons out the duty of the Church to use at the Lord's Supper the 'fruit of the vine,' with an earnestness and dignity, a courage and a courtesy, worthy a Christian minister, and of the grave interests involved in the discussion;" and in another pamphlet on responsibility Mr. Reid adduces "the case of a lady, the wife of a medical gentleman, who became addicted to intemperance, and was disowned by her family. She was induced to become an abstainer. In course of time she recovered her wonted sense of propriety, and was received anew into the society of her family and friends, and in due season restored to the fellowship of the Church; but, partaking of the wine in use at the Lord's

table, she relapsed, was found drunk in the street, and ultimately died the inmate of a lunatic asylum." Mr. Reid adds:—"Did delicacy permit, I could tell of more who have been ensnared by communion wine;" and the Rev. Alexander Stewart, of Aberdeen, in his Commentary (page 414), after speaking of the danger to those who, through grace, have been reformed, to partake of the fruit of fermentation, adds:—"Fermented wine is inappropriate as a symbol, and dangerous in reality, when used at the table of the Lord; but the unfermented juice of the grape is suitable and safe. Whether, then, would Christ use the one or the other? Morally there is no room for hesitation. Besides, His own words are decisive—He used the 'produce of the vine.'"

CAUGHT IN THE QUICKSAND.

Victor Hugo gives the following impressive description of a death in the quicksand of certain coasts of Brittany or Scotland. He says:

"It sometimes happens that a man, traveler or fisherman, walking on the beach at low tide, far from the bank, suddenly notices that for several minutes he has been walking with difficulty. The sand beneath his feet is like pitch; his soles stick in it; it is sand no longer; it is glue.

"The beach is perfectly dry, but at every step he takes, as soon as he lifts his foot, the print which it leaves fills with water. The eye, however, has noticed no change; the immense strand is smooth and tranquil; all the sand has the same appearance; nothing distinguishes the surface which is solid from that which is no longer so; the joyous little crowd of sand-flies continue to leap tumultuously over the wayfarer's feet. The man pursues his way, goes forward, inclines to the land, endeavors to get nearer the upland. He is not anxious. Anxious about what? Only he feels, somehow, as if the weight of his feet increases with every step he takes. Suddenly he sinks in.

"He sinks in two or three inches. Decidedly he is not on the right road; he stops to take his bearings. All at once he looks at his feet. They have disappeared. The sand covers them. He draws them out of the sand; he will retrace his steps; he turns back, he sinks in deeper. The sand comes up to his ankles; he pulls himself out and throws himself to the left; the sand half leg deep. He throws himself to the right; the sand comes up to his shins. Then he recognizes with unspeakable terror that he is caught in the quicksand, and that he has beneath him the terrible medium in which man can no more walk than the fish can swim, he throws off his load if he has one, lightens himself as a ship in distress; it is already too late; the sand is above his knees. He calls, he waves his hat or his handkerchief; the sand gains on him more and more. If the beach is deserted, if the land is too far off, if there is no help in sight, it is all over.

"He is condemned to that appalling burial, long, inflexible, implacable and impossible to slacken or to hasten, which endures for hours, which seizes you erect, free and in full health, and which draws you by the feet; which, at every effort that you attempt, at every shout you utter, drags you a little deeper, sinking you slowly into the earth while you look upon the horizon, the sails of the ships upon the sea, the birds flying and singing, the sunshine and the sky. The victim attempts to sit down, to lie down, to creep; every movement he makes intensifies him; he straightens up, he sinks in; he feels that he is being swallowed. He howls, implores, cries to the clouds, despairs.

"Behold him waist deep in the sand. The sand reaches his breast; he is now only a bust. He raises his arms, utters furious groans, clutches the beach with his nails, would hold by that straw, leans upon his elbows to pull himself out of this soft sheath; sobs frenziedly; the sand rises; the sand reaches his shoulders; the sand reaches his neck; the face alone is visible now. The mouth cries, the sand fills it—silence. The eyes still gaze—the sand shuts them; night. Now the forehead decreases, a little hair flutters above the sand; a hand comes to the service of the beach, moves, and shakes, disappears. It is the earth-drowning man. The earth filled with the ocean becomes a trap. It presents itself like a plain, and opens like a wave."

Could anything more graphically describe the progress of a young man from the first cup of wine to the last?—*Canada Christian Monthly.*

"PLL DIE FIRST."

The following letter from a medical man appears in the last number of the *British Workman*:—

Holt, Norfolk, May 30, 1877.
DEAR SIR,—The following facts transpired in my practice three years ago, and I have thought they might interest some of the readers of the *British Workman*. At the time mentioned I had a poor man a patient laboring under a severe attack of confluent small-pox. On the sixteenth day after the attack he was verily one black mass, and the stench arising

from him was simply unbearable without the handkerchief was applied to the nose. He was also delirious. Well, I suggested to him that he should have some stimulants in the shape of either brandy or porter or ale. He muttered out something which I thought was, "I 'ont," so I left him to his fate.

The following day I repeated my orders; he was more polite, for he said "I 'ont; I'll die first." What this meant was all a mystery to me, until I learnt from his landlady that he had been a great drunkard, and that a little time before Miss Hammond, from Fakenham, had been preaching at Briston, and he had gone out of curiosity to hear her. Happily he was not only convicted but converted, and is still a staunch total abstainer. I directly made my way to good old Mr. Hill, the largest farmer in the parish, who has been an abstainer for the last sixty years, and who now rides his pony like a boy, although over fourscore, and told him the tale. He gave orders for the poor man to have all the new milk and eggs he wanted, and I am proud to say I never saw a more rapid recovery from such a state.

I remain, faithfully yours,

A TOTAL ABSTAINER.

P.S.—I may add I had put into my hands last March, Dr. Farrar's sermon, "The Vow of the Nazarite." I have tried total abstinence since then, and I find every word of the sermon not only strictly true, but quite practicable.

—The evidence given by Captain Walter, the head of the Corps of Commissionaires, before the Select Committee on the civil employment of soldiers, sailors, and marines, printed with the report of the committee lately issued, shows that his opinion of the present condition of the army is not favorable. Captain Walter "regrets to say" that the army has fallen off very considerably; indeed, every year it seems to him to get worse; there is a marked difference in the non-commissioned officers in every point of view, and especially in education; and, as far as the rank and file go, they are totally different. There is, he asserts, "a great falling off both in physique and morale." The amount of drunkenness he represents as being "frightful." In support of this statement, he mentions that he has now passed nearly 3,000 men into the Corps of Commissionaires, besides having rejected a great many others; out of these 3,000 men he has been obliged to dismiss from various causes about 1,000. All these men came to him with wonderfully good characters. He instances the case of a master-gunner of artillery who came to him of exceedingly smart appearance and having "no end of certificates." He had been recommended for a commission; Captain Walter put him on the staff and turned him out of the corps in less than a fortnight for *delirium tremens*. In another case, that of a paymaster-sergeant of a Fusilier regiment, who also came with a "wonderful character," the same thing happened. Captain Walter's experience, which must be very great, leads him to the uncomfortable conclusion that regimental certificates are no characters whatever, and that as a rule the more certificates a man has the more he wants them. "There is," he adds, "no more comparison between the non-commissioned officer of the present day and what he was in 1843 than there is between London at the present time and what it was twenty years ago." In other words (says the *Pall Mall Gazette*), military deterioration has progressed in the same rate as metropolitan improvement.

"WHAT DID YOUR SEAT IN THE PUBLIC-HOUSE COST YOU?" "A man came to join my church in Glasgow who had signed the temperance pledge about twelve months before, and whose home, when I visited it, was destitute of every kind of furniture—there was not even a chair to sit down upon. 'I have now,' said the man, 'been an abstainer twelve months; I have paid for a sitting in the public-house long enough, and dearly enough, and I now wish to exchange it for a seat in your church—in the House of God.' 'What did your seat in the public-house cost you a week?' I enquired. (He was an engraver by trade, and was employed in one of the first establishments in the city, and was in the habit of receiving £2 5s. per week.) He hung down his head as he said, 'Well, say nineteen shillings.' His house had not, as I have said, at the time he signed the pledge, a stick of furniture. I visited it twelve months afterwards, and saw several chairs, a chest of drawers, and many other articles, which gave it the appearance of a well-furnished house. He is now an office-bearer in the church, and one of my most useful men."—*Rev. Alexander Wallace, D. D.*

Best in the Lord, and
wait patiently for Him.
PSA. 37: 7.