



A Safe Example.

(Mrs. G. S. Reaney, in 'The Temperance Record'.)

I was on my way to a meeting in Hampshire, travelling in a well-filled third-class carriage. It came naturally to talk to one and another, spelling opportunity. I had found it quite impossible when about half way to resist lecturing a young mother, with a baby at her breast, about the refreshment contained in the wine flask. I had ventured to tell her that an eminent London physician had recently declared that if each one of the six hundred thousand drunkards in the British Isles, alive at this moment, could give the history of their love for drink, nine-tenths would have to declare they had imbibed their first taste from their mother's milk, and I followed up the statement by other Temperance facts.

In a little while I was conscious that the whole carriage was listening to my remarks, and to spare the blushes of the young mother, who I fear not unnaturally felt my words more or less personal, I changed the conversation by asking a sailor occupying the seat opposite to mine if he knew anything of the Canvas Bag Mission—delightful work which provided readings for all vessels afloat? Chancing to know the one—William Cook, of Folkestone—to whom this mission had owed its origin, I told the story. How having himself been blessed by picking up a small tract and reading it in leisure moments in his own cottage, he had purchased other tracts, and put them in brown paper covers and given them to some who went out in their fishing smacks, to read in their leisure moments on the high seas; how he had found his good desires defeated, because ere the tracts could be read, the sea-water had soaked through the brown paper and made havoc with the printing, how, further, to obviate this difficulty Cook had cut up old sacks and made these into covers.

Then came one to Folkestone connected with a popular paper for the British workman; and he told the story of Cook's efforts to pass on to others the blessing he himself had received from a tract; and this description of the old sailor, illustrated by a life-like portrait, had got into the hands of a confirmed invalid, who forthwith planned to supply all who would undertake to fill them, canvas bags, securely made, in which books and pamphlets could be preserved intact. And from this beautiful planning had come the widespread and well-known to-day Canvas Bag Mission.

The moral has been applied: 'So send your books and magazines to some Sailors' Institute and ask for them a place in some canvas bag!'

It was as I paused that I noticed for the first time amongst my listeners a gentleman with brown beard and bronzed complexion.

'Thank you very much for your information,' he said, 'I have just landed from a six weeks' voyage on a vessel which had no canvas bag reading for its sailors. I will do my best to supply the deficiency.'

'Hear, hear,' said my original sailor—the man who sat opposite—beaming upon the speaker.

'Permit me to say,' continued the gentleman with the brown beard, 'that I consider the topic of conversation before the Canvas Bag Mission was introduced was one slightly misleading. From words which were spoken I think a conclusion was intended to be drawn, that because the few drunk to excess the many were in error who drank at all, where as I for one maintain that it is far better to be a moderate drinker than a man who has to prove up his moral nature by a pledge of total abstinence.'

'You will admit,' I said, 'that the few drinkers to excess are numbered by thousands in our land alone?'

'Certainly,' was the reply, 'I have no wish to discredit that statement; my point is rather that that fact alone should not lead me to give up my high standard.'

'Which is?' I enquired.

'To set an example of moderation which all might safely follow,' was the prompt reply.

'Forgive me,' I said, 'but are you quite wise in your choice of the word "safely"?'

'Undoubtedly.'

'Suffer me to ask you very carefully to examine your statement,' I said, adding quickly, 'you are doubtless free from the subtle temptations of inherited taste for alcohol. Your surroundings in home-life tend to refine and elevate, not to coarsen and depress. You are in full possession of a well-balanced mind . . .'

The gentleman with the brown beard smiled and would have spoken, but I continued—

'Say there are five hundred people in this train, and at the next station all got out, and to continue their journey had to cross on foot a bridge which spanned a river. A board, displayed where all could see it, read thus:

'"This bridge is warranted to carry one only at a time, and that one not exceeding fifteen stone in weight.

'You take the lead, the given weight leaves a fair margin in your case, but you turn to the four hundred and ninety-nine others who have left the train, many far heavier than yourself, some even eighteen and twenty stone, and to these indiscriminately you say—

'"Come on, the bridge which will bear me will bear you."

'By what right do you claim to lead people, trying in all good faith to follow your example, to their ruin? Surely as a moderate drinker, perfect as your own safety may be, the example might be utterly misleading to some to whom drink will present temptations of which you know nothing: whereas, as a total abstainer, you could never by your example lead the most tempted to excess!'

I had been so eager in stating my case that I had not noticed the train had slackened speed. At that moment it stopped at

a station and the gentleman with the brown beard alighted.

As he turned to close the carriage door he said to me.

'You have the best of the argument. I am bound to admit'; and raising his hat he was gone.

It was quite two years afterwards that the chairman of a meeting, which I had travelled some distance to address, was making a few remarks about the power of personal influence. He told, as an illustration, the story of a friend of his—who some time ago recently returned from abroad—came to visit him, starting the visit by signing the pledge.

'A lady in the train down had convinced him that as one anxious to set an example to his fellow-creatures, which they might safely follow, it was better to be a total abstainer than a moderate drinker'; and turning to me my chairman added—

'I think, Mrs. Reaney, by the description my friend gave me, you were the lady who did the deed!'

'A gentleman with bronzed complexion and brown beard?' I enquired, much interested.

'The same,' was the reply, 'and I congratulate you in winning so good a man to the Temperance cause!'

TEMPERANCE PLEDGE CRUSADE
HONOR ROLL.

For Week Ending Monday Night, Jan. 5.

- *MONA G. TOLPUTT, Salmon Arm, B. C.
- *THOS. H. P. ANDERSON, Bancroft, Ont.
- *JOHN WELLS, Montreal.
- *PIERSON MCKENZIE, Victoria, B. C.
- *EMERALD ST. METH. S.S., Hamilton
- *VERA J. HENDERSON, Stapledon, Ont.
- *FASIL GRIFFIN, Millgrove, Ont.
- MRS. FRED. HOUGHTON, Topsfield, Me.
- JERRY HENWOOD, Westbrook, N.S.
- *K. M. FISHER, Wingham, Ont.
- THOS. BRAY, Appelle, Assa., N.W.T.

Total Signatures to date 57,832. 616
Pledges Received Since Last Issue.

Those with this mark after their names have sent at least forty signatures to the pledge. Each additional list of twenty names entitles the sender to an additional *

*MONA G. TOLPUTT, Salmon Arm, B.C. heads this list, as her list was the first received for the week beginning Tuesday, Dec. 30.

The Pledge Crusade.

If you have not already signed the 'Messenger' Temperance Pledge Roll would you not like to sign your own name to the following solemn pledge and get others who have not already signed to do the same? These forms may then be cut out and forwarded to the Temperance Department, 'Northern Messenger,' 'Witness' Building, Montreal, where they will be collated and registered with the Dominion Alliance for safe keeping. These forms may be sent in with the renewal subscription. If sent separately, don't forget to put a two-cent stamp on the envelope.

TEMPERANCE PLEDGE ROLL.

I solemnly promise by the grace of God that I will abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and will discountenance such use by others.

NAME.

ADDRESS.

In witness }
whereof }