

### THE LECTURER WAS A FRAUD

And Didn't Know a Manhattan From a Shandy Gaff.

The Major Could Drink or Leave it Alone, But Never Tried the Latter—Lecturer Called Down.

Once there was a town that was having a total abstinence jamboree. The excitement over temperance was becoming intemperate, all on account of a reclamist who was conducting a series of meetings at Central hall. The lecturer claimed to have been ousted for 15 years at a stretch. He had a sudden past that read like a session of the legislature. He had been down in the gutter, and told about it every evening. The front rows were filled with horror stricken old ladies and sympathetic young girls who shuddered when he told how he used to hold strong drink until he would see green anacardis and polkadot lizards peking out from behind the Morris chair.

The former soak took particular delight in telling what a brute he had been all during the time that he was doing business with the rum fiend. According to his own story he must have enjoyed a thirt that was a pip-pip. He touched up the black bottle every five minutes or so. In the whole 15 years of continuous toot he never had been known to compromise on a suit or take a cigar and put it in his pocket to smoke after a while. Nothing but the red eye would do for Oscar when he started on a bender. He said that he sold a locket containing his mother's picture in order to get his morning's morning. Once he broke open the savings bank belonging to his little brother and took out 63 cents to blow for alcohol. When his darling sister remonstrated with him, he chased her with a poker. He forged his father's name to a check rather than do without his liquor. In fact he had been an around pup and he wanted everybody to know it.

After each meeting the ladies would cluster around and offer congratulations. The ordinary man who never had been through the tremors or assaulted his folks had to retire to the background, feeling small and unworthy. The men who attended the meetings and observed the popularity of the recent drunkard began to realize

ize that they had made a serious mistake in sticking to sarsaparilla.

The reclamist tank was invited somewhere to tea every evening, and there the women would hang upon his words and beg him to tell once more the sweet and simple story of how he swatted his sister with the poker.

The meetings were a grand success. All the people who did not drink came to the front and signed the pledge two or three times a week. Every man who was suspected of keeping beer in his cellar or taking a flask with him when he went fishing was entreated to get on the water wagon, or it might be a matter of only a few months until his children would be crying for bread and his wife would have to sew for a living and he would be dead to the world, lying face down on the cement sidewalk.

If this town there was an attorney known as the major. He was regarded with suspicion, as he was supposed to be high church, although he never attended services. His nose had an iridescent glimmer and he was a little watery in the eyes. The major had been brought up in a household which held that the sideboard and the cradle were equally indispensable. He had been taught that when the copper distilled essence of joy is more than 12 years old, intemperance may be considered a virtue. He held that a scholar and a gentleman never took water afterwards. It was an article of faith with him that the genuine article did not have a cross word in a barrel of it, but, on the contrary was a valuable medicinal agent, having curative properties which could not justly be claimed for root beer, moxie or hot chocolate.

So when the rescue corps went after the major, it had a large contract on hand. The ladies tried to wrestle him to earth and pin a blue ribbon on him, but he bade them stand back and declared for personal liberty. His idea of personal liberty was to drink it or leave it alone, although he never had tried the latter.

The ladies told him that he would be a hopeless inebriate in less than a year unless he shunned the wine cup. He replied that the wine cup never could land him, because he went against nothing but the low ball, which means a full jigger and then about another finger for luck. The landlady of the boarding house at which the major lived was one of the earnest workers. She was a good soul, and she longed to wean the major away from the old stuff and get his nose bleached. She advised him to take the gold cure, but the major said they never would get a drink

into him unless they hurried it into him while he was asleep. The landlady gave him "Ten Nights in a Barrroom" to read, and had a little girl sing "Father, Dear Father, Come Home With Me Now" for his special benefit, but it did not seem to do any good. Also she gave him a chart showing that the interior of the moderate drinker's stomach resemble a colored map of Asia Minor. When he came down to dinner he found at his plate a card representing a snake with a forced stinger coiled around a bottle of Rhine wine, and below it was some pried matter to the effect that the intoxicants used cost more than the public schools. The major retorted that this was a clear case of value received. The public schools had filled his youth with sorrow, while the distilleries had helped him to forget his troubles for 30 years.

After each of these efforts to save him the major went to his room and took a gentlemen drink out of a tumbler just to prove that he retained his personal liberty.

There did not seem to be much chance of pulling in the major, but the landlady and her friends kept after him. At last, just to humor them, he promised to attend one of the meetings. He slipped into a back seat and listened to the horrible example. Next day he requested an interview with the lecturer. At this there was much rejoicing. It seemed as though the legal dipsonamic was beginning to weaken.

When the renowned temperance advocate entered the major's room, the major received him with formal courtesy.

"I understand that you were the champion booze fighter at one time," said the major, pouring a goodly slug from his private decanter. "Now, I want you to smell of that and tell me whether it is rye or bourbon."

The lecturer began to edge off. "What kind of bitters are used in a Manhattan?" demanded the major, severely.

"I don't know what you mean," said his caller. "And yet you boast of a record! What did you drink during all the 15 years that you were on the turf?"

"Rum," was the weak reply. "Go to!" said the major, indignantly. "Do you think you can deceive an expert? Rum is not a beverage. It is a remedy for a bad cold. No one drinks rum except in the nautical novel or a story by the Rev. Sheldon. Perhaps you can tell me what sour mash is?"

"I am afraid not," said the other.

"Then I denounce you as a make-believe rouser," said the major. "When I heard you misstate the terms in your lecture last evening, I saw that you did not know the difference between a Remsen Cooler and a Shandy Gaff. And that talk about throwing your sister against the red hot stove and trying to choke your old father did not go with me. Don't you know that when a true gentleman is cornered he goes home and gives money to his relatives?"

"I have always understood that liquor makes a brute of a man," said the lecturer.

"Not at all. It is a shortage of liquor the morning after that causes one to be disagreeable. You should have studied up on these details before you started out to be a reformed drunkard. I don't believe you have had any experience whatever."

"I tried to take a drink many years ago, but it made me ill," said the lecturer. "I discovered, however, that in order to be a power for good in temperance work I had to tell about being on prolonged bays around the 5-cent doggeries. The slums have an abiding fascination for well behaved people who never go near them and, of course, there is no risk in stringing them. But when I strike a saloon specialist, such as you, my talk doesn't go. I trust you will not expose me."

"Certainly not," replied the major. "We are justified in doing anything to push along a good cause. But I am going to ask you to make a quick jump to the next town. You have demoralized my boarding house. The landlady has been so busy trying to get a hammer lock on the demon of strong drink that we don't get anything to eat."

"I thank you for keeping my secret," said the lecturer. If you were to squeal on me and let it be known that I have left an exemplary life all these years, I would not stand one-two-seven with the respectable element."

Next day the town settled back to its usual calm.

Moral: Any one who is going into reform work should get a thorough technical education.

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