

a familiar question, and an answer in the affirmative became almost as good form as inclusion in a Royal Drawing Room list or a ducal bridge party.

The Rev. Leslie Herrick very properly congratulated himself therefore on a first-rate piece of business in bagging a star of such magnitude for his modest Vicarage meeting on social reform. He would not have ventured to approach her but for the circumstance that she was an old friend, or more correctly an old patroness, of his wife. The same circumstance secured her consent to attend.

Her theme, admirably and felicitously chosen, was "The Crime of Drunkenness," with special reference to the lower orders. To be sure no drunkard of the lower orders would be present to benefit by her scathing denunciation of his ways; but the reporters aforesaid would give her eloquence wings, and it was hoped that between its swills of beer the nation would give heed and mend. Now here she was primed and ready, with a picked audience hungering for her wisdom, and lo! no Herrick.

She was on the point of rising to depart in dudgeon when the defaulter entered hurriedly with his little daughter, a tripping, eager, fairhaired, rosy, winsome child of seven or eight. He was deathly white and piteously nervous; piteously solicitous to conciliate, too, as he apologised with an almost abject humility, first to Lady Stapleton and then to the guests in general, for his seeming discourtesy. He was detained, he explained rather brokenly, by the sudden and alarming illness of his wife, who sent her regrets for being unable to come in.

"You shouldn't have come either, you should have stayed with her," Lady Stapleton responded, touched and mollified by the evident sincerity of his con-