



### The Newsboy's Story.

Going from the office one evening last week, we were stopped by a wan-faced, sad-eyed boy. He says he's seventeen, but in size he doesn't look it by a half-dozen years. He hadn't had enough to eat since he came into the world. Hunger is a law of his life. Despair peeps from his sad eyes, and premature sorrow has been cut into the cheeks which God intended should bloom with roses of youthful joy. But joy is a stranger to this youngster. He lives in hell—the hell created by a drunken father. He was cursed before he was born. The saloon did it.

'Take a paper, sir, for mother's sake,' he said. The appealing tone in which he spoke must have stormed the heart of God. It was more than an appeal; it was a live coal of prayer from off the white altar of the Eternal. As his hand moved swiftly, he said, 'Say, can I serve you reg'lar, mister?'

'You can, indeed, my lad.'

Seeing he was disposed to talk, we asked: 'Are your parents living?'

'Yes,' he answered quickly, and a flood of bitter memories seemed to look through his eyes. 'Yes, but you see dad—he don't live with us no more.'

'Doesn't he?'

'No; we had to drive him away. He would steal mother's hard-earned money and mine, and spend it for beer.'

'Too bad, too bad.'

'But say, mister, he like to got us before he went.' Here his eyes sparkled as he recalled their narrow escape. 'Policemen were just in time to save us.'

'Save you? How?'

'Why, man, he had a big butcher-knife, and was about to kill mother and me when the cops nabbed him.'

This boy was worse than fatherless. Why? Ask the beer shop. It made a brute of his father.

This boy is homeless. Why? Ask the liquor bar. While brutalizing his father, it also robbed him of the money with which he could have built a home.

This lad has not an equal chance in the world with other boys. Why? The saloon sent him into the street, when his place was in school.

This boy goes home every night to a crushed, broken and husbandless mother. Why? Because the saloon has taken away her husband.

This brave warrior goes forth every morning into the streets to fight the wolf for mother, himself and five smaller ones, who are unconsciously grog-shop victims.

The institution which will make a thief and a murderer of a father will destroy the nation if given time. The one remedy is—destroy the institution.—'The Banner.'

### Dinner Customs in Olden Times.

Shortly after the accession of James I. to the English throne, when Scottish gentlemen were beginning to feel at home in London, Lord Harewood gave a dinner party, to which were invited a large number of courtiers and officers, both civil and military. After the bottle had circulated freely, and the spirits of the assembly had begun to rise, General S—, an English trooper of fame, and a reckless 'bon-vivant,' rose and said:

'Gentlemen, when I am in my cups, and the generous wine begins to warm my blood, I have an absurd custom of railing against the Scotch. Knowing my weakness, I hope no gentleman in the company will take it amiss.' He sat down, and a Highland chief, Sir Robert Blackie of Blair-Athol, presenting a front like an old battle-worn tower, quietly rose in his place, and with the utmost simplicity and good nature, remarked:

'Gentlemen, when I am in my cups, and the generous wine begins to warm my blood, if I hear a man rail against the Scotch, I have an

absurd custom of kicking him at once out of the company. Knowing my weakness, I hope no gentleman will take it amiss.' General S— did not on that occasion suffer himself to follow his usual custom! What fools the wine made of these men!—'The National Advocate.'

### Then and Now.

Then: Only a few years ago a young man of promise was invited to sign a pledge. He declined, saying, 'Why should I deny myself the use of the cheering wine because some people abuse it? I can drink or leave it alone!'

Now: A man staggered into a pawnbroker's shop in New York the other day, and, laying down a package on the counter, exclaimed: 'Give me ten cents!'

The proprietor opened the parcel and found a pair of little red shoes so slightly soiled as to indicate that they had seen but little wear.

'Got them home,' said the man; 'my wife bought them for the baby.' Mad with thirst he cried: 'Give me ten cents. I must have a drink.'

'You had better take them back to your wife,' said the pawnbroker, 'the baby will need them.'

'No she won't,' said the man, 'because she's dead. She's dead, I say; died in the night.' And he bowed his head on the counter and wept like a child.—Selected.

'Do you object to cigarette smoke?' asked young Softleigh as he prepared to light a cigarette.

'Really, I don't know,' rejoined Miss Cutting. 'No gentleman ever smoked one in my presence.'

### A Child Shall Lead Them.

(S. Miller, in the 'Temperance Leader and League Journal'.)

(Concluded.)

'That's what puzzles me,' replied Ferguson, after a few moments' calm reflection. 'If death is annihilation, how could I see my dead father, and mother, and sister?'

'It must have been a trick of the imagination, if your theory is correct.'

'No, sir, it was nothing of the sort,' cried Ferguson, angrily.

'What if the Bible is true then, after all?'

I said, looking at him quietly.

He winced for a moment. 'It's all one, there is no hope for me now, the devil tells me.'

'But the devil was a liar from the beginning, and if you had been studying the Bible when you were studying infidel publications, you could have silenced the adversary of souls with one word, "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."'

Ferguson did not answer, but gradually the cloud of depression that hung o'er his countenance broke, and a glimmering of hope seemed to appear through the gloom of despair. Ferguson was the son of respectable parents, he had received a good education, and he began life creditably; but in an evil hour he associated himself with a set of Free Thinkers, and, carried away by their evil influence, he became a rank infidel. Latterly he had fallen into dissipated habits, and by the time I made his acquaintance he had lost every trace of his respectability, and even in the miserable locality in which he lived was held in contempt. I had almost lost heart in the attempt to reclaim him, but it seemed as if we had got to a turning-point at last. His theory of no future state of being was shaken, and he was more than half convinced that he was on the wrong track. He received my visits in a better spirit than formerly, too, and step by step I hoped to win him back to the truth. But, alas! so soon as he was able to go about again, his besetting sin took hold of him. The craving for drink returned, and he could not go past his old accustomed haunts. The public-house lamp, like an evil eye, haunted him at every corner, and lured him towards it with the serpent's secret charm. The stumbling-block in the way of Ferguson's happiness was the spirit shop, and the enemy started up before the man at every step he took. Disheartened and depressed in spirit, I was leaving him one day after a last vain effort to get him to take the temperance pledge. I had reached

the door, and my hand was on the lock, when his youngest child came bounding in. He was a remarkably pretty little fellow, despite all the disadvantages of dirt and rags. Fixing his bright, intelligent eyes upon me, he made a dead halt, his face all smiles and dimples.

A happy thought struck me, and taking the boy's hand in mine, I led him up to his father. 'Ferguson, if I were you, I would try to get rid of this little one,' I said, looking quite serious.

The father stared at me with astonishment stamped on every feature.

'He would be better lying silent in his coffin than here,' I continued.

A shudder quivered through the father's frame, and involuntarily he stretched out his hand and drew the child to his knee.

'If he lives what can you expect him to become without a father's care, and with a drunkard's example constantly before his eyes?'

'Charlie has not a bad disposition,' muttered Ferguson; 'none of my children have, sir,' he added, sharply.

'But do you think it possible that they can breathe the tainted atmosphere of moral pollution without inhaling its poison?'

He looked down, silent.

'There is a bud of glorious promise' said I, pointing to little Charlie, who was nestling lovingly on his father's bosom. 'But as surely as a garden blossom requires the gardener's watchful oversight to bring it to perfection, as surely does this little one need a parent's care in the morning of life; and that you know as well as I do, Ferguson,' I added, with emphasis.

'God knows I have tried,' he muttered, and the tears came into his eyes.

'Man, could you not sacrifice a selfish indulgence for the sake of that promising child?' I said, as he appeared to waver. 'Is the love of that fresh young heart not better than the false smile of the mocker? Try it,' I urged; 'and here is Charlie going to promise that father's sacrifice will be gloriously rewarded in the affection and respect of his children to life's latest moment.'

A great tear fell on Charlie's upturned face, and with the quick perception of childhood the little creature divined something amiss, and flung his arms round his father's neck and kissed him.

'It's not too late, you see, Ferguson,' I said, when he lifted his head. 'The sacrifice will be well repaid if you make it, and it will be your own fault, sir, if this little fellow doesn't help yet to redeem the family name,' I added, smiling.

'God bless you, sir, you have stirred the golden chord,' whispered his wife as I passed out.

Yes, the golden chord was struck at last; the next time I went back Ferguson met me himself at the door with a beaming countenance.

'I've done it, sir,' he exclaimed with a joyous smile. 'I took the pledge yon day before I slept, and my wife has taken it too.'

'And you'll never repent it,' I added.

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Ferguson had a clever head, and when it was clear he used it to good purpose. Step by step he redeemed his position after he signed the pledge, and in the course of a year or two again the family were in a flourishing position. He has continued faithful to the teetotal pledge, and I have the pleasure of recording that he has entirely abandoned his infidel views, and is a member of the church of Christ. And as a proof of his prosperity, I may add that from time to time I have a pound note slipped into my hand to help the poor and needy amongst God's people.

This story is strictly true. A more hopeless case than Ferguson's could not be imagined, but the grace of God is sufficient for all things, and by patience and perseverance, in humble dependence upon God, the most obdurate heart will yield in the end. Try to find the vulnerable part, probe the incrustations of moral depravity until you come at it. Sweep the heart-strings gently and the golden chord will respond to your touch at last, like music in the hands of a skilful player.

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