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The Minister's Resignation.

"Let me see," said Miss Eleanor Banks, on the first afternoon of her visit to her aunt at Farmington village, "didn't you write to me last winter that your minister had resigned?"

"I guess perhaps I did," was the reply, in a somewhat absent minded tone.

"It seems to me that I got the impression from your letter that the resignation did not cause universal regret," suggested the niece, after waiting a moment for her aunt to enlarge upon the theme.

"Maybe you did," said the old lady, who was apparently absorbed in learning how hard it may be for a thread to pass through the eye of a needle.

Presently she added, with the manner of one who, after all, is not quite willing to let the subject drop, "There were some of the people who thought that Mr. Pease had kind of lost his usefulness."

"He had been here a long time hadn't he?" asked her niece.

"Yes, that was just it. Mr. Pease had been here going on thirty years; and as you might say, we'd got him learned by heart. We always knew what he was going to say next, and its no use denying that he was getting to be rather dry in the pulpit. I didn't mind it so much myself, but your Uncle Andrew did, and that was worse. The preaching I could stand, but what with that of a Sunday, and Andrew's taking on about it all the rest of the week, I was beginning to get about beat out of myself.

"Every now and then somebody would come around and want him to speak to the minister about resigning. Of course, if anything of consequence is to be done in the parish, it is always your Uncle Andrew that has to go ahead with it. They would argue that Mr. Pease was comfortably off, and his wife had property besides, and so it would be no hardship for him to step aside.

"But Andrew couldn't make up his mind to do it, so things went along with the society fast running to seed, when all of a sudden, and without any help from anybody, the minister did resign.

"Well, I presume a good many felt to rejoice, but I guess nobody was quite so tickled as Andrew. For a few days it seemed as if he could not do enough to show how kind of grateful he was.

"He did the papering and painting that I had been at him about for two years, and he bought a new parlor carpet that I hadn't so much as asked for. Then he took it into his head that we must get up a farewell reception to the minister.

"Well, all the folks seemed to fall in with that idea, and if you'll believe me, they raised a hundred dollars in gold for a parting gift.

"Of course there was a general invitation to the reception, and we had to hold it in the town hall. Well, after we had all shaken hands with the minister and his wife, Andrew came up front and made the presentation speech.

"I do wish you could have heard him! Of course your uncle is gifted in speech, but I guess he surprised himself that night. Yet he didn't say anything but the truth. Mr. Pease had been a faithful minister—one that had visited the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and been helpful in sickness, and stood by us all in trouble, and tried to comfort us when we buried our dead.

"But it was wonderful the way your Uncle Andrew worked all those good things Mr. Pease had done into his speech. It took hold of us more and more as he went along, until by the time he got through and handed over the hundred dollars in gold to the minister, about everybody in the hall was having a good hard cry.

"As for Mr. Pease, he could hardly speak at first. But when he found his voice I guess what he said made full as much impression as Andrew's talk.

"He said that he had been simply amazed at the feeling that had been manifested, and it led him to think that perhaps he had been hasty in the step he had taken. Perhaps it was his duty,

after all to spend the rest of his days as the pastor of his dear flock. He went on in that way for a while, and finally he asked all those who desired him to withdraw his resignation to rise.

"Well, there were some queer looks went over a good many faces, but in a minute all those that hadn't been standing before got up from their seat.

"And the choir had been rehearsing a very handsome song for a week, but it was all about parting, and they wouldn't sing it. When they were called on they whispered together for a while, and then announced that they would sing, 'Blest be the tie that binds,' and they requested all present to join.

"Then we partook of refreshments, and the reception broke up."

"So you still have the same minister," said Eleanor, with a smile.

"Why, yes, in one sense we do. But, really, Mr. Pease has seemed like a new man ever since. It's wonderful how that reception seemed to freshen him up. He preaches a new sermon almost every Sunday, and the whole parish seems to be alive again. As for your Uncle Andrew, you'd think to hear him talk there was nobody like Mr. Pease. You see, he's bound to stand by that presentation speech. So in one sense, I suppose, we've got our change, after all."—Sel.

The Bottle.

A room, whose windows—windows in name only, since every vestige of glass had vanished, it may have been years ago, its place being supplied by rags—rattled their skeletons of frames in a stiff November gale. A few crazy tiles upon the roof kept up an intermittent accompaniment, while every now and again small cascades of mortar coursed down the chimney into the rusty and broken-barred grate.

With his head upon his arm, lying over an old table, was a man, apparently contented—aye, it may be said, happy—with his lot, since the roar of the elements made no impression, awoke no expression of annoyance, or disturbed his dreams, for he slept soundly. His face was not a good face to look upon, sallow, with pendulous, trembling lower lip and twitching features, that told only too plainly what scaffolding had reared it. Vice, passion, and drink. Behold a slave more bound than by fetters of steel, more powerless than if held in granite walls, more helpless than if guarded by an army. Upon the table beheld his fetters, his dungeon, and his gaoler—the bottle.

Upon the floor was the child, wide and hollow-eyed, gaunt with hunger, and vainly striving to get some warmth by huddling the straw upon which it lay closer to its shivering body.

Evidently it was no relation to the man, else, surely upon such a night as this, he would have clasped it to his breast for warmth and comfort; but he took no notice, though for a moment he stirred uneasily, then stretched out a hand, as if blindly groping for something that he loved. The child saw the movement and scrambled up on to its bare feet to go towards the man, but at that moment he found what he was searching for, and clasped it tightly to his heart—the bottle. The child, looking through eyes that had long forsaken weepings as of no avail, fell back shivering upon its wet, straw pallet; yet though you may believe me not, the man was father to the child. The spalding room, the drunken man, the starving child, and, triumphant over all, the bottle. It was a picture fit for the pen of Hogarth.

An hour passed, two hours, and awoke some semblance of animation in the man. The child had managed to get a little sleep, but, at the first movement of the man, awoke alert and ready. Seeing the man was not yet awake, but heavy in drunken stupor, the child rose stealthily and withdrew the bottle from the arms that hugged it to his heart, and hid it underneath the straw of his pallet, and then lay down upon it. A few minutes, and the man awoke. This time he looked around, searching for his treasure, then he lurched heavily towards the wretched bed, and dealt the child a heavy kick.

"Whersh bottle, you young devil!" he stammered. "Father!" came from the child's lips. Father! Oh! the mockery of that name! "Father, I haven't it; and father you've had plenty tonight. Don't drink more! You've had it all. The bottle's empty."

"Give it ore," he yelled. You've emptied it, but I'll

teach you to steal my drink." He seized the child by the neck and dragged it roughly off the straw, and in so doing disclosed the bottle that the child had lain upon to hide. Grasping the bottle by the neck, he dealt the child a fearful blow upon the temple. With a low moan it fell back, bleeding from a frightful wound, and the man, muttering to himself and clasping his treasure, once more sat again at the table, took a long draught, and relapsed in drunken unconsciousness, while a glint of moonlight reflected on the bottle made it appear as the eye of a basilisk, cold, malignant, and still triumphant, gazing upon the scene.

Daybreak. The man woke slowly from his debauch.

"Ned," he said; "Ned, lad, come here."

No answer.

"Ned, lad, here."

Again no answer.

"Ned, my lad." Surely those tones, so gentle, could never come from him. And yet they did; they were spoken as if he held a world of love for the lad that lay dead upon the floor, and, sunk, debased, and murderer though he was, he had loved his victim dearly.

"Ned! He must have gone out," he muttered. Then staggering up, he went to get some few sticks to make a handful of fire. What was that that lay across the floor, a dark red stream still flowing feebly from its poor head. He pressed his hands to his temples.

"My God," he cried, "my God, he is dead! He has been killed! God have mercy, I have killed him!"

In a moment he was down upon his knees, with the poor fellow pressed tightly to his breast, rocking to and fro in anguish, crying wildly.

"Ned—my Ned!"—kissing with fearful energy the dead lips of his son, as though by every passion he could bring back life to him. Alas, there was no answering kiss, and the child that had hungered for a word only a few short hours ago had now a thousand endearments showered upon its dead, dead ears. And the man who spurned him with a kick was now a broken suppliant for one last kiss.

Gazing round, his eyes fell upon the bottle, the dirty label, smeared a dull crimson. With a loud cry, as recollection forced itself upon him, he seized the accursed thing and flung it across the room to shatter it in ten thousand pieces; but it struck the straw pallet, and with a sneering ring rolled unscathed to the floor. And the man, with a piercing scream, fell senseless by the body of his son.

Night. Again he woke to consciousness to find two policemen bending over him, the light from a "bull's-eye" thrown upon his face.

Said one, "He has murdered the lad with the bottle. See where he hit him, and the label is bloodstained. That was his weapon. Come, my man, up you get."

They had placed the bottle upon the table, and, catching the reflection from the "bull's-eye," it seemed to show the dull red gleam of murder in its wicked eye of light.

With a shuddering cry he hid his face in his hands and passed with his captors out into the night. And the bottle stood triumphant up on the table. Triumphant over honor, over duty, over love, over life itself. The uncrowned king, whose monarchy was absolute, nay, whose power is supreme when once its subjects bend the knee its allegiance.—E. W. Tower, in Reynolds's Newspaper.

"Let us not waver from our purpose; victory is at hand, and will come triumphantly when the church membership shall feel its responsibility and lend a helping hand."

"Our people used to spend in strong drink the entire valuation of the state in every period of twenty-five years. But now one million dollars will far more than pay for all the liquor smuggled into Maiee and sold in violation of the law."

When I was getting signatures to the petition for a prohibitory law, I found about five times as many women as men ready to affix their names. This fact led me to seriously consider what the value of woman's ballot would be on moral reform questions, and I became an advocate of woman's suffrage."

"We forbid the bans between rum, religion and politics of whatever party and whatever sect, and in the name of God and Humanity, we proclaim a union holy and indissoluble, of affection as well as of interest, between temperance, religion and politics of every party and every sect.—Neal Dow.