

Tales and Sketches.

AS THE DRUNKARD DIES.

MRS. M. J. SMITH.

He died as the drunkard dies !
With foaming lips and bloodshot eyes ;
In anguish untold he perished at last,
With the shadow of infamy over him cast.

Died with a curse on his tongue !
And prayers, by anxiety wrung,
Were horribly mixed with blasphemous oaths,
And scraps of obscenity purring loathes.

Oh, 'twas a terrible sight :
In the blackness and darkness of night ;
From the one dim lamp that we brought to his bed,
With shrieks of wild terror he covered his head.

He died as the drunkard dies !
And that man had been learned and wise
As the world goes. He had drank of fame,
And the laurel and bay twined wreaths for his name.

That man was his mother's pride !
The honored choice of a beautiful bride ;
A father's hope in the gathering years—
A sister's joy, pride, love, hope—now shame and tears.

For the agonizing wail
Goes up from the lips that are shrunk and pale ;
And where is the hand to successfully bear
A balm to those spirits that drink of despair ?

Oh, curse that is blighting our land,
Tyrant, demon ! Say, where is the hand
That dares to bridle ? Who dares to lie down
While the demon sweeps over the country and town ?

Up, brother ! go work to-day !
Sister, be earnest ! go labor and pray,
Till every saloon, with infamous brand,
Is swept from the face of our glorious land.

—The Lever.

KITTY'S QUESTION.

John Vincent had been a total abstainer for nearly a year, and he knew he was the better for it. In former times, before he had signed the pledge, his home had not been so comfortable as it might ; not that it was a poverty-stricken home like some we could point to, but there was a lack of many of the little comforts that tend to make a house cheerful and its inmates happy.

"Never," said John, "will I take another drop. I feel so much better in myself ; then the children and their mother are better clothed, and yet I have managed to put something by."

"Well," answered Harry Jones, to whom John was speaking, "you do as you like, it doesn't matter to me ; but don't be so sure that you will never take any more."

"Sure ?" exclaimed John ; "I am sure. I have made up my mind to it."

Yes, John had quite made up his mind to it, and he did not think that anyone or anything could ever tempt him to break his resolution ; he felt strong and confident about that. He persuaded himself that he had quite overcome the liking for ale, or anything else of the kind, and that the old craving, the almost need for stimulants, could never return.

Alas ! he little knew how weak he was, and how little he could depend upon himself.

Hardly a week had passed after his conversation with Harry Jones before he broke his resolution and his pledge together.

It was very wrong of his shopmates, but they, some of them at any rate, had made up their minds to persuade John to forget his pledge. They had tried it many times without success, but on the morning in question something had put him a little out of temper, and when they coaxed him to take just one glass, he took it and drank it. Poor fellow, it was a bad glass for him, for it did not end with the one. As a tiger which has once tasted human blood continually thirsts for it, so John longed for another glass, and from one he went to two, and from two to more.

It was a sad time for John's wife when she saw how he was, on his return home in the evening. She thought of the old days which she had hoped were gone forever. Was she to have a repetition of them? Her heart

sunk within her ; but she was too wise to say anything at the time. She tried to make her husband as comfortable as she could, and when he had gone to bed, which he soon did, she went into the next room where her children slept, and kneeling down, prayed to God, that He would help her husband to keep from drink in the future. And the prayer then offered in secret was rewarded openly.

When she rose from her knees, Mrs. Vincent was surprised to see her little girl Kitty looking at her with wide-open eyes.

"What were you doing, mother?" asked the little one. "Were you saying your prayers?"

"I was praying to God, Kitty."

"What about?" asked the little one.

"I was asking Him to give me strength," answered Mrs. Vincent, who felt that strength would be needed if her husband returned to his old courses.

Kitty said no more, but laid her head on her pillow, and was soon fast asleep. She did not, however, forget her mother's words.

A week or more passed by, and every night, notwithstanding his wife's expostulations, John Vincent came home the worse for drink.

It was Sunday morning ; the church bells were ringing for service ; the chapels were becoming filled, but John Vincent sat by his fireside gazing into the glowing coals.

"Aren't you coming, John?" inquired his wife. Never since he had taken the pledge had he missed going to a place of worship on Sunday.

"No," he answered ; "I don't feel up to it. You go, and take the children ; I shall stay at home to-day."

"Oh ! John," exclaimed Mrs. Vincent, "I am sorry ; shall I stay with you? I will if you are not well."

"No," said John, shortly. "I don't feel ill ; but I don't feel exactly strong enough to go this morning."

Little Kitty laid her hand on her father's knee, and looking innocently into his eyes, inquired, "Did you ask God to give you strength, daddy?"

John started as if he had been bitten by a serpent, but he answered his little girl kindly—

"All right, Kitty, you go with mother ; I shall be better by-and-by."

When Mrs. Vincent and the children were gone, John opened a cupboard, and from a hiding-place took out a half-gallon jar of ale. He had brought it home the night before, and had meant drinking it when he was alone, but he did not feel as if he could enjoy it now. Every time he looked at the jar, and then at the glass he had brought in, little Kitty's inquiring eyes seemed to be before him, and her question, "Did you ask God to give you strength?" came to his mind.

"Dear little thing," he said to himself, "she doesn't know I have broken the pledge. I wish I hadn't ; but now I must have a little." "Ask God to give you strength" rang in his ears ; the little childish voice sounded over and over again and the bright eyes haunted him.

For some time he sat ; but at last he started up, and speaking out as loud as if answering a question, he said, "No, I didn't but I will now," and fell on his knees.

For some time John remained kneeling, and when he rose he took the stone jar with a firm hand, and carried it into the kitchen and emptied its contents into the sink.

"God be thanked !" he exclaimed as the last drop disappeared. "He has given me strength, and He will again if I ask Him. And God bless little Kitty, too, for asking the question."

That day was a turning-point in John Vincent's life.

It is years since this occurred, but he has never returned to his old habits. Whenever he has been tempted to break the temperance pledge, he has thought of his little one's question, "Did you ask God to give you strength?" and then he has sent up a secret prayer to God for help, and God has heard the prayer and answered it.

There are many who try to resist temptation in their own strength. They are sure to fail, without the help of God we can do nothing.—Selected.

General News.

CANADIAN.

The Senate adjourned last Friday to meet again on Feb. 13th.

In the House of Commons the following Bills to incorporate the following companies have been read a first time. Halifax Mutual Marine Insurance Company, Temperance and General Life Insurance Company, Bank of Winnipeg, Lake Nipissing & Hudson Bay Railway, North Western Coal and Navigation, Alberta Railway & Coal Company, Provincial Bank, Pictou Mutual Marine Insurance Co., also a Bill to confirm the lease of the Ontario & Quebec Railway to the C. P. R. The following Bills have passed a second reading :—A Bill to advance school money to Manitoba, a Bill to give salary to a judge in Cariboo, B. C. The South Saskatchewan Railway Bill, Mr. M. C. Cameron's Bill to extend the provisions of the Act respecting offences against the person, and his Bill to permit persons charged with misdemeanors to give evidence in their own behalf. The House is now discussing the C. P. R. resolution.

The Ontario Legislature has at last got through the debate on the address and settled down to business. The following bills have been read a first time :—To amend the Consolidated Municipal Act, 1883, to amend