

There are some people whose manner instantly invites confidence—who seem to possess the key that unlocks the closed chambers of the human heart. You know them instinctively. How often in the most hurried scenes of life, in a railway carriage, on the deck of a steamer, taking shelter from a shower under a gateway, sitting near one at a public meeting, has a face flashed upon us, neither young, nor handsome, nor particularly intelligent, but bright with such a serene glow of sympathy—a living epistle—a passing evangel—as to prompt the involuntary ejaculation, 'When I need advice in perplexity, comfort in distress, when the tide of tears is fast welling up, and I need a kind bosom on which to shed them, when my eyes are growing dim with the shadows of death, and I want a gentle hand to close them, may it be such a one as this that shall be with me then.' Of this class was Mrs. Basil.

Mabel related the tale of the country girl, with the slight touch of wonder at the enormity of woman being instrumental in the degradation of her sister woman, that marked her inexperience.

Mrs. Basil sighed as she said, "It is a common case—nothing is so bad as a bad woman."

"Surely she is not worse than her betrayer," said Mabel.

"She will prey on her own sex coolly and systematically, as man rarely preys on man. She falls from a greater moral height, and is more shattered by the fall. The ruin is more complete. I speak not of these poor things here, in this house—victims mostly; but of those whose career of guilt has been successful. Their state is surely the mystery of iniquity. But, to the more practical questions of admitting this girl. We shall have one—I fear, two—vacancies. We are obliged to restrict our number to twenty." This was said with a grieved look.

"And you obtain places for these unfortunates?" rejoined Mabel.

"When we can. It is very difficult to do so," was the reply. "Only a few families can receive them; where there are children or young people it might not be safe; and of those who are able to help this good work, few are willing. Then again, even good people make the path of the returning penitent thorny as well as steep. They trust them less, and expect more of them, and so our failures are unhappily frequent, and our success small. But, if one case in twenty is a real restoration, how thankful should we be. But it is the hour when I read to them; would you wish to be present?"

Mabel answered that Mrs. Burnish wished her to see the Institution; and she accompanied Mrs. Basil into a large room on the first floor, overlooking the highly walled yard, which served both for exercise and the operations of the laundry, and beheld twenty inmates, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. They were dressed alike, in blue gowns and close caps. It was some minutes before Mabel could gather sufficient composure to look at them. Her eyes were dim at the thought, that, for these unfortunates, there was neither name nor place, nor sweet domestic charities nor relationships. Nothing that the heart of woman clings to; cut loose from all, no rest but the grave, no home but Heaven! Yes; that last best hope remained for them. The promise as sure, the prospect as bright, for the believing among them, as for the best of the unfallen, and, it may be, untamed children of men.

Mabel was recalled from her reverie by Mrs. Basil offering her the Bible, and asking her to read; but she declined, her youth suited best the condition of a listener; and Mrs. Basil said to the inmates, "As one—it may be, two—of your companions leave to-day, the oldest of them shall choose the chapter of the reading." A quiet voice responded, "The 15th of Luke." Mabel had heard great pulpit celebrities and fine readers, in the fashionable city in which she had been reared, but she never had been so impressed with the hallowed sweetness, the heavenly tenderness, of the the prodigal son, as on this occasion. There was a pathos in the clear, liquid tones of the reader, and the slight tremor of emotion, that trembled through the words, which went through every heart. Then followed a simple prayer, in which the departing companion was commended to God's protection. There were no painful allusions to the past; all was hope and trust—aspirations for newness of life, and the healing blessing of Him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us. After this, the young woman was brought to Mabel, who, at the request of Mrs. Basil, gave her a Bible that had been provided, and, with a smile of encouragement, ventured to utter a few good wishes for the future welfare of the wayfarer, again departing on the perilous journey of life.

(To be Continued.)

Right forever on the Scaffold,
Wrong forever on the Throne;
But the Scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch above His own.

"The struggle between the church, school and library on the one side, and the liquor traffic on the other, is one phase of the warfare between heaven and hell."—*Chas. Buxton, M. P.*

For Girls and Boys

"IS THAT ALL?"

A carpenter who had been a constant drinker—"in a moderate way," as he called it—and who was often really drunk, went into a place where the writer was presiding over a temperance meeting. The carpenter was interested, and convinced that he was a very foolish man to waste his money, strength, and time, as he had done, in the public house. The part of an address that touched him most powerfully was that by an ex-circus man, who described his own feelings when his little girl—who was leading him home on Sunday morning from the public-house where he had caroused all Saturday, and where he had stayed all night—asked him a question. They happened to pass a schoolroom where the scholars were just singing their Sabbath morning hymn. His little girl said, "Stop a minute, father; listen. Is it not sweet? How I should like to be in that school!" Then she looked up and said, most piteously, "Father, when will our Sunday come?"

That question had touched the heart of the circus-man, and he resolved by God's help that his dear broken-hearted wife and ragged children should have happier times, if possible. He was changed, and became a speaker for temperance. Now as he told, with the tone of truth and power of pathos, the story in a crowded assembly, his words reached the heart of the carpenter who was one of his auditors.

The carpenter was convinced that he had lived a selfish and harmful as well as foolish life. He resolved to give up the drink. He knew his wife was miserable, his children were afraid of him, his home shabby and dilapidated, and his debts increasing. He knew that he had helped to make the publican the most 'patronized' comfortable, and the publican's wife gay with the silks purchased out of his "fools' pence." He resolved that his own wife should have less reason to complain, and more money to spend. He was earning the moderate wages of thirty shillings a week, but out of that he contrived to spend often six or seven shillings sometimes much more.

After deciding to be a total abstainer he made himself a strong box without hinges, and nailed it up tightly. He left just a small slit in the top through which he could drop his coppers. And many a penny and threepenny-bits he did drop therein. It was his custom whenever he felt tempted to drink to take out of one pocket just the money that he would have to spend to gratify a mere taste or craving, and put it into the other until he should reach home; then he would put it in the box and leave it there untouched. For a year this went on. He kept the box hidden away, and told not his wife of his practice or intention. At the end of the year he was seated by his own fireside after tea, and looking across to his wife, he said, pleasantly, "Jennie, it is just twelve months to-night since I signed the pledge; do you think we are any better off for it?"

"Better off? why, yes, Charlie."

"How?"

"Why, you are earning more money, and you would not have been made foreman if you had not become so steady and trustworthy. Then look at the home; we have better furniture now."

"Is that all?"

"The children are better clothed."

"Is that all?" he asked again.

"Why, no Charlie; they are happier, and so am I."

"Is that all?"

"Well, I am happier, and I think healthier, for I have less anxiety than I used to have."

"Is that all?"

"No, for you are kinder and happier too."

"Is that all?" he again asked.

"No, for we are out of debt, and I have even two pounds in hand."

"Is that all?"

"I don't know anything further, unless you mean that you delight now to go to God's house on Sunday."

"Yes, I do delight in it; and, thank God, I found out my need of a Saviour, and have found that the Saviour was seeking me. But there is something more that makes me ask whether even that is all."

"What is it?"