

Tales and Sketches.

ONE GLASS.

At a meeting where temperance experiences were being given a man arose and told what one glass had done for him. He said: "I had a little vessel on the coast; she had four men besides myself. I had a wife and two children on board; the night was stormy, and my brother was to stand watch one night. The seamen prevailed on him to take one glass to help him to perform his duties, but, being unaccustomed to liquor, he fell asleep, and in the night I awoke to find my vessel a wreck. I took my wife and one of my little ones in my arms, and she took the other, and for hours we battled with the cold waves. After intense suffering the waves took my little one from my embrace; then after more hours of anguish, the waves swept my other little one from my wife's arms, and our two darlings were separated from us forever. After more battling with the storm and waves, I looked at my wife, and beheld her cold in death. I made my way to the shore, and here I am—my wife, my children, and all my earthly possessions lost for 'one glass of rum.'—*British Workman.*

MR. BINGLE'S OLD COAT.

Splendid!" said Mrs. Bingle, pulling the collar up and skirt down, and settling the pocket flaps, as Farmer Bingle tried on his new overcoat. "Real silk velvet collar!"

"Yes, and such a piece of cloth! Forty-five dollars for the whole thing."

"Forty-five dollars!" echoed Sam and Jim, admiringly.

"Yes. Seventeen for the tailorin' and trimmin's, and twenty-eight for the cloth. It'll do me till I'm gray."

"What you goin' to do with the old one, pa?" asked Jim.

"It's a good coat yet," said Mrs. Bingle.

"Sam'll be grown into it two years more."

"First-rate coat. But—I was thinkin' some of givin' it to Parson Graves. You see, it'll go on my account for the year, and I won't have so much to pay on his salary."

Mrs. Bingle measured with her eye how much Sam would have to grow before fitting well into the roomy coat, and decided it might be at least three years, in the course of which time, added to the seven during which it had been doing duty on Sundays and great occasions, it might begin to look old-fashioned, and Sam might object to wearing it, that young gentleman having already begun to develop a taste for clothing which came reasonably near fitting him. So it was agreed that Parson Graves should have the old overcoat.

Accordingly, on the next Saturday, when the farmer with his wife was about to drive into the country town, he asked at the last moment:

"Now, where's that coat?"

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Bingle, "I've been so busy over that butter and eggs, if I didn't clear forget about it! Sally, Sally," she ran into the house calling to the girl who helped in the kitchen, "run up to the spare chamber and take that overcoat that hangs there, and some of them papers that lays on the shelf, and wrap it up well and bring it to me."

Sally brought it, and the huge bundle lay in Mrs. Bingle's lap as she rode.

"It is a good coat," she observed, half-regretfully, smoothing with her finger a corner of the cloth which peeped through a hole in the paper and again revolving in her mind the possibility of Sam's growing into it in two years. "Sam won't be likely to get an, ready-bought coat half as good as this."

"Like as not he won't," agreed the farmer, "but never mind. It's more blessed to give than to receive, you know."

The Bingle household awoke the next morning with the impression that something of an event was impending in the family, which impression became, with full wakefulness, defined into the remembrance that the new overcoat was to be worn for the first time on that day. There was, however, no undignified haste nor trifling in the matter. The morning chores were done, morning prayer conducted with its time-honored lengthiness, and then the farmer leisurely shaved himself as usual, at one of the windows of the great kitchen, before saying, in as indifferent a voice as he could command:

"Jim, run up-stairs and get my overcoat."

Jim went, but delayed until his mother had put the last touches to the bow in her bonnet-strings, a process which was almost invariably interrupted by her husband with remarks that they would be late for church, before he was heard shouting:

"I can't find it."

"Where are you lookin'?"

"In the closet in your room."

"It's in the closet in the spare chamber," called his father.

Another long delay and then Jim came down stairs without it.

"I tell you it's on one of them pegs in our closet," said Mrs. Bingle.

"I'll go myself. It's dark, and he can't see, but it's there, for I put it there myself."

"No," said Mr. Bingle, calling after her, "it's in the spare chamber closet. I put it there."

She was heard stepping briskly from one room to another, and then back again. Then down the stairs, when she stood before them in silence, on her face—blank consternation, and on her arm—the old overcoat!

"When did you hang it there?"

"I d' know—the day after it come, I guess. The old one always hangs there, so I took it down and hung the new one there."

Mrs. Bingle sank into a chair.

"It's gone."

"Gone to Parson Graves!" The boys stared, opened mouthed, unable at first fully to take in the calamity.

"But you can get it again," at length Jim said, hopefully.

"Of course!" said Sam. "You can tell Parson Graves it was all a mistake, and it was the old coat you meant for him, and of course he'll change back."

But the farmer shook his head ruefully.

"No, that won't do. It's done, and it can't be undone," he said with a groan. "Don't one of you never let on about its bein' a mistake."

The family and the old coat were late at church, thus missing the sight of the entrance of the new coat, but it lay over one arm of the little sofa in the pulpit. And Farmer Bingle never could recall a word of that service through which he sat trying to bring himself into some friendly recognition of the fact that he had presented his minister with a forty-five dollar overcoat, which he could not hope to have count at anything near its full value on his yearly assessment, for who ever heard of a country parson having such a coat?

"Jings! Don't he look fine, though," ejaculated Sam, as Mr. Graves came down the aisle.

"And don't Mrs. Graves look set up!" said Jim.

"Enough to make any woman to hang on to a piece of cloth like that," said Mrs. Bingle.

Mr. Bingle was unhitching his horses as Mr. Graves came out of the church door, and did not at first raise his eyes as he listened to the remarks passing around.

"Bless me! What a fine-lookin' fellow our parson is, anyhow! Where on earth did he get that coat?"

"Must have had a fortune left him."

Mr. Bingle could not help a feeling that the coat had been well bestowed, as its wearer came to meet him with out-stretched hands and a few quiet, though very earnest words of acknowledgment of his gift. The coat had fitted the farmer well, but there was something more than the mere filling out of good cloth in the minister's dignified bearing; and in the scholarly face which appeared above it something which stirred up a feeling in many members of the congregation that this servant of the Lord had not hitherto been clothed in a fashion worthy of his high office.

"That's a shabby old hat to wear with it," said one of the village store-keepers. "I'll see about that before another Sunday comes 'round."

As Mr. Bingle felt the grasp of his pastor's hand, he began almost to be glad he had given the coat. And then, as the fact of his having given it was whispered about, to feel ashamed of receiving so much credit for an act which he never would have thought of performing. For an honest and really warm nature lay under the crust of parsimonious selfishness which had hardened over his heart, as it has, alas!—over so many which might overflow in deeds of kindness to bless those who have given not grudgingly, but their whole selves to the Master's service.

"I feel like a liar, yes I do?" said Mr. Bingle to his wife, with an energy which startled her, as they rode home. "To have that man shakin' me by the hand, and talkin' about my generosity, and his wife's eyes beamin' up at me, and me not able to right out and tell 'em I'm a grudin', tight-fisted old—I tell you what!" he gave his horses such a vigorous cut with the whip that Jim and Sam, on a back-backed seat of the bob sleigh, nearly went over backwards into the snow, "I've got to get even with myself somehow, but I don't know just how, yet."

It was astonishing what a commotion Farmer Bingle's gift created in the parish. Not one eye had failed to mark the justice done by Mr. Graves' goodly figure to the goodly garment, and with an awakening pride at the possession of such a fine looking pastor came a desire to see him thoroughly well-equipped. Which desire found expression in such a visitation at the parsonage as had never before been dreamed of. Cheap goods and cast-offs were ignored in the generous supply of winter comforts which each giver made sure should be in keeping with the new overcoat, and the wives and mothers had seen to it that Mrs. Graves and the children should look fit to walk beside that tailor-made-up piece of cloth.

Mr. Bingle had smiled with a light in his eyes, which came up from somewhere under that broken crust, at the set of furs which his wife