



Temperance Department.

ROSA LEIGHTON.

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(National Temperance Society, New York.)

CHAPTER III.

"Birdie, Birdie, I am so unhappy, I don't know what is the matter. If I hadn't you I don't know what I should do. Let's go to the window among the flowers, Birdie, and you can look out and I can feel the sunshine on my face. Oh, Birdie, I don't know why papa doesn't kiss me any more; ever since that New Year day, when I thought he was sick, he hasn't seemed like my darling papa; why, he is real cross to me sometimes, and this morning when I went up to him, and put my hand on his arm, he pushed me away; oh, Birdie, Birdie, what shall I do?" and the lonely little girl leaned her head against the window, and still pressing her feathery friend to her cheek, sobbed aloud.

"What! crying, my little Rosa, crying!" and Uncle George, who had this time entered the room unheard even by her quick ear, put his arm around the unhappy little girl and drew her to her favorite seat, close nestled in his arms.

"Why, Rosa, darling, what makes you unhappy?" said her uncle, now roused to sympathy at the sight of her tears; "tell Uncle George all about it, and perhaps he can help you to make everything right; tell me, darling, and then I will tell you something."

Thus encouraged, the little girl poured into his ready ear a tale of all her troubles; first and greatest of which was the apparent loss of her father's love. Mr. Newton did not know how to answer her; too well he knew that the demon which was so gradually and surely taking possession of his poor brother-in-law, was as surely and gradually driving from his heart all the finer, softer feelings of his nature.

He quieted Rosa as well as he could, and then said: "Now I have something to tell to my little darling. Don't you remember that I have told you that I want to go far away to teach the heathen about Jesus? You know that there are a great many people who never heard how our dear Saviour came into this world and died for us, and so I want to go away and tell them. You will let Uncle George go, won't you, dear?"

"Oh, Uncle George, don't go away from me; I shall be so lonely without you; I didn't know that you meant you were going soon. I don't want you to go away at all. Oh, I am so unhappy; my papa don't love me, and mamma is so worried all the time that she can not talk to me as she used to, and now Uncle George is going away. I won't have any one left; oh, what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

Mr. Newton clasped the lonely child more closely to him, and wiping away her tears, said: "Hasn't Rosa forgotten some One who never leaves her? She is never alone; she has one Friend who loves her more than papa or mamma or Uncle George, who never goes away from her."

Quieted by her uncle's words and caresses, the little girl raised her eyes toward his face and said: "I know you mean Jesus; I had forgotten Him; I know He is with me all the time; and do you know, Uncle George, sometimes when I am all alone I try to think that Jesus is here with me, and I am not lonely any more. I had such a beautiful dream last night, I almost forgot to tell you. I dreamed that Jesus was here on earth again; and as I sat here so lonely one day talking to Birdie, He came into the room. I knew it was He, for His voice was so sweet and kind as He said, just as He did to the poor blind beggar: 'Little Rosa, what wouldst thou that I should do unto thee?' and I said, 'Lord, that my eyes might be opened,' and He said, 'Receive thy sight,' and, uncle, I looked up and saw Jesus. Oh, I can't tell you how beautiful He looked! He was so lovely! but just as I was looking at Him, I awoke and found I was still blind, but when I get to heaven I shall see, sha'n't I?"

She paused a moment, but before her uncle could answer her, she threw her arms more tightly about his neck, and almost smothering him with kisses, said: "Yes, uncle, go tell the heathen about Jesus; He is so lovely that I want everybody in the world to know Him. I will try not to be lonely, and when I want you very, very badly, I'll remember that you have gone to tell those who never heard of the dear Saviour, all about His dying on the cross for them, and then I won't worry any more; will you come back again, Uncle George?"

"Yes, I hope so, darling, and then where will I find my little Rosa? she won't be little then, but so tall that I'll hardly know her; let me see, how old are you—eight? Well, then, if I stay away five years, you will be thirteen years old; too old, I expect, to nestle down in my arms."

"No, no, Uncle George, this is my place; I never want to grow too big for it."

Silently the little one leaned against the loving heart that would have shielded her from all sorrow; her cares had fled; her tears were all dried, for she had been talking of Jesus, the One she loved most of all.

Suddenly she raised her head and said: "Uncle, do papa and mamma love Jesus?"

"I am afraid not, darling; but perhaps Jesus wants you to be a little missionary here and teach them about Him."

"Oh, wouldn't that be nice," and again she was silent for a little while. Then she raised herself and said, earnestly: "Uncle is papa sick? What makes his head ache all the time, and why doesn't he take me in his arms as he used to?"

What could Mr. Newton say? How could he tell her that the father she so dearly loved was sinking far, far away from her, so that he dreaded the sight of his own child, whose purity was a continual rebuke to him?

He only said: "Papa often has a headache, Rosa, and perhaps it disturbs him to hear you talk."

"Can't Jesus cure his headache? I'll ask Him, and then papa will love me again," and thus having laid all her burden at the foot of the Cross, she was at peace.

"Rosa," said Mr. Newton, "I haven't told you yet what I came up here for; to-morrow I am going away, and I want my little girl to be with me all this evening, so I have asked mamma to let me take you to a temperance meeting."

"And, Uncle George, did she say I might go? What is a temperance meeting?"

"Two questions at once! To the first I say, Yes, she did; and to the other I say, Wait, and hear what it is yourself. Now I will go down-stairs and ask nurse to give you your supper and get you ready."

Brightly the stars shone overhead that lovely April evening; and as Mr. Newton walked through the streets, leading by the hand his little blind niece, he could not but think how much she missed of the beautiful things of this world, and yet he felt that she in her blindness had seen more heavenly beauty than many who boasted of their far-reaching eyesight; she had seen Jesus; had looked to the Cross of Calvary, and had seen there her Saviour shedding His precious blood for her, while thousands more were turning their backs upon that Saviour, or closing their eyes that they might not see Him.

The conversation that he had just had with Rosa brought also other thoughts into his mind. He feared that he might be leaving work at home to engage in work abroad; but as he prayed, as he had often done of late, to be guided aright, a sweet peace took possession of his soul; he felt that his Master had directed his choice to the work for which his arrangements had long since been made; and knowing by the experience of the last few months that his brother-in-law resented all interference from him, that the mildest word of rebuke only drove him to greater excess in his mad career, he felt sure that God had other means in store for saving this imperilled soul.

Their walk did not lead them through the most fashionable part of the city, but passing through several narrow streets they paused before a most unpretending-looking church.

As they entered and passed up the aisle, many an eye was turned toward Mr. Newton with a look of gratitude and regret, for in that neighborhood he had been a kind of temperance missionary, and many were

there whom, under God, he had been instrumental in reclaiming from the path of destruction, and now they were looking upon his face for the last time for years, if indeed they should ever meet him here again.

He led Rosa with him to the pulpit, and having seen that she was comfortably seated, he turned to look upon his audience. He seemed to be seeking for some one, but in vain; for a look of disappointment was gradually stealing over his face, when the door opened and a gentleman and two ladies entered.

At a single glance one could see that they moved in a different social circle from that of the rest of the audience, but they seemed glad to take their places in their very midst. Now Mr. Newton looked satisfied, and a silent prayer of thanksgiving arose from his heart to Him who had thus granted his oft-repeated request.

The meeting progressed; one speaker after another made addresses; but it was not until Mr. Newton arose that the audience gave their entire attention; then all eyes were fixed upon him, and it seemed as if he carried the hearts of the people whither he would.

At the close of his remarks he invited all who were willing to promise, with God's help, never to taste any intoxicating drink, to come forward and sign the pledge.

There was silence, and then the young man arose, for whose coming Mr. Newton had seemed so anxious. He advanced to the head of the aisle, and having asked and received permission to speak for a little while, he turned to the audience. As he turned we recognize Frederick Lansley. He has changed since we last met him; instead of the self-confident look that used to rest upon his face, there is now a look of humility, yet of strength and determination, but of a strength not his own, and a determination having a surer foundation than his own will.

All eyes are turned toward the stranger, as with a calm voice he says: "My friends, I have come among you to-night for the first time for one particular purpose; I have come to sign that paper that your friend and mine has presented to us. Once I disdained it; not many months ago I would have sneered at the idea of enslaving myself by any formal promise. I had a will of my own, strength of my own, and I felt confident that it required but the exercise of that will and the putting forth of that strength to enable me to resist the strongest temptation; but I fell; yes, my friends, only four months ago, a glass of wine, handed to me by a lady who pretended to be my friend, proved my conqueror. My strength was very weakness; my will had lost its power, and I yielded."

"Maddened by the taste that had quickened an appetite controlled but for a little while, I rushed recklessly toward destruction."

"Day after day and night after night I sought the lowest taverns, hoping there to elude the vigilant search of him who has been sent by God to rescue you and me from drunkards' graves, but it was in vain; I forgot that I could not hide myself from the Master's eye, and He could send His servant to do His bidding."

"Thus a week passed; I sunk lower and lower; I cared not that I was breaking the hearts of a loving mother and sister. Love and all the finer feelings of my nature seemed frozen at their very source."

"Sunday came; but still, regardless of the day, I sought my accustomed haunts. Toward evening, just as the bells were calling together the worshippers of God, I paused on the threshold of one of the lowest taverns I had yet visited; my self-respect had all gone; with the lowest of the low I would drown my thoughts, and then lie down and die; I paused, and that pause was, under God, my salvation. I touched the latch; I opened the door; the foul air reeking with the smell of vile liquors met me, and instinctively I shrank back shuddering. Just at that moment a hand was laid upon my shoulder, and a voice I well knew pronounced my name. 'It is of no use,' I said, and tried to shake off the hand, but my friend tightened his grasp, and spoke to me so kindly and hopefully that the better feelings of my nature seemed re-awakened, and I felt I might once more be a man."

"Need I tell you, to many of whom he has spoken in the same way, how faithfully he pointed out to me the reason of my fall—

the slippery ground of self-confidence—and then pointed me to the Rock, resting on whom I could alone be safe? Suffice it to say, that through the blessing of God, he led me to the foot of the cross, and in the bleeding victim hanging there, I was enabled to see the Saviour I needed—Him whose precious blood would cleanse me from all sin, for whose sake I was forgiven, and in whose strength I would be enabled to live for His honor and glory. And now, my friends, I have come here to sign the pledge, trusting that my precious Saviour, with whose help I can do all things, will enable me to keep it."

All the time that Mr. Lansley had been speaking, Rosa had listened attentively; and as he spoke of his trust in the Saviour that she loved, and what He had done for him, she leaned toward her uncle, and whispered: "Tell me, Uncle George, was he sick like papa?" and when Mr. Newton, in a low voice, answered her, she whispered triumphantly, "And Jesus cured him; well, I know He will cure papa too."

Mr. Newton now left the pulpit, and taking his seat near a table prepared with pens and ink, presented the pledge for signatures.

The first name signed was that of Frederick Lansley, and at once his mother and sister came forward, and added their names. His sister's views had altered materially since that New Year evening when she boasted so confidently of her brother's strength, and the anxious solicitude for that only brother during those terrible days that had followed, had taught her to accept the great Burden Bearer as her friend, and on the Sunday preceding this meeting, their mother had had the joy of sitting with her son and daughter at the Table of the Lord.

No wonder, then, that it was with hearts light and thankful, that they could now all join in using their influence in persuading some other weak fellow-mortals to abjure forever that which had well-nigh wrecked the happiness of their whole household.

Just as Annie Lansley had signed her name, a little figure left the pulpit, and feeling her way noisily to the side of Mr. Newton, and laying her hand gently on his arm, said: "Uncle George, won't you please guide my hand, and let me sign the pledge too?" The sight of that sweet, innocent face, with its blind eyes turned beseechingly toward Mr. Newton, touched the hearts of many of the audience; and after Rosa Leighton's name, many others followed, of those who longed to escape from the thralldom that enslaved them, or who would by their example help those who were weak.

(To be Continued.)

CONSCIENCE AND STRONG DRINK.

Mr. J. B. Vassar gives the following incident in the life of his father, "Uncle John Vassar," which shows what conscience says on the question of the drink traffic:

"My father, as is known to many, was for many years in the employ of Matthew Vassar, the founder of Vassar College. It may not be generally known that the money with which the College was founded was made from the sale of pale ale. My father was the foreman in the business, while most of the money was being made. When he was converted, and for 'conscience sake' left the business, Matthew Vassar was very much offended, and for a number of years would not speak to him. A year before Matthew Vassar departed this life father called upon him, and, as was his wont, offered a short prayer before leaving, Mr. Vassar kneeling. I, a boy, observed the two men with uncommon interest. Never shall I forget that at the ending of the prayer Matthew Vassar rose, and with tears, laying his hand upon father's shoulders, said, 'John, you did right in leaving the business.'"

This is the way things look when life's closing shadows gather. It is well for us sometimes to see our course from the standpoint of a dying bed. Was there ever a man who, in his latest hours, rejoiced that he had spent his life in making, selling or using strong drink? Shall we do in life's course what we would not do at life's close?—*Christian*.

IN IRELAND the total rental of land amounts to \$57,000,000, while the average amount of money spent a year for intoxicating drink is \$69,000,000.