

## Experimental Abstinence.

("Temperance Record.")

In the early stages of the temperance reformation when the practice of abstinence was regarded by many as a somewhat hazardous experiment, it was no uncommon thing for teetotalers to take the pledge for periods of one month only, in order to test its practicability, and he was considered a man of unusual courage, if not lacking in prudence, who declared he had no fear of sustaining physical injury by abandoning at once and forever the ordinary use of intoxicating beverages. It was not long, however, before the force of this difficulty was lessened by the personal experience of men and women in various conditions of life who allied themselves with the new enterprise, and gradually reached the conviction that the dangers attendant upon moderate drinking were much greater than those arising from abstinence; while many were evidently astonished at the improvement in personal health that followed a change of habit which they solely adopted as a means of influencing others. We have known delicately nurtured ladies, engaged in district visiting and other works of benevolence, who abandoned with fear and trembling the glass of wine which had hitherto been considered as indispensable to the maintenance of health and strength, and found themselves much stronger and better fitted in every way for successful work amongst the poor after becoming abstainers.

Several clergymen who were personally known to us had a similar experience. A venerable church dignitary connected with a noble family, who took a special interest in soldiers, and did much to promote their welfare, became impressed with the idea that his power to help would be greatly augmented if he were able to talk to them as a personal abstainer, and asked his medical adviser if he might with safety try the experiment. That gentleman did not altogether approve of his patient's views, but thought that no great harm would result from a trial of six months, and suggested that if his weight were not diminished at the end of that time he might conclude that his health had not been injured. The experiment proved to be perfectly satisfactory, not only for six months only, but till the end of his useful life, some years later, and he always felt indebted to the temperance movement for the opportunity it afforded him of influencing the military men and others whose highest interests he assiduously sought to advance.

Another excellent clergyman with whom we had much pleasant intercourse about thirty years ago, had a still more remarkable experience. He had never enjoyed very robust health, and on reaching middle life his strength broke down so completely that he was compelled to relinquish his parochial duties. He consulted numerous physicians, most of whom recommended him to spend a year or two in foreign travel, and when the question of drink was introduced they were unanimous in recommending some kind of alcoholic liquor, but differed widely as to the special sort most suitable for his special case, one man stating that he must on no account take what another had strongly recommended. After travelling for several years with scarcely any perceptible benefit, our friend returned home, and when on a visit to a relative in Gloucestershire, was told of a clever physician in the neigh-

borhood whom his friend strongly recommended him to consult. His reply was to the effect that he was tired of medical men and was not at all disposed to see any more of them, but when asked if he would meet this doctor if they invited him to dinner, he said he could not be so churlish as to decline the company of any one to whom they might extend such an invitation. When they met two or three days after at the social board, the doctor and the invalid were mutually attracted to each other, and the clergyman gave a full description of his case and anxiously inquired if the physician could do anything for him. To this the doctor replied that he could have spoken more hopefully if application had been made to him at an earlier stage of his long illness; but he was quite willing to try what could be done if the would-be patient would promise to follow his instructions. He at once gave the assurance required, but was strongly inclined to withdraw his assent when informed that the first requirement was that he should abandon entirely the use of all kinds of alcoholic liquors. 'I could not possibly do that,' exclaimed the patient; 'being so weak that I am unable to dress in the morning until fortified by a stimulant.' 'So much the more need,' replied the doctor, 'for the course I recommend.' From that evening the clergyman became a rigid abstainer from alcoholic liquors, and having also followed his medical adviser's suggestions as to diet, exercise, and other hygienic adjuncts, his shattered health was so completely restored after a few months that his professional duties were resumed and carried on with increased earnestness and vigor till the close of a long life that was largely devoted to the welfare of others.

## Two Roof Stories.

Here are two strange roof stories for the children; they have at least the merit of being true.

The Cincinnati vouches for the first. The children in a farmhouse in northern Germany, two summers ago, found that a stork was going to build its nest on their roof. They had been told that this was a sign of good luck, so they fed the stork all summer until it grew quite tame.

When autumn came, knowing that the stork would leave them, they wrote a letter, setting forth their pet's virtues and cleverness, telling how dear it was to them, and begging the people to whom it came, in whatever far country, to be kind to it. They all signed their names, and tied the letter under the bird's wing.

Winter passed and spring came, and one bright morning there stood the stork again upon the roof! And under its wing was tied another letter. It was from a missionary in Africa, to whose house the stork had come. He said he was sure that the children who had been kind to a bird would be sorry for the black children among whom he lived, whom a famine and fever had brought into sore want, and that they would help him to save them.

The next letter that the children wrote went to Africa by mail, and carried friendly words and substantial help from them and their friends. So it was that the poor dumb stork did God's work.

The other story was told twenty years ago by a venerable minister, then in charge of the Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in this country. During one day with a friend in New York, he told of the

hardships borne in winter by certain missionaries to the Indians in the far West.

Two children at the table listened eagerly, and consulted when they were alone as to how they could earn money to help these poorly clothed and half-starved men. They lived in the fourth story of an apartment house. 'If we were in the country,' said the girl, 'we could raise cows and sheep. But here—'

The boy's eyes flashed. 'Here we can raise chickens—on the roof!'

The fenced-in roof was already their playground. They bought in the market their 'stock' of two or three fowls, fed them well, and soon had fresh-laid eggs to sell to the other tenants in the house for their breakfast. When summer was over, they brought their small earnings to their old friend in a tiny purse.

As the clergyman made his rounds among the wealthy churches of the country, he told the story of the poor workers for Christ in the West, and of the work of the children upon the roof. The story of 'that little purse brought in thousands of dollars to our Indian mission,' he said.—'Youth's Companion.'

## The Old Year.

(By Lotta Miller, in 'American Messenger'.)

Of its words of comfort spoken,  
Of its joys, give we no token  
To the swiftly dying year?  
While we sorrow o'er its sadness,  
Shall we pass by all its gladness,  
All remembrance of its cheer?  
Nay; the sorrows we have known,  
And the winds that chill have blown,  
Only make it the more dear,  
And we, weeping, say adieu,  
As we welcome in the new.

## A TRIBUTE FROM MANITOBA.

'CANADA'S BEST EDUCATOR.'

The 'Witness' has a number of namesakes, publications for the most part started by 'Witness' admirers and in realms purely religious. The 'Prairie Witness' is one of these, and, from small beginnings, like its great ancestor, bids fair to keep pace with the growth of its constituency. It is to be hoped that its interests will widen with its influence till it discuss from the Christian standpoint the great temporal questions of the day, both political and economic, local and national, for they all tend to bring about or delay the time when the Kingdom of our Lord shall be established.

In its issue of Dec. 1 the 'Prairie Witness' says: 'Now is the time to decide upon what papers you are going to read during the year, and we hope to give you some assistance in this matter.'

'First, we say—what we believe no one will dispute—that the Montreal 'Witness' is by far the best educator in Canada.'

'It has done more to make Canada what it is than any other paper in the Dominion. We say this with great assurance, because we believe it true. It has the growth and character of over fifty years' well-doing, and it is everywhere held in respect for its work's sake.'—'Prairie Witness.'

CAPE COVE, QUE.  
Dec. 11, 1899.

Dear Sirs,

I value the 'Witness' highly and have always been glad to express my opinion about it.

So far as I know, it is, I think, the most useful paper published in Canada. The leaders and notes on the War Situation are always remarkably well done.

I herewith enclose amount of my subscription.

I am, dear Sirs,

Yours faithfully,

REV. WILLIAM G. LYSTON.