



The Secrets of the Curio Cabinet.

(Concluded.)

'We will have Aunt Deborah's letter next, Uncle David,' he said. 'We will have it together.'

It was written in cramped, inelegant characters, but the writing was perfectly legible, and he proceeded to read it aloud. It ran thus:—

'Dear Nephew Charles,—People call me eccentric, and they are probably right. I have a little gift for you, but if you follow out my wishes you will not know of it until your twenty-seventh birthday, and I have my reasons for this. I believe you have the making of a true man in you, and an all-round business one, too; but your future success will depend on whether you shun the evil which proved your poor father's ruin. During the years which must elapse before my gift comes into your rightful possession there will have been time for life's emergencies to test you; and though unconscious of the fact, your actions will be watched by those who have charge of your future financial interests. It may be that you will have prospered, and when you read this be in a position to pay off, by your own exertions, the mortgage which will run out one month later. "God helps those who help themselves," and I never think it good for a young man to be born with a silver spoon in his mouth. But misfortune sometimes overtakes the most worthy, and it is not always because a man's morals are weak that he finds himself in financial difficulties. I hope you will forgive me for my brusque sermonette, but I never found a few words of honest and well-meant advice injure any man, and I believe you have the grit of a true man in you. If, however, you have not enough money to clear off the mortgage, you may find my little gift useful. The papers which you will find with this letter will entitle you to £8,000; and if you communicate with the firm of solicitors named therein your legal claim to the money will be at once acknowledged. If it gives as much gratification to receive it as it affords me to bequeath it, we shall both do well by the arrangement. God bless you. Your loving aunt, Deborah Ashley.'

Charles Wyndham's face had flushed and paled alternately, and his voice had grown hoarse and unsteady. The letter dropped from his hand. Old David Wyndham's feeble fingers were interlaced and unlifted, while his lips moved in harmony with the silent thanksgiving which he was pouring into the ear of the Great Unseen.

'I ought to have trusted him,' murmured Charles.

'And, my lad—the old man's voice was tremulous with feeling—'you've proved yourself worthy of your Aunt Deborah's faith in you. The test and strain of life have not broken you away from your moorings. You've honored your Temperance pledge, Charles, and you can thankfully take your aunt's money without a shadow of shame or a sting of conscience. You haven't any dark skeletons to lock away, and you have no cause to fear the scrutiny of those who have been silently watching your life actions. Yes, your Aunt Deborah was a shrewd business woman, no doubt,' and his eyes twinkled humorously. 'You can understand now why she got you to explain with exactitude all the points of any business importance bearing upon the mortgage. Yes, Deborah Ashley was certainly a wise woman.'

Coals of Fire.

Farmer Dawson kept missing his corn. Every night it was taken from his crib, although the door was well secured with lock and key.

'It's that lazy, Tom Slocum!' he exclaimed one morning after missing more than usual. 'I've suspected him all the time, and I won't bear it any longer.'

'What's makes you think it's Tom?' asked his wife, pouring out the fragrant coffee.

'Because he's the only man around that hasn't any corn—nor anything else, for that matter. He spent the summer at the saloons while his neighbors were at their work. Now they have plenty, and he has nothing—serves him just right, too.'

'But his family are suffering,' rejoined his wife. 'They are sick, and in need of food and medicine; should we not help them?'

'No!' growled the farmer, 'if he finds his neighbors are going to take care of his family, it will encourage him to spend the next season as he did the last. Better send him to the jail and his family to the poor-house, and I'm going to do it, too. I've laid a plan to trap him this very night.'

'Now, while Tom is reaping the bitter fruits of his folly, is it not time to help him to a better life?' suggested his wife.

'A little course of law would be the most effective,' replied the farmer.

'In this case coals of fire would be better. Try the coals first, William, try the coals first.'

Farmer Dawson made no reply, but finished his breakfast, and walked out of the house with the decided step of one who has made up his mind, and something is going to be done.

His wife sighed as she went about her work, thinking of the weary, heartbroken mother with her sick and hungry babes around her.

The farmer proceeded to examine his cribs, and after a thorough search found a hole large enough for a man's hand.

'There's the leak,' he exclaimed; 'I'll fix that,' and then went to setting the trap inside.

Next morning he arose earlier than usual, and went around to the cribs. His trap had caught a man—Tom Slocum—the very one he had suspected!

He seemed to take no notice of the thief, but turned aside into the barn and began heaping the manger with hay—sweet-scented from the Summer's harvest field. Then he opened the crib doors and took out the golden ears—the fruit of his honest toil.

All the time he was thinking what to do? Should he try the law or the coals? The law was what the man deserved, but his wife's words kept ringing through his mind. He emptied the corn in the feeding trough, then went around where the man stood with one hand in the trap.

'Hello! neighbor; what are you doing here?' he asked.

Poor Tom answered nothing, but the downcast, guilty face confessed more than words could have done.

Farmer Dawson released the imprisoned hand, and, taking Tom's sack, ordered him to hold it while he filled it with the coveted grain.

'There, Tom, take that,' said the farmer, 'and after this, when you want corn, come to me, and I'll let you have it on trust for work. I need another good, steady hand on the farm, and will give steady work and good wages.'

'Oh, sir,' replied Tom, quite overcome, 'I've been wanting work, but no one would hire me. My family are suffering, and I am ashamed to beg. But I'll work for this and every ear I have taken, if you will give me a chance.'

'Very well, Tom,' said the farmer; 'take the corn to the mill, and make things comfortable about home to-day, and to-morrow we'll begin. But there's one thing we must agree to first.'

Tom lifted an inquiring gaze.

'You must let whiskey alone,' continued

the farmer, 'you must promise not to touch a drop.'

The tears sprang into Tom's eyes, and his voice trembled with emotion, as he said:

'You are the first man that ever asked me that. There's always enough to say: "Come, Tom, take a drink," and I have drunk until I thought there was no use in trying to be a better man. But, since you care enough to ask me to stop drinking, I'm bound to make the trial; that I will, sir.'

Farmer Dawson took Tom to the house and gave him his breakfast, while his wife put up a basket of food for the suffering family in the poor man's home.

Tom went to work the next day, and the next. In time he came to be an efficient hand on the Dawson place. He stopped drinking and stealing; attended church and Sabbath-school with his family, and became a respectable member of society.

'How changed Tom is from what he once was,' remarked the farmer's wife, one day.

'Yes,' replied the husband, 'twas the coals of fire did it.'—*Religious Intelligencer.*

What is the Reason?

1. Some say alcohol gives strength. If so, why do athletes abstain while training for a race or other contests requiring strength?

2. Some say alcohol gives endurance. If so, why do great employers of labor cut off the supply of drink when work of an especially arduous nature is required?

3. Some say alcohol gives heat. If so, why do travellers in the Arctic regions who take drink succumb to the cold, while the abstainers remain unharmed?

4. Some say alcohol is good in hot countries. If so, why did Stanley refuse it to his men during his forced march across Africa in search of Emin Pasha?

5. Some say alcohol steadies the nerves. If so, why do surgeons abstain before performing a delicate operation?

6. Some say alcohol sustains the health. If so, why do insurance companies take total abstainers at a lower premium than others?

7. Some say it is dangerous to suddenly give up the use of alcohol. If so, why do prisoners, most of whom are obliged suddenly to abstain, improve in health?—*The Temperance Leader and League Journal.*

What Can Whiskey Do?

(The Rev. Louis Albert Banks, D.D., in *The Temperance Leader and League Journal.*)

Not long ago there stood in the Haarlem Police Court, in New York City, a variety of men and women arrested for drunkenness. One was noticeable for his age, and for his extreme despair. He did not seem to care what became of him. He came up before the magistrate—a younger man—who inquired his name. He replied—'Joseph——'. The magistrate started, and then peered curiously into the old man's face, and inquired, with a note of agitation in his voice—

'You're not the Joseph — that used to be head man at Claffin's?'

'Yes, I am the same man.'

A few years ago the magistrate, an honored judge, was the office-boy in Claffin's great store, at \$1 a week, and Joseph — was head man in the same establishment, earning \$2,500 a year. The one has been sober; the other has taken the whiskey path. The moral does not need enlargement.

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