

to the arm of his chair with pitiful hopelessness.

"Don't, father, don't," pleaded the old lady, the tears creeping down the wrinkles in her cheeks. "God has worked greater miracles than taking this awful appetite away from our poor boy." And so the night wore on and the candle burned very low. The skies became calmer and the rain had almost ceased falling, while the old people watched and waited by the fire. At last they went to bed, leaving Fred's supper still on the table and placing a match by the side of the remnant of the candle.

When morning came, the power of the poison having worn itself (and almost its victim) out, Fred roused himself from his drunken slumbers, and started home, nearer rationality than he had been for some time before. Slowly and tremblingly he picked his way along the streets, not even raising his eyes to the passers-by—many of them his old companions going to their work; and oh! what a living lesson he must have been to them, a miserable wreck of manhood, instead of the lively, noble friend of a few months previous!

"Young Harding has gone in for good, I guess," remarked one merchant to another. "There's no use trying to make anything out of him now."

"It's a burning shame," returned the other; "it seems to me if they had taken it in time, they might have saved him. He's a capital fellow, if it wasn't for that accursed rum! Before Garney put up his saloon here, there wasn't a harder-working, nobler fellow in town."

"Has he a family?"

"Only an old father and mother, who are tottering over the grave. He's the only child they have living, and they say it's nigh killing the old man. He was engaged to be married to Ella Brighton, but she wouldn't have him when he got to be such a sot."

But Fred had reached home by this time, and entering the room where the old people sat the night before, he found the table still spread with his supper; and the tea still warm on the stove. His face became even more haggard when he noticed these little marks of loving care, and he only murmured, "It's no use!"

The old people still were sleeping, and Fred sat in the old arm-chair, thinking, with his face buried in his hands, till they awoke. Finding him at home they hastily rose, and entered the room. Fred raised his head as they greeted him, but he could not bear the mournful pity in his father's dim eyes, nor the caressing touch of his mother's hand. After a while, he said:

"Mother, father;—it's no use! Here you have been up all night, waiting for me. You must not do it! You must not care for me. It's no use, I'm not worthy of it! It's too late—I'm lost—lost!"

"Don't talk so, my son, don't;—no, no, you are not lost! You remember the desperate thief on the cross; he was saved, Fred,—saved!"

"O, father, he was not a drunkard. He had a soul. I've drowned mine—in rum! I am ruined and lost. Yesterday morning I promised you, mother, never to touch it again; oh, it's no use!" and the bitter tears came from the bleared eyes, and harder hearts, it seems to me, than a rum-seller's must have melted had they witnessed the grief of the aged parents, and heard their sobs of despair and wretchedness.

"Ah! mother, Ella was right. She was right and wise," said Fred, after a while. "She said it was burning me up! I would have been a brutish husband! What disgrace and misery she has escaped! She should thank God for this deliverance. But why didn't she—why didn't you, mother, keep me from it before it was too late? Why did they let me have it? Why did I taste it? It's too late, it's burning me up!"

Meanwhile the conversation between the two merchants progressed somewhat as follows:

"Isn't there any way to get Garney out of Chelleyville, and put an end to his contemptible business?"

"I don't believe there's any use in trying that, Hawley," returned Mr. Hawke; "and, besides, he owns the saloon and lot it stands on, and he's got a license, and I don't see where you can touch him."

"Still, he doesn't make much, and we might prevail on him to pull up stakes, and try his luck somewhere else."

"No, he doesn't make much, there are few men in this burg that would patronize such an establishment. Still he might as well keep up the traffic here as anywhere, if he must sell liquor."

"Now, Mr. Hawke, I do not agree with you there; now see here; if the people in every town should say as you have said, to every saloon-keeper that made his appearance,—'just as well sell the stuff here as anywhere else,'—things would stand pretty much as they do now,—saloons everywhere; but suppose every town had a club of influential men, who would refuse to admit of a single saloon

being established,—well, the difference would soon show itself, that's all!"

"Well, if all the influential men in the world were such as you, Mr. Hawley, I don't doubt but your scheme might succeed. But you know people in our country do as they please, in regard to trades and professions mostly. But if you want to try some of your plans on Garney and Chelleyville, count me in for all that I can do!"

"Good, Mr. Hawke, here's my pledge that we'll try to rout Garney!" exclaimed Hawley, springing from his seat and extending his hand to Hawke.

"And mine!" said Hawke, grasping it firmly in his. So it was arranged that Hawley should see Garney in the course of the day, and find out his business standing and intentions, and report to his colleague in the evening.

As Hawley walked up the street to the saloon he felt as if he was going to the gallows almost; it wasn't any trifling matter to be seen walking into a grog-shop, and poor Hawley fancied a face staring at him from every window, and that every one he met cast malevolent glances at him, and he hardly dared to raise his eyes, and even pictured himself called up before his brethren in the church, to account for this visit to Garney's saloon. Even the sign over the door seemed to stare at him maliciously, and he could scarcely reconcile himself to pass under it to the saloon. But the thought that folks would find out, should he succeed, carried him along over these obstacles, and he was soon conversing with the good-natured, corpulent Garney. Hawley's ardor cooled a little when Garney assured him he was perfectly contented; liked Chelleyville first-rate; didn't want to sell; plenty of business—getting better every day!

"Then I couldn't buy you out?"

"Don't want to sell; lot'll be worth twice as much when the new railroad comes through—couldn't think of selling."

"Well, never mind—just thought I'd run down and make you an offer; but who's that yonder? Is he sick?" said Hawley, pointing to a boy's form stretched upon a dirty lounge in a corner of the room.

"No, he's not sick, only taking a nap; it's George McKee," replied Garney, uneasily, for it was plain to see that the boy was dead drunk. Hawley said no more, but walked down the street toward Hawke's emporium, to the great relief of the rum-seller. Hawley suddenly changed his course, however, and walked briskly back to his own office. Going to his desk he wrote hurriedly over half a page of "legal-cap" and, after reading it carefully over twice, signed his name, folded it, and put it in his vest pocket with a sigh of satisfaction. Then taking his hat he hurried out to dinner.

Toward evening, in a private talk with Hawke, he related his conversation with Garney, and produced the writing, which Hawke read aloud as follows:

"We, the undersigned, citizens of Chelleyville, do hereby agree and resolve that no saloon, grog-shop, or liquor establishment of any kind whatever, shall be permitted to carry on its disgraceful and contemptible trade in the village of Chelleyville, on and after Saturday next, November 18, 187—, for a period of five years,—and it is further resolved and agreed that we will use every possible means to eradicate any such institution that is, or may be, established in said village of Chelleyville; and we also agree and resolve to insist upon the immediate removal or closing of B. F. Garney's saloon; and the proprietor of said establishment is hereby informed that no harsh means will be used previous to specified date, but after said date, we emphatically declare that no intoxicating beverage shall be sold by any citizen of Chelleyville."

"Good," exclaimed Hawke; "but I confess I fail to see exactly your plan; and how you'll make this half-page of 'legal-cap' cause Garney to get up and dust, and turn these half dozen carousing tipplers into decent human beings, I don't precisely understand!" laughed Mr. Hawke.

"Why just easily enough," replied Hawley, too much absorbed in his plans to notice Hawke's levity; "you see I shall get every honorable man in town to sign this paper, and then present it to Garney, in a way that will impress it upon his mind; I don't know just how yet."

"But, Hawley, would such a proceeding be legal?"

"Legal? I'd like to know what I care for legal if I get Garney routed! I'll warrant it will be law enough in his comprehension!"

"Well, you always have a way and a remedy for everything; here's my name and I sincerely hope you may cure Garney, or rather Chelleyville, but I haven't much faith!"

That evening the half page of "legal-cap" was produced in many a home, and read by many enquiring eyes, while the enthusiasm of Hawley stirred up the minds of his listeners to an earnest regard for his attempt, and down went name after name, and every signer felt as if there was a great battle about to be fought, and he was one of its heroes. When Hawley with some trepidation knocked at Harding's door, it was late in the evening; he hardly knew what the consequence of his visit might be here, but he felt his principal victory lay in getting Fred Harding's name, so he resolved

to venture. The door was opened by the trembling hand of the old man, and he was led to a seat by the fire, for the evening was of a freezing temperature without. Fred was pillowed up in the arm-chair, looking very miserable, indeed; he only nodded to Hawley and extended his hand.

"Why, Fred, you look sick!"

"I am," he replied, "sick of everything!"

"Have you been home all day?"

"Yes, for once, Hawley, I've sat here all day, and been cared for and worked for as though I were worth it!"

"Well, Fred, I'm glad you're at home. I've spent the greater part of the day in fixing up a concern for you to sign. See, I've got the names of more than half the town to it now! It'll be a capital affair, when we get the finishing touches on! Read it, and then down with your name." Poor old Mrs. Harding looked anxiously over Fred's shoulder, hoping to see "Pledge" printed at the top, but no title had been prefixed, and she waited in silence while Fred perused it. He finished it and handed it to his father without a word.

Mr. Harding read it aloud in a trembling tone, and then in a lower voice, each name attached; then, taking the proffered pencil, slowly and carefully inscribed his name.

"Now, Fred," said Hawley, here's the place for yours; come, we must have it."

"No, Hawley, I can't do it; you are strong enough without me."

"But, Fred, I count your name worth more than half the others!"

"Wait, Hawley; I can't do it!"

"Now, Fred, you know what an influence your name will have on my list, and I say you are wrong to withhold it! Now think half a minute; if you sign this and we get Garney out, you will be happy, your parents will be happy, and I shall be happy! And then think of the misery manufactured by Garney's saloon! Young men who have never yet tasted will become wretched topera—many happy homes must soon become hovels of poverty; noble men go down—"

"Hawley! Hawley! don't for the sake of pity tell that all over—I know it now well enough—better than you ever will—every bit of it! I will sign my name, and if nothing more, it will show that the right spirit is willing; and oh, if you get the poison clear away it might be—" he did not finish the sentence, but hastily added his name to the list. This pledge seemed to have awakened a new life in Fred; and a half hour's conversation with Hawley, and the plans and prospect of the good times in future days seemed to wonderfully lift the gloom from the little house in the trees, and the old people began to feel as if a little of the joy of our existence could be tasted on the earth!

While Hawley and his "half page of legal-cap" were traversing the streets on that cold evening, little knew Garney of the conspiracy against him working its way from home to home, and I dare say, he might have been flattered, had he known the simple fact that more than half the town were much concerned to-night in his prosperity.

But the work went on and grew stronger, nor even his dreams betrayed trouble!

The next day was Thursday, and in the evening a complement of Hawley's best signers went in procession to B. F. Garney's saloon. The building was lighted up magnificently, and through the glass doors two or three of his old customers were seen loafing about and talking loudly, when Hawley knocked. Garney opened the door, and in his most cordial tone invited Hawley and Hawke in; they only nodded to his congratulations and walked with firm steps to the other end of the room, followed by their companions till the room was full. Garney's surprise knew no bounds and was expressed in many and severe epithets, but the men kept perfectly cool and Garney became more and more frightened, and his companions slunk off into shady corners. Hawley took off his hat, and stepping upon a box opposite Garney, produced the paper afore-mentioned, while Garney stood perfectly mute and spell-bound—his head a dizzy whirl with memories of all the mobs he had ever heard of; and buckets of tar and feathers, and various things seemed to spread out before him in a perplexing jumble. Mr. Hawley began.

"Mr. Garney, we have taken the liberty to call upon you this evening to get your assistance in the transaction of some business of very great import to our town. We hope you will not hesitate to aid us all in your power, since we are obliged to have your coincidence."

Garney was relieved. He stepped forward, and with a low bow said: "At your service, gentlemen; shall be most happy to aid you. Is it a railroad?" here a laugh from some of the company threw him into confusion again, and great drops of sweat found their way to his temples.

"No, Mr. Garney, it's of greater importance to Chelleyville than a railroad, even," said Edward Brighton, rising; "it is just an honest request from honest men, and we hope you

will give it a candid consideration; our town, you know, has had no peer for morality and harmony until within the past few months, and after a critical investigation of affairs, we conclude that rum is the cause of all the present disturbance! And there is not another roof in town that shelters the poison but this, Mr. Garney! You know its effect—and I shall not attempt to portray the wretchedness you are daily bringing upon your fellow-beings! You know the number of souls you are drawing in the accursed fire;—and now we ask you to desist, and hope you will not compel us to employ harsh measures;—Mr. Hawley will read our article of agreement." Mr. Hawley unfolded the paper and read in clear, concise language the half page of "legal-cap," and slowly and with emphasis, every name appended. "You have heard our protest and pledge, and now we wait your reply!"

Silence ensued for several minutes. Garney stood in a sulky mood, his face burning from the excitement. After a while he said:

"Why didn't you say so at first? Here I've carried on my business peacefully enough, for most a year, and now you come to me and say you count yourselves too respectable to have a saloon in your town! No, sirs, I shall carry on my shop until I'm satisfied I can better myself elsewhere!"

"Which will be before Saturday!" said one of the party.

"We confess, we have not objected as soon as we should," replied Hawley, "but you have heard the law of Chelleyville for the next five years."

"Couldn't you give a fellow a little chance—just a month or two?"

"You have heard the law."

"Just a week then?"

"The law reads 'Saturday, Nov. 18.'"

"I can't do it no way—I'd lose everything I've got!"

"There's no need of that, we'll pay you what your liquors cost you, and you can keep your house and lot if you'll promise never to sell intoxicating drinks here again." The rum-seller meditated a minute or so, and then said in a savage voice: "I've a right to sell liquor here as long as I've a license."

"Speaking of your license, Mr. Garney, reminds me of the fact that when I called yesterday I saw young McKee here, dead drunk, and half the men here know that you sell liquor to him; furthermore, we are positive that he is only nineteen years of age, while your license forbids your selling to minors; and Garney, if you want to save yourself considerable trouble, you had better just sign your name to this paper, and give up the business now and forever. You can make a good living here at your old trade,—keeping a bakery. And you know the penalty of violating your license; here is the paper; sign it and you shall receive the full value of your liquors from the town treasury." Garney was scared, and it was evident that Hawley had pulled the right line, that time, for Garney after a little grumbling and hesitating, signed Hawley's "half-page of legal cap," and the saloon fairly shook, and the liquors trembled in their casks and decanters, as cheer after cheer was given by the enthusiastic witnesses. A computation was made and an order drawn on the town treasury for the full value of Garney's liquors.

"Gentlemen, I move we celebrate next Saturday, as a day of rejoicing for Chelleyville!" cried Edward Brighton.

"Second the motion!" said Garney.—The vote was unanimous for a celebration, and a ringing cheer was given for Garney. "And I move," said Hawke, "that we take all the rum we've bought of friend Garney to-night, and follow it in procession that day, to Black Swamp, and empty it in the bogs!" Seconds to this motion rang simultaneously from all parts of the room. The sign over the door was taken down and laid on the counter, the doors of the saloon locked and the keys given to Hawley for keeping until Saturday;—and after many hearty "good-nights" the company dispersed.—*Morning Star*.

— It is believed that the Government have accepted the principle of Sir Harcourt Johnstone's bill for depriving grocers of their spirit licenses. The facilities afforded by licensed grocers have been the occasion of many evils, and this step of the Government will tend to the diminution of drinking and drunkenness, more especially among the female portion of the population.—*League Journal*.

