

"But do you give your children such right of way through all your places?" I asked, my interest in the shell stitch gone.

"Not quite all," she answered, laughing, "I have a few little nooks that are sacredly my own, but only a few. Frank uses the right word when he says we are 'partners,' and I don't know when he has enjoyed anything as much as being allowed to keep that new fishing-hook in my pile of handkerchiefs;" and the mother laughed afresh at the odd hiding-place the boy had invented.

But I was burdened with a consciousness that I should have snubbed my young man upon any such unreasonable proposal, and I pressed the discussion.

"How can you keep any order, or teach any order," I asked rather petulently, "if you do not insist on things being kept in their right places?"

"I do try to check the troublesome propensity to leave things lying around," answered my companion; "but oh, Elsie, don't you remember from your own childhood how much nicer and more secure our mothers' places seemed for our treasures? That new fishing-hook is of the same value to Frank that your diamond ring is to you: more, indeed, for it gives him more lively pleasure, I am sure, and no place of his own seemed good enough for it. It was a very small sacrifice on my part to allow him to tumble clean handkerchiefs, but the gratitude it has awakened in that precious little heart has bubbled up and over in many a kiss and caress that was infinitely sweet to me.

"He got that word 'partners' from a story that they are fond of hearing me tell, of a bit of my own childhood's experience. I had some bad tricks, as a child, that were hard to correct, and one was playing in the fire. Living in the country, big wood-fires blazed on our hearths all winter, and seemed an irresistible temptation to me. Of course I was punished time and again, but nothing ever seemed to cure me, until one day my mother found me with long pieces of twisted paper, trying to see how near the flame I could hold them without their lighting. Instead of the punishment I expected, my mother sat down beside me on the floor, and played in the fire with me for half an hour. By that time my craving was satisfied, and the morbid fascination that the forbidden pleasure had exercised over me was gone. 'Now, Nellie,' said my mother, as she brushed up the litter, 'we are partners in this game, and it will be very unfair if you ever try to play it without me.' I never did, and the idea of being partners with mother held me with a strong grasp all my life; it brought me to her side with many a question of this or that, which I am persuaded most young people settle for themselves, and often settle the wrong way."

I began to feel sorry for my poor little well-managed children, who had never known the sweetness of playing "partners" with mamma; but they were young enough, thank God, to begin yet, and I trusted I was not too old to learn.

"Aren't you afraid to trust Frank to go to the mill-stream?" I asked, kissing my friend good-bye; "it's horridly deep above the dam."

"He never goes above the dam," she replied with proud content; that's part of the partnership!"—*Elizabeth P. Allen, in Ill. Christian Advocate.*

THE BARN MEETING; OR, WHAT PROVERB WILL SAID.

Down in the shires a farmer lent his barn for a teetotal meeting and an aged man known as Proverb Will was the chief speaker. He was a wise old man, and called Proverb Will, because of his wonderful gift of mixing proverbs in his daily talk. The barn-floor was covered with forms from the National Schoolroom and the Primitive Methodist chapel, and Proverb Will quietly stood up on one of the benches, and thus began his homely speech:—

Friends and neighbors, said he, in a manly voice, "One man may lead a horse to water, but fifty can't make him drink," and I may talk to you about signing teetotal, but I cannot make you do it. You must all settle that for yourselves. "If it were not for hope, the heart would break," and I have trudged here five miles to get you to join our good cause, and I did not faint by the way, for "Care will kill a cat," and so I kept up my heart, and I feel you will treat me kindly. I have been teetotal many a year now. A man came to our village one winter and held a meeting like this, and my wife and I went to hear him. I had, like most young chaps, been drinking a bit, and lost my money and my temper, and my wife was not happy about it, I can tell you. Well,

the man that held the meeting talked very good sense, and so I listened to him, and at last he said, "Be a good husband, and you'll get a penny to spend, a penny to lend, and a penny for a friend." That stuck to me, and I told my wife that I would sign if she would, and she looked at me as bright as a star, and went up to the table and signed right off. So I followed her lead, and we went home, and emptied the beer-jar into the pond, and hung up the jar outside the cottage, and there it is now under the creepers on the south wall. "A good beginning makes a good ending," and though the ending hasn't quite come yet, we don't fear; it will be good when it does come. "Young men may die, old men must," and we don't forget that flowers fade, and life is cut off, but after we signed the pledge we found the Bible sweet, and we hope to have a calm sunset, and a lift across the river to the fair land beyond.

Well, friends, "time tries all," and time has tried me. Since I gave up beer I've done with smoking and swearing, and I've bought books, and bacon, and my little cottage, and I fear no ill in old age. Beer is never any blessing to you. It is waste, it is always waste. If you spend twopence a day on ale you give away more than three pounds a year, and as the old saying is—

"He that buys land buys many stones,
He that buys flesh buys many bones,
He that buys eggs buys many shells,
He that buys ale buys nothing else."

Ale does you no good—never all the year round. It does not clothe you, nor feed you, nor buy a gown for your wife, nor shoes for your children, nor pay for your pig, nor keep you out of the doctor's hands. So I never touch it, for "wilful waste makes woful want," and "good watch prevents misfortune."

Neighbors and all here, let me assure you that I have found teetotal good for my children, gin and ale spoils many a wife. You know

"A good wife and health
Are a man's best wealth,"

and

"Saith Solomon the wise,
A good wife's a prize."

My wife keeps at home. That's the best place for a wife. The beer shop is the worst place she can go to. "The mother's breath is always sweet," says the old saying, but beer spoils its sweetness, and gin makes it like poison to the babe, so I am glad, friends all, that my wife keeps teetotal to this day. She's been a good mother, and all her children praise her.

I am rare glad to see lads, and young men, and lasses here. Folks often say that "youth will have its swing." So I say; but where are they going to swing to? They may swing into the ditch but that is not a pleasant bed, or they may swing into a prison, and that is a dark-place for young eyes. "It's good to be merry and wise," and I like to see young folk as lively as kittens and lambs and larks, but "a little mischief is too much," and gin and ale bring more mischief than either monkeys or foxes. There is no real gold in the glass, but plenty of trouble of all sorts that can come upon us.

You may tell me you don't mean to go to prison or the work-house. No, maybe not, but "there are more ways to kill a cat than hanging." Empty pockets, broken legs, bad wounds, and sore hearts come through the drink, and therefore it is foolish to take it. "Constant dropping wears the stone," and frequent tipping ruins the health. I heard a speaker say—

"Temperance, exercise and repose
Slams the door on the doctor's nose,"

and I believe it. Yes, I do all the way. In our club the teetotalers are always least on the fund. It's the drinkers that waste the money. Come on then and sign teetotal. Don't lose your chance. "The first blow is half the battle," and when you sign don't be ashamed of what you've done, for "fair faces need no paint," and a wise deed needs no defence. Only fools will laugh at you, but never mind that, for "a fool's bolt is soon shot."

Well, I've had my say, and will sit down, for "many words will not fill a bushel." But, "be sober, and watch unto prayer," and remember, friends and neighbors all, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

And Proverb Will sat down amid the cheery thanks of all the folk. After the meeting he walked home in the soft moonlight, and, having had a frugal meal, he went to rest, saying to Himself, "He giveth his beloved sleep."—*George W. McCree, in Temperance Record.*