



Temperance Department.

HOW THEY REBUILT WEST WALTHAM CHANCEL.

A great groan from the rector "My dear, what is the matter?" exclaimed his wife, gazing up at him through the spectacles she had but lately adopted, in which consequently she looked extremely comical in the eyes of her rising family.

"Papa has stuck fast in the middle of his sermon because we've been making such a row," said Molly, the youngest girl of thirteen, who has fully copied her two elder brothers in their free and easy style of expression.

"Then I'll help you out of your difficulty, papa, if you will but put away your books and talk to us for half an hour. We'll finish it, papa, when the magpies are gone to bed."

"I am from Norah, a pretty young likeness of her mother Mrs. Weston without spectacles, and an evident pet of the head of the family."

The speaker left her low seat and her netting and went to enforce her suggestion by attempting to withdraw her father from his writing table, and once by his side, she boldly began clearing away the obnoxious litter of books and papers before her.

"What's this though," she ran on "ecclesiastical dilapidations," "Chancel Repairs," "Specifications" of "Why, papa, it's that dreadful chancel that's been worrying you all this time. We might have guessed that when you've been shut up all the afternoon with Mr. Nash."

"Gently, Norah," said Mr. Weston: "the chancel is anything but dreadful a better specimen of the perpendicular can't be found on this side of England properly restored it would be a fine thing but patched and muddled about as it has been for the last fifty years, it's a standing reproach to the men who've gone before me and what's more to the point, it's a disgrace to me—and yet," sadly finished the rector "for the life of me, I cannot see my way clear to putting it in order."

It was easy to see this subject was a sore one to the family Mrs. Weston gave a weary sigh as soon as her husband began speaking; the boys made faces at each other over their easels, suggestive of a horror of the chancel, and Molly almost began to cry over the sudden check to her flow of fun, and went over for comfort to the couch where lay the very oldest daughter, a gentle patient invalid.

Norah even sat down, helpless, and just a thought crossed everyone knew the chancel was in a dreadful state, but what was the use of worrying about it? if its restoration were anything feasible, of course they would all try and help towards it, but there were the facts of the case. The restoration, so said the architect, could not be done under £300; the rectory was worth just £450 a year; there were five of them, besides papa and mamma, and a couple of servants to live off that, and just a little further income from private means—so how in the name of fortune could anything be repaired, or scraped, or saved towards rebuilding? The thing was out of the question, so argued Norah, as she sat wistfully gazing at the pretty flower-boxes outside the open window—and it passed through her mind that they certainly did all they could with their means, for she and her two brothers were the sole gardeners as far as the flowers were concerned. Then Mrs. Weston put in her plaint, not that she was by any means a woman given to bewailing her fate, but this chancel was a perpetual burden on her mind, knowing as she did the anxious thought it gave her husband.

Well after all it will have to be what we have talked of so long Murray—we must give up "Joany" and if Norah helps me we can manage without sending Molly to school, or having a governess either and with both these expenses put down we may be able to save something in two or three years. But she was hardly allowed to finish her sentence by the excited young folk. "Give up Jenny—the steadiest best old brown mare that ever lived who never ran away or shied, or played any pranks unworthy of the trust reposed in her, who saved them shillings untold by bringing parcels of unknown number and weight from the neighboring town, who turned out almost of her own accord to meet the boys on wet afternoons when they came home from school," gave up Jenny, who was the very good, soft-nosed friend and pet of every member of the family. That was manifestly impossible, and an outcry was raised at the mention of such a thing, but Mrs. Weston resolved nevertheless to urge it upon her husband when they two should be alone.

There was a disadvantage attending the

Westons' habit of talking over family affairs always in a "committee of the whole house"—there was often a great deal said and very little done—but on this occasion there was also an advantage. The question being a serious one, everyone really tried to find a way out of the trouble—even Molly did her best. This was it. With very open eyes, and in solemn tones she began, "Once I know a girl"—and at her very grave face every one began to laugh, which was a good thing, and cheered her on—"a girl who wanted to buy a donkey, and what do you think she did?"

"Attention," cried Frank, "the girl that bought a donkey is sure to put us in the right way to build a church. go on, Molly."

"And so," said Molly "she turned teetotaler."

At which they all laughed more than ever, and then being in at any rate a rather happier mood for the time being, the rector had them think no more of the matter, but come out for half-an-hour's walk with him before the young ones' bedtime. So the party of five sallied forth with smiling adieux to the house-mother, who stayed behind as usual to "clean up" after the young ones, and to the invalid, whose enjoyment of the fresh, open air depended so much upon the possession of Jenny aforementioned.

There was a wonderful quiet when the last sound of cheerful young voices died away—a delicious quiet, broken only by the sweet-sounding song of birds and the light rustle of leaves. After the cares of a long day, the silence of such half-hours is inexpressibly refreshing, and the sigh with which Mrs. Weston seated herself by her daughter's side had as much relief and contentment as weariness in it.

"Mother," said Mary, looking up with loving eyes, "please don't laugh at me and don't scold either, but don't you really think there may be something in what Molly said just now?"

"My dear child," answered Mrs. Weston, "there is something certainly, but very little to suit our case, we all know it would be far cheaper to live without eating and drinking if it were possible, but then it's not possible, so we must devise some other and more practical means of saving money. I am quite sure we are very moderate in all we take; not our worst enemies, if we have any enemies, can call us extravagant."

Mrs. Weston would have closed the question with this speech, but Mary used her invalid's privilege to pursue the subject.

"Mother dear, don't be cross, but you know I often lie and think of odd things when I can't read, and that chancel does so often trouble my mind. If I were clever, I would compose music, or think of tales and get Norah to write them, so that I might somehow contrive to earn a little money and help papa to rebuild; but I'm not clever enough to earn money, so I have really determined to save!"

Mrs. Weston laughed, and kissed the anxious, flushed face. "And how are you going to set about it?"

"By doing as Molly says? I don't mean all in a day. Don't say anything till I've done, mother. I mean to give myself three months for the work, and by that time I will have no more to do with that port-wine that Mr. Morrison makes me take, nor that dreadful porter that gets into my head, and makes me so sleepy every afternoon. Now wait a minute, mamma—let me go on—you know exactly how much I used to take, and how much it all cost. Please do you give me just the money you save by not taking them, and I shall feel so happy at putting by my something to help dear old father, that I really believe abstinence will prove a better medicine than all the others you have tried for me."

The girl's eyes brightened and her lips quivered, and though, out of the fullness of her heart, her mother would fain have combated the idea that had taken possession of her, she foresaw that if a quiet night's rest were to be ensured, very little talking and no opposition must be indulged in, so she promised Mary's plan should have a trial, feeling, however, secretly convinced that Mr. Morrison would never allow it to be carried out.

Gaining, as she hoped, one point, Mary preferred another request.

"Please, mother, will you give me last year's bills to look at to-morrow? You mustn't mind my attacking the beer-drink so vigorously, the more I think of it, the more downright absurd it seems that we young ones should be drinking up all your comfort as we are doing. You know you and papa take less than any of us."

Which was a fact. The superstition—for thank God, it is being proved to be nothing but a superstition—that alcohol, in some shape or other, was a necessity to young growing boys and girls, was as deeply rooted in the Weston family as it is in ninety at least out of every hundred middle-class households. "The boys were shooting up fast, and required good wholesome ale with two of their daily meals," Molly was running up beyond her strength, and at the medical man's recommendation, was already sharing her elder sister's porter and port-wine, while Norah, the healthy, strong

lassie of the trio of sisters, though she had no particular liking for ale or such things, just took them because, as she honestly said, "she didn't like water."

So Mary's investigation of the file or bills the next morning revealed startling facts, which had never been faced or realized till that time. She called Molly to her help, and between them they made out a most systematic account of the previous year's expenditure with wine and ale merchants. This account Mary promised to read to them in the evening, and, far more to please his daughter than from the hope that any really good result would follow from it, her father consented to make one of the listeners. The boys were rather huffy at this new whim of their sister's, but as no one of this family ever thought of opposing for long any of Mary's fancies, they fell in with her humor, and agreed to listen too.

"Nay, Frank, you must read it," said Mary, with a spark of mischief. "come here by me and begin, there's a good griffin," with a little caress, which the "good griffin" pretended to shake off in disgust, as he set about his uncongenial task.

"To Mr. Patriak, for ale (twenty-six 18-gallon casks), £23 8s. What beer's that, Mary?"

"Why, yours that you have at dinner and take to school for lunch."

"That's a shame to call it ours," broke in Tom, "there's Norah and Molly sometimes, and any stray men that come, besides the gov—father and mother. We don't drink half, I know."

"Don't interrupt, Tom. Go on, Frank, what next?"

"Something of yours, Miss Mary. How many bottles of 'invalids' stout do you imagine, Indies and gentlemen, that pale young lady has consumed in a year? Do you give it up? Why, somewhere about three hundred! Close on a bottle a day. Oh, Mary, for shame! Six guineas' worth of that invigorating beverage you've made off with, and you don't look a bit fatter than you did before you began it!"

"That's just what I say, Frank," cried Mary, triumphantly. "I look no fatter and I feel no better, but go on, you are not half come to an end of my enormities."

"To Mr. Wheeler for four dozen excellent port, £12 12s. that's yours too, Mary. finest French cognac, £6 6s. do. £7 10s. you're not guilty of that I suppose, most of the second lot, I believe, was what our great uncle Geoffrey used to drink and abuse all the time when he favored us with his company for six weeks last Christmas. What comes next? 'sherry,' 'pale old brown ditto,' 'ruin' (that was for the choirmen at their supper, and I know they all had too much), 'half a dozen Marsala' that was when we were expecting the shooting party here to lunch and they didn't come, so we drank it up on birthdays instead. Well I never should have believed it, Wheeler's bill comes to £4 altogether," and Frank stared blankly at his father as he named what seemed to him such an immense sum.

"And then," put in Mary, "there's the beer for the servants besides all these accounts—in all, papa, you actually paid over £90 last year for such things as these, and I do not, indeed, believe they did us ninety farthings worth of good."

So Mary, feeling always sure of a hearing, made out a very strong case, and extracted a promise from her father that he would not urge her to take these expensive drinks against her inclination. More than that she was too wise to press for at the time, having much of the wisdom which more vigorous young people often lack. She was quite content to wait and let her quiet example work its way among the others. Not that she had long to wait, for Molly, the impulsive, was only too delighted to rush into a new habit, and took great credit to herself for having been the first to broach the idea among them. Norah scorned to indulge in luxuries which her delicate sister denied herself, so she soon joined the abstaining band, and what Mary called the "total abstinence box" soon grew heavy with their accumulated savings. One thing their father had stipulated—they were to make no talk or fuss about this change in their style of living. "Wait," he said, "till you see if you change your minds about it. don't let it be with you as it was with a clergyman I once knew, who went in fast and furious for the temperance cause, gave up wine for three weeks, preached a tremendous sermon against drinking, in which he announced that he had for ever done with 'the accursed thing,' and then a fortnight afterwards I found him taking to old port again, because his doctor told him he wanted stamina. Try this new plan by all means if you will, and I'm not sure I shall not try it with you but don't talk about it till you see how it answers."

The boys took the longest time to consider about the matter, but at last they grew tired of taking ale when no one else at the table did so. First Frank, then Tom joined the abstaining party, and the last glass of beer Tom ever indulged in, he put down with a very wry

face, declaring it was horribly flat, and he should give it up for a week or two.

There was a row royal between Mary and her very good friend and doctor, Mr. Morrison, on the subject, he prognosticating weakness, loss of appetite, loss of nerve, and evils incalculable from her present course of proceeding. Happily he proved a false prophet, but not so to her father who was quite sufficient stimulant to her spirit to keep her faithful to her new course, and, in the course of months, she decided her movement in her health astonished even her incorrigible doctor, who, however, to her glory stoutly maintains that giving up wine did nothing whatever to do with the change, and Mary is too happy and thankful in her growing strength to care to combat the point with him.

I should only weary my readers if I attempted to tell half the gossip and remarks, friendly or ill-natured, that the Westons excited in their own circle. They were "mean, rash, better than their neighbors, always trying some new plan, low church, ascetic, tainted with dissent," and a dozen other terrible things, some of which speeches hit them unpleasantly at first (especially the boys, who met with no lack of ridicule from their school-fellows), but afterwards disturbed them not the least in the world, and it is an absolute fact that at the end of three years, during which time Mr. Nash, the builder, had contrived to "shore up" the chancel sufficiently to insure safety, a sum of money was resting in the bank at Waltham-by-the-Sea, to justify Mr. Weston in commencing his long-wished-for restoration. His parishioners, rich and poor, were alike astonished when he told them frankly how his saving had been effected, and many a one wished he could have recalled an offensive remark, lightly uttered about the rector's meanness, when it became clear what motive had incited the change. In the face of what so many considered a great personal sacrifice, few, indeed, declined to take their share in the work of rebuilding, and precisely four years from the summer evening when Molly made her astounding proposition about turning teetotallers, West Waltham Church was reopened fully and thoroughly restored, without a half-penny of debt remaining on the work.

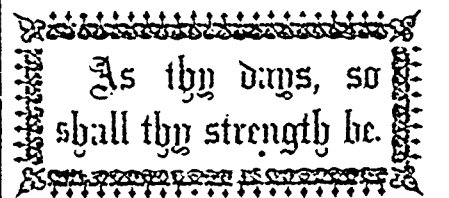
Let those laugh who will, at such means for such an end, but let all remember that habits of self-sacrifice, small though they may be at first, strengthen with years, and that a bridge put upon youthful inclinations may, in late life, serve to curb an appetite for evil, and to restrain footsteps from paths wherein it is not seemly to tread.

SELLING POISONS. The prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors is becoming more and more the sentiment of the people. We are glad to see that the public mind gradually opens to the truth that the unbridled indulgence in such drinks is the chief cause of our taxation for the support of criminals and paupers, and that the State has the right and is bound to prohibit a traffic that has such inevitable fruits. Of course prohibition is in one sense also a license law, inasmuch as the sale of alcoholic liquors is necessary for some uses, and for such uses provision must be made in every prohibitory law. But the license system, as now administered, is a solemn mockery of law and justice and humanity. Of what possible benefit are the licensed rum-shops or every block in many parts of our cities? They are established by law and they assist in making paupers and criminals, to be supported by taxes on the sober and industrious. Thus the State manufactures its poor and its felons and then supports them! It is therefore the duty of the State to hedge the sale of such an evil with just as many difficulties as possible, without doing violence to the liberty or other rights of any citizen. The sale of all poisons is rightfully regulated by law, except that the worst of all poisons is positively encouraged by many existing laws. N. J. Ober.

Two liquor-sellers in Portland, Me., one the leading and wealthiest in the city, have each been fined \$100 and sentenced to three months' imprisonment for violating the new liquor law.

In Sheffield and other English towns, "coffee-cart" companies are furnishing coffee to the thirsty multitudes for a half-penny a cup.

The druggists in Augusta, Me., have agreed not to sell or give away any more liquor either for medicinal or other purposes.



As thy days, so shall thy strength be.