

## BESIDE HIMSELF.

For seven years we had been praying that F—J— might be led to seek Christ as his Saviour. He knew quite well that mother, sisters, friends, longed for his conversion to God; but he merely laughed at, sometimes he ridiculed, what he called our 'extremely bad taste in pushing on a fellow what he did not want.'

'I am not going to say anything against religion for women; it keeps them in order, and does them good, I daresay. But, if you want to make me believe it will do me any good to embrace a set of new beliefs just for the luxury of feeling I am a sinner, why, you will have to do it when I'm beside myself, that is all.'

That is how he would talk to us; not because he was ever asked or advised to 'embrace' anything, because he never was. We always abstained from 'talking goody' to him, as he called it, believing that, in his case, 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'

He married. A good, kind, simple little woman his wife was, but she made no pretence of caring for 'things that accompany salvation' any more than her husband did. To some of us it seemed, then, as if our praying could not be of 'the effectual, fervent' kind, since, as yet, it had availed nothing, and we resolved to give ourselves more earnestly, definitely, and constantly to prayer on his behalf than hitherto. This we did, but we never spoke of it outside our own praying circle. One of our number said, one day, 'I don't feel as if I can pray any longer. Here is F— worse than ever he was; he now boasts openly of doing things he was once ashamed of, and A— (his wife) says that he has begun to ill-treat her, and he bets away all the money he can earn. Some people elect to go to the devil, and F— is one of them. I can't pray for him. We were sorry for this, but we resolved to pray more ardently than ever, for, we argued, it is all very well for a man to 'elect to go to the devil,' but God is stronger than the devil, and if he will save a man, not all the devils in hell or out can prevent it. So we continued praying. Then we heard some very bad things about F—J—. He certainly seemed to have a faculty for taking the downward road in everything he did. Finally, we knew he had left his home, deserted his wife and little child, leaving no word behind him.

Two of us went to see the poor little wife. She was overcome with sorrow; the world seemed a very black lonely place, to her. She said:

'I don't know which way to turn—all seems dark.'

'Turn to God, dear,' we said. 'You will find he will never fail you. Just cast all your care upon him.'

'How you talk!' she said. 'As if I'm going to do a shabby thing like that—run to him when I'm in trouble, when I've not given him a thought in my happiness! No.'

'Poor child!' we said, drawing her to us, 'don't you know that God is our refuge and strength—a very present help in trouble? It will be more shabby to keep away from him.' We left her a little comforted—for had we not pointed her to the Comforter—and we went home to pray for F— and her. We said, as the clock was striking nine:

'Let us spend the night in prayer. F— must be needing help more than ever, and who knows if he may not be tired of himself to-night, and longing for help and comfort?'

So we prayed. At half-past eleven we felt we could pray no longer—a wonderful uplifting of heart filled us; it was as if sunshine had come into the room, and we felt that we must praise God for F—'s sake. This we did, and with a happy sense of liberty and light, and an outspoken belief that F— had got a blessing, we retired for the night.

At about seven the next evening F— and his wife came. It seemed as if we had expected them, for we greeted them with the words, 'We were not quite sure what time to expect you.' They looked at one another.

'Why, how did you know?' they asked. 'Do you know?'

'We felt you were happy,' we said, 'and we have been thanking and praising God for you. But we know nothing.' They looked surprised, but as if they perfectly understood, and then F— told us

how it was. I will give it in his own words: 'I had had a wretched day; something seemed to dog my steps, and make me more hopeless and wretched than usual, and at last I thought the best thing I could do for myself and others would be to quietly end it all in the river. I went down to the dock and hung about, but there were so many people about, and one or two watching me, that I resolved to waste no more time there, but to go to one of the bridges and fling myself over in a pause in the foot traffic.'

'I started to do this, but as I stalked along in the pouring rain I saw a very bright lamp hanging over a doorway, and a cosy shelter just inside the outer door. It seemed a queer thing to do for a man who was going into the river just to stand up from the rain, but I felt obliged to do so. Presently there was a shuffling of many feet, and some strong, rough voices began to sing. I opened the inner door just the least bit, and saw (though they could not see me) two or three hundred people standing and singing. I caught the words of the song, too; they struck me as being more appropriate than elegant—

Come to the Saviour, make no delay.

But I think differently about them already. Then a man began to speak to the people, and he spoke from the words, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

'I listened with all my might, and as time went on it became a matter of life or death to me. I squeezed myself silently into the room, and on a seat by the door I listened unnoticed. By the time the man had finished I was beside myself (here we exchanged glances, for he had said he must be 'beside himself' before he could believe!), 'longing for pardon, cleansing, and peace. It was now nine o'clock (we remembered that hour—it was then we were moved to special prayer), 'but I felt I must speak to that man or I should go mad. I waited till all had left, and told the preacher how I felt. He was a good fellow, and though it was getting late, he said he would not leave me.'

'He took me home with him, prayed with me, read to me, but all the time I felt as if I must be lost—there could be no hope for me. Suddenly, while he was praying for me, my lips were unlocked, and I burst into thanksgiving—every burden of sin rolled away, and I was in the light! It was now half-past eleven (again we noted the time), 'and I longed, yet feared to go home to poor A—. I ran all the way, and outside the house I paused. Perhaps A— would regard me as a madman. I saw a light in the window, and peered through the blinds. I saw at a glance that A— had been reading the Bible—she saw that something had come to me, and that I was not the same man who had run away from her.'

'She had found pardon; owing to the words you had spoken to her, she had gone to God for comfort, but found she wanted to get rid of the load of sin before even she could be comforted. And she cast it all on the Lord, and found peace. But then she was afraid of me. If I came back, as she hoped, she dreaded my opposition.'

'When I knew I was pardoned, my first thought was of her. "How she will ridicule me, after all my holding out!" I said to myself. But here we were, both of one mind, both of one faith; I could scarce believe it.'

'You said you would have to be beside yourself before you could know yourself to be a sinner,' we reminded him.

'It was quite true,' he said, 'only not in the way I meant. I can only praise God for leading me to where I am, and for giving you all such a real grasp of the power of prayer.'—*The Christian*.

## GOD DID IT.

An old mother who had reared a large family was commended for her success in bringing them up so well. 'Hush,' she said, hastily and earnestly, 'I felt so incompetent that I trusted in God. He did the work, and now I feel that it would be ignoble in me to allow you to commend me for what he has done.' Trust in him, and he shall 'bring it to pass.' Give him your heart, that it may be his temple. Give him your home, that he may be the ruler of your household, and so meet the experiences of life trustfully, hopefully.

## TOM.

BY REV. C. H. MEAD.

Never did any one have a better start in life than Tom. Born of Christian parents, he inherited from them no bad defects, moral or physical. He was built on a liberal plan, having a large head, large hands, large feet, large body, and within all, a heart big with generosity. His face was the embodiment of good nature, and his laugh was musical and infectious. Being an only child there was no one to share with him the lavish love of his parents. They saw in him nothing less than a future President of the United States, and they made every sacrifice to fit him for his coming position. He was a prime favorite with all, and being a born leader, he was ungrudgingly accorded that position by his playmates at school and his fellows at the University. He wrestled with rhetoric, and logic, and political economy, and geometry, and came off an easy victor; he put new life into the dead languages, dug among the Greek roots by day and soared up among the stars by night. None could outstrip him as a student, and he easily held his place at the head of his class. The dullest scholar found in him a friend and a helper, while the brighter ones found in his example, an incentive to do their best.

In athletic sports, too, he excelled by none. He could run faster, jump higher, lift a dumb-bell easier, strike a ball harder, and pull as strong an oar as the best of them. He was the point of the flying wedge in the game of football, and woe be to the opponent against whom that point struck. To sum it all up, Tom was a mental and physical giant, as well as a superb specimen of what that college could make out of a young man. But unfortunately, it was one of those institutions that developed the mental, trained the physical, and starved the spiritual, and so it came to pass ere his college days were ended, Tom had an enemy, and that enemy was the bottle.

The more respectable you make sin, the more dangerous it is. An old black bottle in the rough hand of the keeper of a low dive, would have no power to cause a clean young man to swerve from the right course, but he is a hero ten times over, who can withstand the temptation of a wine glass in the jewelled fingers of a beautiful young lady. Tom's tempter came in the latter form, and she who might have spurred him on to the highest goal, and whispered in his ear, 'look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright,' started him down a course which made him learn from a terrible experience that 'at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' Does any one call a glass of wine a small thing? Read Tom's story and then call it small, if you dare! Whatever he did was done with his might, drinking not excepted. He boasted of his power to drink much and keep sober, while he laughed at the companions who imbibed far less and went to bed drunk. At first Tom was the master and the bottle his slave, but in three years' time they changed places. When too late, his parents discovered that the college had sent back to them a ripe scholar, a trained athlete and a drunkard. The mother tried to save her son, but failing in every effort, her heart broke and she died with Tom's name on her lips. The father, weighed down under the dead sorrow and the living trouble, vainly strove to rescue his son, and was found one night in the attitude of prayer, kneeling by the side of the bed where his wife's broken heart a few months before had ceased to beat. He died praying for his boy:

One evening as the sun was setting, a man stood leaning against the fence along one of the streets of a certain city. His clothes were ragged, his hands and face unwashed, his hair uncombed and his eyes bleared; he looked more like a wild beast hunted and hungry, than a human being. It was Tom. The boys gathered about him, and made him the object of their fun and ridicule. At first he seemed not to notice them, but suddenly he cried out: 'Cease your laughter until you know what you are laughing at. Let me talk to my Master while you listen.'

He pulled a bottle from his pocket, held it up, and looking at it with deep hatred flashing from his reddened eyes, he said:

'I was once your Master; now I am your slave. In my strength you deceived me; in my weakness you mock me. You have burned my brain, blistered my body, blasted my hopes, bitten my soul and broken my will. You have taken my money, destroyed my home, stolen my good name, and robbed me of every friend I ever had. You killed my mother, slew my father, sent me out into the world a worthless vagabond, until I find myself a son without parents, a man without friends, a wanderer without a home, a human being without sympathy, and a pauper without bread. Deceiver, mocker, robber, murderer—I hate you! Oh, for one hour of my old-time strength, that I might slay you! Oh, for one friend and some power to free me from this slavery!'

The laugh had ceased and the boys stood gazing on him with awe. A young lady and gentleman had joined the company just as Tom began this terrible arraignment of his Master, and as he ceased, the young lady stepped up to him and earnestly said: 'You have one friend and there is one power that can break your chains and set you free.'

Tom gazed at her a moment and then said:

'Who is my friend?'

'The King is your friend,' she answered.

'And pray, who are you?' said Tom.

'One of the King's Daughters,' was the reply, 'and "In His Name" I tell you he has power to set you free.'

'Free, free did you say? But, you mock me. A girl with as white a hand and as fair a face as yours, delivered me to my Master.'

'Then, in the name of the King whose daughter am I, even Jesus Christ the Lord, let the hand of another girl lead you to him who came to break the chains of the captive and set the prisoner free.'

Tom looked at the earnest face of the pleading girl, hesitated a while, as his lip quivered and the big tears filled his eyes, and then suddenly lifting the bottle high above his head, he dashed it down on the pavement, and as it broke into a thousand pieces, he said:

'I'll trust you, I'll trust you, Lead me to the King!'

And lead him she did, as always a King's Daughter will lead one who sorely needs help. His chains were broken, and at twenty-nine years of age Tom began life over again. He is not the man he might have been, but no one doubts his loyalty to the King. His place in the prayer circle is never vacant, and you can always find him in the ranks of those whose sworn purpose it is to slay Tom's old Master, King Alcohol!—*Christian Herald*.

## OUT OF THE WASTE-PAPER BASKET.

In the spring of last year a young Spaniard came frequently to the services at the Soldiers' Mission, Gibraltar. One evening, the superintendent, seeing a small New Testament in his hand, thought he recognized the book, and asked him how it came into his possession. The young fellow replied that his father was a mason, and that when working at the telegraph office, two or three years ago, he had found the book in a basket of waste paper. He had brought it home and given it to his son, who began to read it, at first without much interest, but, after nearly three years, he saw Christ crucified for him, and light, and peace, and joy came to his heart.

The previous history of the Testament is interesting. In 1888 a friend of Mrs. Todd Osborne, from whose correspondence we take the narrative, when at Mogador, was entrusted with a small sum of money with which to buy Spanish Testaments. The gentleman who gave the money desiring that certain verses in each copy should be interlined with red ink to attract the reader's attention, a soldier at Gibraltar copied the marks from a specimen Testament, and the books, when ready, were distributed through a Spanish Christian at Algeiras. The little book in M. G.'s hand proved to be one of these red-marked Testaments. Some one made a mistake in giving it to one who threw it into the waste-paper basket; but He who makes no mistakes had it conveyed to the right man after all.