

BOYS AND GIRLS

THE RED, RED WINE:

A TEMPERANCE STORY.

THE REV. J. JACKSON WRAY'S LAST STORY.

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CHAPTER XL.—Continued.

'Now, look for a moment at this haggard father, whose cheeks are blistered with a ceaseless rain of tears. The foul spirit did that, too, and if you and I could go to that home from whence the lad had come, we should see a home blasted by that one master sorrow. I'll match it and surpass it in a thousand English homes to-night, ay, and in not a few in Netherborough. "Have compassion on us." Us, do you hear. When the devil struck the lad, he struck the father a heavier blow! Said a mother to me when I asked to see her husband, all ignorant of what had fallen on them, "He's ill in bed, and so is Hannah, and I'm as ill as they. O sir, our boy, our boy!" and she burst into a passion of tears. "Our boy," as she called him, was in gaol on a charge of manslaughter, committed in a drunken brawl. True, "he dasheth him down," and dasheth down innocent others in agony and shame.'

Norwood Hayes felt that he answered to all of Mr. Hallowes' description, save and except that he was himself not innocent. The preacher continued:

"Come out of him," said Jesus, "enter no more into him," and out he came. There was no moderate treatment of the foul spirit here, though the command meant a mighty tussle for the boy. He did not say, "Come partially out; nor yet, "Take up less room;" nor yet "Restrain yourself a little." He said, "Come out." He didn't say, "Come back occasionally," "Visit him on birthdays and social reunions, and public festivals." No, He said, "Enter no more into him." That was a total deliverance, and when you have foul spirits to deal with, that is the only prescription that meets the case.

I have spoken of the attitude of the Christian Church upon this subject. It will bear further study. Here in England the Church stands in the presence of this Demon Drink, and philanthropy, policy, patriotism, and humanity, ay, and the very victims themselves, cry aloud to Christianity to "Cast him out." We declare ourselves the representatives of Jesus. Indeed we are a good deal jealous of any rivals in the field, and yet the cry comes to us and we are forced to own our inability. We cannot cast him out. Why?

"This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Here is the reason. Our prayer is a myth. Forms of words are not prayer whether formal or extempore. Prayer is labor, and how many of us labor to cast him out? Fasting is denying, fasting is self-sacrifice, fasting means giving up for Christ, and the giving up for others. Alcohol beats the churches, because the churches are in league with alcohol, and till we expel him from the land he curses and defiles, we cannot cast him out.'

Then followed an impassioned personal appeal. To those that were strong for the sake of others, to those that were weak, for their own. "Some, I am sure, within these four walls are in danger, more firmly in the drink fiend's grasp than even you know. May not my voice to-night be as a message from Christ Himself to save you from a downfall such as appals the very thoughts?" He finished with an appeal to the young, and then stepping to the Communion-table, he laid his private pledge-book on it.

"Who is on the Lord's side?" said he. "Let him here and now enroll himself a soldier of the Christ—the enemy of the devil, and that gimmet of devils, strong drink."

A moment's pause, and then Norwood Hayes

stepped forward, signed his name with a strong, firm hand, and turning to the congregation, he said with broken voice and bowed head:

'I have been wrong. May God forgive me.'

Dear old Aaron was bound to say, 'Praise the Lord!' and even Netherborough nonconformity was, for that occasion, only, too much wrought up to be shocked.

Norwood Hayes was instantly followed by his son-in-law, Walter Bardsley. Mr. Hayes had taken his seat again. He looked on for a moment in strong surprise, and then bowing his head in his hands, he prayed for the young man to whom he had given his well-loved daughter. Prayed that he might be saved from the fate that had overtaken Othbert, and through his doing.

'Father, help me,' said Walter, as he touched him and passed on. And every word went like a dagger to his father's heart.

Full fifty pledges were taken at the table, and so ended the day in which fair temperance first found her place in that sanctuary of God.

As a natural result of this splendid Temperance revival, a unanimous call was given to Edwin Hallowes to the pastorate of Netherborough Congregational Church. The young Temperance evangelist had learnt something of the state of Netherborough, and felt that there was a big work to be done; therefore, though he had not up to then taken the idea of a settled pastorate into consideration, he felt that the call was the ordering of God's providence, and under the circumstances he decided to accept it, much to the delight of Jennie Bardsley, old Aaron Brigham, and Walter.

CHAPTER XLI.

Edwin Hallowes made it a 'sine qua non' of his acceptance of the pastorate, however, that he should have an absolutely 'free hand' in Temperance matters, and this, though it was objected to by one or two, on the grounds that his 'rabid' Temperance opinions might offend some of the members, was eventually conceded.

The first use Edwin Hallowes made of his powers was to abolish fermented wine, once and for ever, from the Lord's table, substituting in its place the pure, unfermented juice of the grape, which there is no question was the beverage in which the first communion was celebrated. Norwood Hayes made no objection whatever to the change. The soul-winning object lesson which poor Tom Smart had given him, had altogether indisposed him for such a course of proceeding. But in spite of Tom Smart's sad fall, there were one or two who covertly resented the change. One in particular thought that the unfermented grape-juice was by no means so palatable as the wine. When the new pastor heard of this he was naturally, somewhat disgusted that any so-called Christian should balance a question of taste against the possible loss of a human soul. The next time he met this member, he attacked him straightforwardly about the matter, and though not given to that keen-edged weapon, sarcasm, he felt that the occasion justified it.

'Sir,' said he, 'if the sacrament of dying love be to you but a question of palate, would it not be advisable to substitute cake for the piece of dry bread? It would doubtless be far pleasanter!' To which there was no answer.

His next step was to re-organize the Band of Hope, for he well knew the immense power of habit, power for good if the habit be good, power for evil if it be evil. 'As the twig is

bent the tree is inclined,' and when solid wood is formed no power in nature can bent it straight. So with man, no power can straighten a twisted character, though, thank God, if we are but willing, Grace can and does work the moral miracle.

But, to my thinking, Edwin Hallowes set a fashion in Bands of Hope which it would have been well had we followed it to this very day. He included all ages in it. By this means he bridged the gap between youth and manhood, that fatal gap, in which the churches of today lose so many of their best and brightest. In this he was greatly aided by the move old Aaron Brigham had already made in this direction, and his new converts were straightway marshalled into the fighting regiment. No difficulty was found in making these different sections coalesce, for the instruction given to the children was equally serviceable to the grown-up folks, and, indeed, was all the more appreciated in that simple, straightforward language used made everything plain and easily understood. As for the entertainments, these were grand successes, for the youngsters enjoyed them much, all the more that they themselves took part in them, and the oldsters were delighted to see the young ones pleased.

Besides this the new pastor went in for aggressive temperance work, finances to the contrary notwithstanding, and with such good effect that within two years five of the public-houses in Netherborough were driven to close their doors. Unfortunately, though the devil was hard hit, there was still a heavy harvest for him to reap, the outcome of the long and busy sowing season previous.

It must not be thought, either, that this revolution took place unhindered. 'The trade' and its supporters, beer-befuddled and otherwise, took good care of that.

By no means the least in this anti-temperance movement were the Vicar and Dr. Medway. Thank God the drunken clergyman is now a thing of the past; would that I could say the same of the non-abstaining parson, and the drunken medico is a 'rara avis.'

Singular to relate, Edwin Hallowes' right hand man in all the work he undertook was a woman—Jennie Bardsley, of course. Kitty Smart was now living with her. After her father's death, it had been arranged between her and Norwood Hayes that the little mother and 'the chilter' should be saved from the unjust and unlawful ignominy of the workhouse. It had seemed to both of them that they, as members of the Church, were, in great measure, responsible for the children's double orphanhood, and so it was decided, much to Kitty's delight, that she should take up her quarters with Miss Bardsley, in order that she might be thoroughly trained in the art and mystery of domestic affairs. Nor was much difficulty experienced in persuading kindly Mrs. Consett to undertake for the other children till such time as they could be launched on the world of their own account, their maintenance during that period being guaranteed by Norwood Hayes.

(To be Continued.)

It is a common mistake to suppose that the only man who is in danger of avariciousness is the rich man. A poor man may be as greedy of his little as a wealthy individual is of his much. A beggar may grasp his dime with as tight a clutch as the millionaire his bunch of stocks. Greed is a thing of the soul, a quality of the inner man. Its measure is not the size of the outward possession, but the spirit of the interior life.—New York 'Observer.'