



What Is There Better?

What is there better than water,
Keeping us healthy and strong;
Making our pathways the brighter,
Filling earth's valleys with song.

Joy to the weary it bringeth,
Down from the fountains of light;
Give me the beautiful water,
Bountiful, sparkling and bright.
—William Hoyle.

An Expensive Badge.

A young man in a London omnibus noticed the blue ribbon total abstinence badge on a fellow-passenger's coat, and asked him in a bantering tone 'how much he got' for wearing it.

'That I cannot exactly say,' replied the other, 'but it costs me about £20,000 a year.'

The wearer of the badge was Frederick Charrington, son of a rich brewer, and the intended successor of his father's business. He had been convinced of the evil of the ale and beer trade, and refused to continue in it, though it would have brought him an income of £20,000 a year.

He preferred a life of Christian philanthropy to a career of money-making; and his activity soon made him known throughout the kingdom as a most successful temperance evangelist. His work, organized in the tent meeting on Mile End Road, has grown steadily for twenty years, and now fills 'the largest mission hall in the world.'—'The Children's Record.'

Time He Quit.

A professional gentleman who was accustomed to take his morning glass, stepped into a saloon, and going up to the bar called for whiskey. A seedy individual stepped up to him and said:

'I say, squire, can't you ask an unfortunate fellow to join you?'

He was annoyed by the man's familiarity, and roughly told him:

'I am not in the habit of drinking with tramps.'

The tramp replied:

'You need not be so cranky and high-minded, my friend. I venture to say that I am of just as good family as you are, have just as good an education, and before I took to drink was just as respectable as you are. What is more, I always knew how to act the gentleman. Take my word for it, you stick to whiskey, and it will bring you to the same place as I am.'

Struck with his words, the gentleman set down his glass and turned to look at him. His eyes were blood-shot, his face bloated, his boots mismated, his clothing filthy.

Then: 'Was it drink that made you like this?'

'Yes, it was; and it will bring you to the same if you stick to it.'

Picking up his untouched glass, he poured its contents upon the floor, and said, 'Then it's time I quit,' and left the saloon, never to enter it again.—Selected.

I'll Take What Father Takes.

Near the close of a lovely June day a company of brilliant men gathered at a garden banquet. The pavilion was set among beds of flowers and opened toward the west.

The table was a dream of beauty with its fruits and flowers, its flashing glass and glittering silver. Some of the noblest of the land sat around the board. Among them was an eager, bright-eyed boy, brought to his first club dinner by his father, an honored judge.

Wit and wisdom sparkled back and forth and wine gleamed like ruby and amber. The boy saw and heard everything. This was an

enchanted land. For the first time he looked upon the faces and heard the voices of great men who had been his heroes from afar. Their words, their hearing, their dress, were full of interest. Yet of all this goodly company, to him his father was the king.

An empty glass stood by his plate—a dainty shell with points that caught the light like diamonds. A waiter stopped beside him with a tray of costly drinks, and named them over glibly, questioning: 'What will you take?'

The judge was an abstainer at home. The boy had never tasted wine. The names were strange to him. But he said with ready confidence, 'I'll take what father takes.'

The father heard. The glass in his uplifted hand shed over it a crimson light like blood. All eyes were upon him. Was he afraid to drink? In a swift vision he saw the serpent in the cup. For policy, for pride, for social custom should he set this deadly thing upon his best beloved? There was a hush as he set down the untasted wine and said distinctly, 'I'll take water—cold water.'—'Crusader's Monthly.'

A Keeper of a Liquor-shop Destroys Her Stock-in-Trade.

There is a story of a woman in the United States, who was one of many left a widow after the terrible Civil War of 1861-5. She had to support a number of children, and she saw no other way to do it but by selling liquor, and she felt that her great need justified her in doing what otherwise she might not have considered quite right. But one day she was converted, and at once saw it to be her duty to disconnect herself from whiskey. She did not stop at abstract belief, but though she did not know what she was to turn her hand to for a livelihood, she boldly did that which she was convinced was right; and taking an axe, stove in the heads of the barrels, and dashed in pieces the bottles. She did not sell the business to the highest bidder, and then live on the money. No; every drop of the liquor that was in her shop was allowed to run down the gutter. While it ran, she called a prayer-meeting, and offered this prayer: 'Now, Lord, Thou seest what I have done; and if there be any other thing in the house with which Thou canst not live, show me what it is, and it shall go also.' The knowledge of what the Lord has done for us, and of His wishes, is a great incentive to living a holy life.

Religious Notes.

The Rev. Pedro Rioseco, in his annual report to the American Bible Society from the agency in the West Indies says:

Cuba must undergo a moral and spiritual reconstruction before she is capable of utilizing her privileges to the best advantage, and the Bible must be an essential factor in the uplift and betterment of this people. To-day conditions on the island are anything but satisfactory. The paramount question seems to be, 'Is it worth while to cultivate the fields, to raise cattle, to improve your property, where no one knows just when the next uprising will occur?' If a careful vote were taken to-day of all who own property and of those who are able to appreciate the actual situation, I do not doubt at all but that the vast majority would declare themselves in favor of having the United States Government exercise a more direct control of affairs in Cuba.

Meanwhile, the island is freer of access than ever before to the circulation of the Bible. Colporteurs do not meet the bitter opposition that they once did, and the Bible is gradually finding its way into the most remote corners of the land. The Protestant evangelical churches are making rapid and substantial progress. We are entering upon an era of spiritual awakening that promises to be of incalculable benefit to the people. The most important events that are occurring on the island are not of a political character. They have nothing to do with the pulling down of this man or the setting up of that other. The events of the deepest significance and of the most far-reaching results are the conversions that are taking place as the result of the

entrance of the Bible into the heart. These are the events that will have the most direct bearing upon the future history of the 'Pearl of the Antilles'; and it is a more glorious work to be engaged in disseminating the Bible than it is to be building railroads, tunneling mountains, bridging rivers, or even directing the political affairs of the island.

The circulation of the Bible in Cuba for the year, in spite of the war and other untoward circumstances, has been quite encouraging. There were 17,936 volumes spread broadcast—1,229 Bibles, 3,616 Testaments, and 13,091 portions. There were three men employed constantly, and some seven or eight at various times, working a total of 972 days, travelling 8,644 miles, and visiting 194 towns and villages.—'Missionary Review of Reviews.'

General Kodama's eldest son says his father's regular habit was to stand in some retired place for about an hour every morning after rising, and, while facing toward the rising sun, to utter some words in a low tone. In reply to the question what this act meant, he said: 'When man has done everything in his power, there remains nothing but the help of God (the Gods.)' Commenting on this, the 'Nippon' says that such has been always the creed of the bushi. In the very forefront of the doctrines laid down for guidance, appeared the rule, 'Have faith in the Kami and the Hotoke.' Thus men like General Kuroki and Field-Marshal Nozu always asked heaven's aid on the eve of great enterprises, and having put up the prayer, issued orders with absolute confidence. 'The bushi may be said to have derived his negative fortitude from Buddhism and his positive from Shinto. His God of War, Hachiman, was a Shinto deity, and to him he prayed on the inception of vital projects, while from the Zen sect of Buddhism and its practise of zazen he acquired the negative courage of meeting any vicissitude with complacency.'

All this is another illustration of men 'feeling after God, if happily they might find Him.' What a joy to the herald of Christ to bring to such the satisfying tidings of the God whom in ignorance they worship!—'Missionary Review of the World.'

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