

title by universal consent because of his religious professions. He was not remarkably good, and by "no manner of means" could he have been called a bad man. He had many most excellent traits of character that endeared him to his family and to the rural community in which he lived. He "set a good table," the farmers said, but it knew very few of what the denizens of great cities call luxuries. Salt meats, occasionally a little fresh meat when he killed a calf, a sheep, a swine, or ox to sell, were found upon his table. The smoking hot corn and the "mealy potatoes" were always present in their season, to say nothing of Indian bread and wheaten biscuit. "Enough for all" was his motto, and his faithful spouse was equal to the duties of her station. Rum, gin, whiskey and brandy the deacon had left out of his supplies more than twenty-five years since, but there was always present on the table or on the shelf a model pitcher filled with "good old cider" for himself, for his workmen and his numerous callers. Everybody in that vicinity knew two things—the cider "was good" and there was always plenty of it at hand. Why not? He had an abundance of apples, a cider-mill, and wasn't it a great pity to have the apples wasted by rotting on the ground? And wasn't there an opportunity to sell what cider he had to spare? And didn't the income from his sales of cider help him to buy more land?

There had been a temperance meeting in the school house "hard by the deacon's" on the previous evening, which the deacon had attended, not so much that he had an interest in that movement, but because the minister that spoke was of his persuasion and was therefore a guest at his house. The deacon was interested in the services. Singing hymns, prayer, and a Gospel sermon—only there wasn't any text—secured his attention and made him think. The theme was "total abstinence from alcoholic drinks the privilege of Christian people."

A privilege! Yes, a great privilege, because neither health, labor, personal nor home comfort demanded their use. And what a saving of money, and time, and health, and life even, was effected by it! It was economical. That held him.

A privilege! Yes, because it enabled one to be helpful to others in many ways, but especially in the development of virtue, morality, and religion—essential elements of a good character and useful life.

It was a help to the young as a safe example. It would save many a youth from ruin to adopt such a course of life, and make him a blessing to the world as well as a servant of God.

It was helpful to those who had fallen victims to appetite, as it taught them a better way and invited them back to virtue. It was a Christ-like virtue to live for others.

There was a nobler position for a Christian man to occupy than to be a post against which drunkards leaned for support.

In the same room with the deacon sat poor old "Jake," besotted and ruined by drink, listening intently to these strange, yet sympathetic utterances. It would be difficult to tell which of the two wondered most at what they heard.

It was urged that even in the use of cider, so common a beverage with some good men, there was danger, even ruin. Were there not cider drunkards in every community? Was it not a privilege to arrest their steps and save them to humanity and heaven? Was it not a Christian duty as well? The deacon leaned forward to hear every word.

The pledge was offered at the close of the service, but no one took it. It was evident that a number were anxious to do so, but none had the heroism to be singular.

The thinking did not stop, though the dim lights were extinguished in that dingy school-room. Even the quiet old deacon was not composed when he had reposed in his arm-chair in the old kitchen, where for so many years he had kept secluded from the outside world.

"John, do you want to sign the pledge?" he asked of a fourteen-year-old orphan that he had given a place of shelter.

"I'd just as lief, if you wil," promptly responded the grateful and thoughtful boy.

After a short silence the deacon said: "Do you know what it means to sign the pledge, John?"

"It means that I sha'n't draw any more cider for you," said the boy, in a kind and reverent manner. "Neither will we offer it to others for their use" was the sentence in the pledge that had given the boy more trouble than the part requiring personal abstinence. Had he not been the boy whose duty it was to see that the cider-pitcher was kept full in the house and the jug full in the field? Could he keep that pledge and retain his place in the only home open to him in the wide world? Had not drink ruined and then killed his unnatural parents, and bequeathed to him a legacy of shame? Was he not a drunkard's child, without a friend in the world outside of that family? Could he sign that pledge and be turned out-doors to pillow his head on the cold ground and be a beggar and a tramp for life?

A neighbor called at this moment and interrupted this conversation, but the subject was not changed. "Two misses," he said, "had talked the matter over since the meeting, and, with the consent of their parents, had concluded to sign the pledge; if the lecturer would let him take the pledge he would take it to them and bring it back in the morning."

Turning to the deacon, he said: "Old Jake says he'll take the pledge if you will." We will not take the reader's time to recount the thoughtful conversation between this old man and the minister who was his transient guest—an earnest, practical discussion of Christian effort, extending far into the night, and followed by prayer for divine guidance and strength.

Morning dawns bright and beautiful. The autumnal frosts have tinged the foliage of the surrounding forests; the chestnut burrs are beginning to open; the squirrels are beginning to gather their winter's supply of food; the chirp of the fall crickets, and the gathering of the birds at their accustomed rendezvous before their annual migration to their Southern home—all seem to impress the mind with the necessity of seizing upon the present moment to do the work of life.

The table has been spread, and the family have gathered to take their morning meal ere the workmen go out to their harvest fields. The pledge has been returned with the names of the two misses written upon it with a bold hand. The deacon adjusts his spectacles, reads over the pledge, calls for pen and ink, and boldly, yet with a tremulous hand, writes his name upon it; then, passing both pen and pledge across the table to his wife for her signature, says:—

"I DO THIS FOR OTHERS."

For whom should he sign it, if not for others? Had he not reached fourscore years? Could it be possible that in the winter of his life this cup could ruin him? The good housewife, worn and wrinkled with many years of toil, affixed her name beneath that of her husband, and then wrote the name of the orphan boy, to which he affixed his mark, X. A young man in his employ, twenty-one years of age, himself an orphan, followed their example. That was a happy morning to the writer. It was an attestation of the power of truth over a human heart, when that truth was brought into immediate contact with it.

It was the closing up of one of Satan's strong-holds in that community, for the deacon's cider and the deacon's example had been prolific of evil to the bodies and souls of men. It was the inauguration of a new movement in that community, for that young man secured the names of fourteen other young men that he found at an auction sale that day. Can any human mind measure the result of that twenty-four hours of service in one of the most unpromising fields in our happy New England.—*National Temperance Advocate.*

THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE.

MR. E. V. WILSON.

In a hospital ward a woman lay
Painfully gasping her life away;
So bruised and beaten you scarce could trace
Womanhood's semblance in form or face,
Yet the hair that over the pillow rolled
In a tangled mass, was like threads of gold:
And never a sculptor in any land
Moulded a daintier foot or hand.

Said one who ministered to her need:
"None but a coward could do this deed;
And what bitter hate must have nerved the arm
That a helpless creature like this could harm."
Then the dim eyes, hazy with death's eclipse,
Slowly unrolled, and the swollen lips
Murmured faintly: "He loves me well—
My husband—'twas drink—he sure you tell
When he comes to himself—that I forgive;
Poor fellow—for him—I would like to live."
A shudder, a moan, as the words were said
And a drunkard's wife on the couch lay dead.

Oh, fathers who hold your daughters dear,
Somebody's daughter is lying here.
Oh, brothers of sisters, come and see
What the fate of your precious ones may be;
Oh, man! however you love your home,
Be it palace or cottage, 'neath heaven's blue dome,
This demon of drink can enter in,
For law strikes hands and bargains with sin.

You have legalized crime, you have the gold,
Now hand them over, the sons you sold—
Keep pushing them forward. Drink, boys, drink!
Your fathers are paid for your souls, they think.
And in the great mart where mammon strives,
Cheapest of all things are human lives.

Inter-Ocean.