

Choice Literature.

JACK.

(Continued.)

I am not writing a temperance story, only the biography of a fisherman, and a few words will say better than many how it was. Alcoholized brain cells being one of the few bequests left to society which the heirs do not dispute, Jack went back to his habits with the ferocity that follows abstinence. Hard luck came. Teen was never much of a housekeeper; she had left her mother too early; had never been taught. Things were soggy, and not always clean; and she was so busy in being struck and scolded, and in bearing and burying babies, that it grew comfortable beside the kitchen fire. The last of the illusion which had taken the name of home within the walls of the crumbling half-cottage withered out of it, just as the cinnamon roses did the summer Jack watered them with whiskey by a little emotional mistake.

A worse thing had happened too. Some shipmate had "told" in the course of time; and Teen's pre-matrimonial story got set adrift upon the current—one of the cruellest currents of its kind—of Fairharbor gossip. The respectable neighbours made her feel it, as only respectable neighbours do such things. Jack, raging, overheard her name upon the wharves. Teen had been "that she said she would" to him. He knew it. No matron in the town had kept her life or heart more true. In all her sickness and trouble and slackness, and in going cold or hungry, and in her vivid beauty that none or all of these things could quench, Teen had carried a sweet dignity of her own as the racer in the old Promethean festival carried the torch while he ran against the wind. Jack knew, oh, yes, he knew. But he grew sullen, suspicious. When he was drunk he was always jealous; it began to take that form. When he was sober he still admired his wife; sometimes he went so far as to remember that he loved her. When this happened, Teen dried her eyes, and brushed her yellow hair, and washed up the kitchen floor, and made the coffee, and said to the grocer when she paid for the sugar:

"My husband has reformed."

One night Jack came home unexpectedly; a strange mood sat upon him, which his wife did not find herself able to classify by any of the instant and exquisite perceptions which grow, like new faculties, in wives. He had been drinking heavily when he left her, and she had not looked for him for days; if he sailed as he was, it would be a matter of weeks. Teen went straight to him; she thought he might be hurt; she held out her arms as she would to one of her children; but he met her with a gesture of indifference, and she shrank back.

"She's here," said Jack. "Mother Mary's in this town. I see her."

"I wish she'd talk to you," said Teen, saying precisely the wrong thing by the fatal instinct which so often possesses drunkards' wives.

"You do, do you?" quoth Jack. "Well, I don't. I haven't give her the chance." He crushed on his hat and stole out of the house again.

But his mood was on him yet; the difference being that his wife was out of it. He sulked and skulked about the streets alone for a while; he did not go back to the boys just then, but wandered with the apparent aimlessness with which the most tenacious aims are hidden. Mother Mary and her husband were holding sailors' meetings in the roughest quarter of the town. There was need enough of Mother Mary in Fairharbor. A crowd had gathered to hear the novelty. Fairharbor seamen were none too used to being objects of consideration; it was a matter of mark that a parson and a lady should hire a room from a rich fish firm, pay for it out of their own scanty pockets, and invite one in from deck or wharf, in oil clothes or jumper, to hear what a messmate of Jack's called "a high-toned prayer." He meant perhaps to convey the idea that the petition treated the audience politely.

Jack followed the crowd in the dark, shrinking in its wake, for he was now sober enough not to feel like himself. He waited till the last of the fellows he knew had gone into the place and then crept up on tiptoe, and put his face against the window of the salt-cod warehouse where the little congregation was gathered, and looked in. The room was full and bright. It wore that same look of peace and shelter which he remembered. Mother Mary stood as she had stood before, tall and pale in her black dress with the white covering on her bosom. Her husband had been speaking to the fishermen, and she, as Jack put his gnarled hands to his excited eyes, and his eyes to the window-glass, turned her face full about to start the singing. She seemed to Jack to look at him. Her look was sad. He felt ashamed, and cowered down below the window-sill. But he wanted to hear her sing—he had never heard anybody sing like Mother Mary—and so he stayed there for a little while, curled against the fish house. It began to rain and he was pretty wet; but Jack was in his jumper, and a ragged old jumper at that; he knew he was not so handsome as he used to be; he felt that he cut a poor figure even for a drunken fisherman; all the self-respect that life had left him shrank from letting Mother Mary see him. Jack would not go in. A confused notion came to him, as he crouched against the warehouse, in the showers, that it was just as well it should rain on him; it might wash him. He pushed up his sleeves, and let the rain fall on his arms. He found an old Cape Ann turkey box that was lying about, turned it edgewise so that one ragged knee might rest upon it, and thus bring his eye to a level with the window-sill, while yet he could not be seen from within. So he crouched listening. The glimmer from the prayer room came across the fisherman's bared right arm, and struck the crucifix. Jack had the unconscious attitude of one sinking, who had thrown up his arms to be saved. Jack did not notice the crucifix.

At this moment Mother Mary's yearning voice rang out

above the hoarse chorus of the fishermen, whose weather-ragged and reverent faces lifted themselves mistily before her, as if they had been the countenance of one helpless man:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me!"

"Oh, my God!" cried Jack.

It was the next day that some one told Mother Mary, at the poor boarding house where she stayed, that a woman wanted a few words with her. The visitor was Teen. She was worn and wan and sobbing with excitement. Her baby was soon to be born. She did not look as if she had enough to eat. She had come, she said, just to see Mother Mary, just to tell her, for Jack never would tell himself, but she was sure her husband had reformed; he would never drink again; he meant to be a sober man; and Mother Mary ought to know she did it, for she did, God bless her!

"I've walked all this way to bless you for myself," said Teen. "I ain't very fit for walkin', nor I can't afford a ferry ticket, for he didn't leave me nothing on this trip, but I've come to bless you. My husband come to your meetin', Mother Mary, by himself, Jack did. He never goes to no meetin's,—nobody couldn't drove him; but he come to yours, because he says you treat a man like folks, and he wouldn't go inside, for he'd been drinkin' and felt ashamed. So he set outside upon a box behind the winder and he peeked in. And he said it rained on him while he set peekin', for he wanted to get a look at you. And he come home and told me, for we'd had some words beforehand, and I was glad to see him. I was settin' there and cryin' when he come. 'I wouldn't Teen,' says he, 'for I've seen Mother Mary, and I'm reformed,' says he. So he told me how he set upon the box and peeked. He says you looked straight at him. He says you stood up very tall and kind of white. He says you read something out of a book, and then you sang to him. He says the song you sang was Rock of Ages, and it made him feel so bad I had to cry to see him. He come in and he got down on the lounge against our window, and he put his hand across his eyes and groaned like he was hurted in an accident. And he says, 'Teen, I wished I was a better man.' And I says, 'Jack, I wished you was.' And he says, 'I lost the hanker when I heard her sing the Rock of Ages, and if I lost the hanker, I could swear off.' So I didn't answer him, for if I says, 'do swear off,' he'd just swear on,—they wont, you know, for wives. But I made him a cup of coffee, for I didn't know what else to do, and I brought it to him on the lounge, and he thanked me. 'Teen,' he says, 'I'll never drink a drop again, so help me, Mother Mary!' And then he kissed me, for they don't, you know, after you've been married. And he's gone out haddockin', but we parted very kind. And so I come to tell you, for it mayn't be many days that I could walk it, and I've been that to him as I said I should, and I thought you'd better know."

"You've had no breakfast," answered Mother Mary, "and you walked too far. Here, stop at the Holly Tree as you go home; get a bowl of soup; and take the ferry back. There, there! don't cry quite so hard. I'll try to stay a little longer. I won't leave town till Jack comes in. It takes the Rock of Ages, to cure the hanker, Teen. But I've seen older men than he is stop as if they had been stopped by a lasso thrown from heaven. If there's any save in him," added Mother Mary below her breath, "he'll have his chance this time."

He went aboard sober, and sober he stayed. He kept a good deal by himself and thought of many things. His face paled out and refined, as their faces do, from abstinence; the ghost of his good looks hovered about him; he mended up his clothes; he did a kind turn to a messmate now and then; he told some excellent clean stories, and raised the spirits of the crew; he lent a dollar to a fellow with the rheumatism who had an indebtedness to liquidate for medicine. When he had done this he remembered that he had left his wife without money, and said aloud: "That's a mean trick to play on a woman."

He had bad luck, however, that trip; his share was small; he made \$7.27 in three weeks. This was conceded by the crew of the fishing schooner (her name was the *Destiny*) to be because Jack had "sworn off." It is a superstition among them. One unfamiliar with the lives of these men will hammer cold iron if he thinks to persuade them that rum and luck do not go together; or that to "reform" does not imply a reduction of personal income. You might as well try to put the fisherman's fist into a Honiton lace jumper, as the fisherman's mind into proportion on this point.

Therefore Jack took his poor trip carelessly; it was to be expected; he would explain it to Mother Mary when he got in. He drank nothing at all; and they weighed for home.

When Jack stepped off the *Destiny*, at Zephaniah Salt & Co.'s wharf at Fairharbor, after that voyage, clean, pale, good-natured and sober, thinking that he would get shaved before he hurried home to Teen, and wishing he could pay the grocer's bill upon the way, and thinking that in default of this, he would start an account at the market, and carry her a chop or a sausage, in fact, thinking about her with an absorption which resembled consideration if not affection—suddenly he caught her name upon the wharves.

It may have been said of accident, or of the devil—no one knew; they may have been too drunk to notice Jack at the time, or they may have seen and scented from afar the bad blood they stirred, like the hounds they were. It will never be told. The scandal of these places is incredibly barbarous; but it is less than the barbarity of drinking men to a man who strikes out from among themselves, and fights for his respectability.

The words were few—they are not for us—but they were enough to do the deed. Jack was quite sober. He understood. They assailed the honour of his home, the truth of his wife; they hurled her past at her and at himself; they derided the trust that he had in her in absence; they sneered at the "reformed man" whose domestic prospects were—as

they were; they exulted over him with the exultation in the sight of the havoc wrought, which is the most inexplicable impulse of evil.

Everybody knew how hot-blooded Jack was; and when the fury rushed red over his face, painted gray by abstinence, there was a smart scattering upon the wharves.

His hand clapped to his pocket; but his was an old, cheap, rusty pistol (he had swapped a Bible and his trawls for it once, upon a spree, and got cheated); it held but one cartridge, and his wrist shook. The shot went spluttering into the water and no harm came of it. Jack jammed the pistol back into his pocket; he glared about him madly, but had his glare for his pains; the men were afraid of him; he was alone upon the wharf.

It can hardly be said that he hesitated. Would that it could. Raving to himself—head down, hands clenched, feet stumbling like a blind man's—the fisherman sank into the first open door he staggered by, as a seiner pierced by an invisible swordfish sinks into the sea. He had fifteen such places to pass before he reached his house. His chances were—as they were—at best.

He drank for half an hour—an hour—a half more—came out, and went straight home.

(To be concluded.)

INDIAN NOTES.

An interesting case is at present engaging attention in mission circles. Some years ago a Mohammedan woman professed Christianity, and asked one of the missionaries at a station in the North-West to undertake the board and education of her three children. Having some doubts as to the reality of the professed change, the missionary agreed to take care of the children on condition that if at any time the mother demanded the custody of her children, a certain sum was to be paid in lieu of board and education. Soon after the woman apostatized, and became utterly reckless in conduct; a demand was made for the children. The missionary remanded her of the bond. The case came before the court. The court decided against the mother, and appointed the missionary guardian of the children. The character of the mother doubtless influenced the decision. Urged on by some Mohammedan co-religionists, the case was appealed. The higher courts reversed the decision of the lower, holding that a mother has no right to part with her children, and to enter into such a compact as that described,—that in *essence* the transaction was a sale of her children. The children, as it should be known, are strongly averse to returning to their mother. The eldest is of an age which entitles him now to act for himself, and he gives evidence of being a Christian. An appeal is likely to be taken to the Privy Council. Ere a final decision will be given, all three children will have reached the age at which they can decide the question for themselves. The children would probably have been kidnapped by their relatives ere now, only the bigger boys in the school have constituted themselves guardians for the present. The case is of considerable importance, as there are many children in mission schools in India under similar conditions.

Lady Dufferin's scheme for the medical education of women has been fairly launched, and will be an iridescent blessing to India. Provisions have been made for the board and lodging of Mohammedan and Hindu girls, but the case of native Christian girls seems to have been overlooked. It is hoped that this defect will be supplied. Native Christian girls cannot share boarding-houses along with either Mohammedans or Hindu—all parties will object to that arrangement. The disadvantage they are still under is obvious.

Some are curious as to the effect upon the Mohammedan mind of the new arrangements for the journey of the Indian pilgrims to the Hedjaz. Messrs. Cook and Son have extended their tours, and under an arrangement with the Government of India, it is now possible to make the pilgrimage under their care. Tickets will be for sale in every district office in India. It has been suggested that the Mohammedan community will regard their action as an encouragement by Government to make the pilgrimage. On the other hand it will tend to make the pilgrimage a very commonplace affair. Previously the journey was tedious, difficult, had an element of danger, and 300 rupees was the least sum required to do it with comfort; now it will be easy, safe, and may be done at a cost of 45 rupees third-class, and 90 rupees first-class, return tickets. The scheme will largely diminish robbery, mendicancy and disease, and will prove a boon to many more than the pilgrims.—*Correspondence, British Weekly.*

THE INVENTION OF PRINTING.

Before the middle of the fifteenth century Europe had a cheap material, paper; an oily ink, developed for block-book printing, in place of the fluid ink, which could be used only with the brush; probably the press itself; skilled artisans trained in the block book work; most important of all, the demand caused by education. It lacked movable types that could be fitted evenly and readily together, for neither the porcelain letters of Pi-Ching nor the individual stamps of the earliest copyists had developed to this point. "The invention of printing" in its modern sense consisted in the simple production of such types, or, as De Vinne puts it, of the type-mould which should produce such types. Fifteen cities claim to be the birthplace of printing, but the honour rests between Haarlem, Strasbourg and Mainz. The Dutch legend is that some time about or previous to 1440, one Laurent Janazoon Koster, custos or sexton of a church at Haarlem, while in the Hout or Haarlem wood, cut letters on a beech tree, which suggested to him wooden types, from which he afterward developed metal types; and that a man in his employ, escaping with the secret to Mainz, originated the art there. Haarlem contains many portrait monuments of Koster, and belief in him is an article of the Dutch faith, but later investigators claim that he is altogether a myth, made up with much imagination and some rascality, of two Haarlem