

Insane Asylum. Another saloon-keeper of our town has been a helpless sufferer for twenty years, and is yet a comparatively young man. Still another saloon-keeper had a son, who, while under the influence of rum leaned on a loaded gun and shot his arm off. Medical aid could not stop the flow of blood and he died. Most of the family, which was large, lived miserable lives and died young in life. The sins of the parent follow to the third and fourth generation. In no one is this truth more apparent than in the generations of the saloon-keeper.

Still another gives his experience:

I have for some years carefully noted the conditions of the saloon-men whom I have known, and all who have died have left no property. In this town were some saloon-keepers who were well-to-do financially when this place went for prohibition several years ago. Some of them owned valuable property and had money, and since the sale of whiskey was stopped they have been industrious in other pursuits, but misfortune follows them, and to-day, in old age, they are poor men. So plainly has this been seen that a former saloon-keeper told me that he knew why he did not prosper, for said he, "the curse of the Almighty is on me and all others who have sold liquor." This man is now a good citizen and so far as I knew, is leading a Christian life, but he thinks that while God pardons him of the guilt of his former business, yet he allows the temporal curse to remain which prevents the success that an industrious career would otherwise achieve.

I have in mind a saloon-keeper of a nearby city; a man of standing in temporal affairs; a total abstainer himself. When his city closed all saloons he went into other business with plenty of money, and had the finest home in the city. In three or four years his home was sold, his business shattered, and he in poverty. His business was taken in hand by others and is now a prosperous enterprise. I am of the opinion that a lasting blight rests upon the liquor dealer.

Railways and Total Abstinence.

There is one general rule regarding temperance on all railways in the Eastern States, which provides that no employee shall take a drink while on duty or come on duty under the effect of liquor.

This rule is in force on the Metropolitan Street Railway, the Manhattan Railway, the Long Island Railroad, the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad, the New York, New Haven & Hartford, and the Brooklyn Rapid Transit, the Smith Street and De Kalb Avenue line in Brooklyn.

There is a further rule that men who make a practice of taking intoxicating liquor, even when off duty, shall be subject to dismissal. This applies especially to all men who are engaged in the operation of trains.

There are 30,000 railway workers in Greater New York.—Exchange.

Liquor in Grocery Stores.

A doctor with a large practice in the suburbs of London, England, told an 'Express' representative that grocers' licenses are among the greatest curses of the age. 'I have traced,' he said, 'many cases of alcoholism among women to this source. The evil begins with the grocers' license and in a short time the public house is patronized.'

'Another evil is the medicated wine, the trade in which has vastly increased during the past few years. Scores of people who would not touch ordinary wine or spirits ask if they may take a little of somebody's medicated wine. It is nothing but ordinary wine to which a drug has been added.'

'It is my firm conviction that the use of such wine cultivates, and in some cases, awakens a craving for alcohol in stronger form.'

A member of a public body in West Ham showed an 'Express' representative round the best parts of the borough one Saturday night. The passing of well dressed women in and out of public houses of the better type was continuous. A visit was paid to what is an admittedly well conducted 'hotel.' In the saloon bar were forty-five persons, twenty-five of whom were women, including six girls with young men, evidently sweethearts.—English Exchange.

The Golden Goblet: a Christmas Story.

(Maggie Fearn, in 'Alliance News.')

(Continued.)

Right merrily went the feasting, and the laugh and jest went round; and of all the fair dames and maidens that graced that stately hall there was not a face so fair as the Lady Elvira's. There was not a form and presence so light and gracious as hers. Bright eyes grew envious when they gazed upon her beauty, and page and knight vied with gallant rivalry to do her homage. Yet her cheeks grew pale, and her tongue lost its cunning, and her smile its playful archness as the hour wore on; and when at length the Lord Roderick rose from his seat on the raised dais at the upper end of the hall, and filled the Golden Goblet sparkling to the brim with ruby wine, Lady Elvira's chair was vacant.

He lifted the glittering goblet in his hand and pledged his guests, and drank of the flowing wine in merry mood. Then he turned to where the Lady Elvira had been sitting, that she might be the next to drink of the loving cup; but lo! spectre-like, she had vanished, leaving but one white brodered glove to plead her pardon.

The Lord Roderick stood still and speechless for a minute's space, while the guests, watching his face, saw an angry light leap into his eyes, and his brow gather darkness.

'How, my lord and ladies,' cried he, 'what means this, that our fair mistress hath forsaken us, forsooth? It were an ill-timed jest to leave the feasting before the honors of the house of Baldrick had been drunk. What, oh, sir page, say to the Lady Elvira's tiring woman that the guests wait her pleasure to taste the loving cup.'

The nimble page, in vestment of green, with silver lacing, hastened to the Lady Elvira's private apartment, and returned almost instantly, followed by the old nurse, who had recounted the legend of the Golden Goblet in the oak gallery. She looked timorous and ill at ease. She feared the Lord Roderick's anger.

'And it please you, my lord, the Lady Elvira is ill fitted for the fatigue of the feasting to-night. She begs that you will pass the loving cup without her, and craves the indulgence of your guests to pardon her absence.'

The frown deepened on the handsome brow of the young lord. The Golden Goblet trembled in his grasp. His voice was quick and angry.

'We can spare no beauty that can grace our banquet to-night,' said he. 'What are the pale stars when we seek the queen moon? Our feasting hall grows dim, good Aileen, and we would fain have the brightness of the queen moon to gladden our vision. Tell your fair mistress the loving cup yet waits for her sweet lips to touch it. The banquet waits for the Lady Elvira, and we would that the revelry went forward!'

The old nurse curtsied low, and turned away to do his bidding, and around the festal board floated a wondering whisper, and a curious silence hovered about the hall—a silence that was the more to be noticed for the faint, restless, half hushed, movement of sweeping silk-gowns, and the muffled clang of steel armor under velvet doublets.

Into the curious silence came the recreant lady mistress. The Lord Roderick stepped not down from his dais to greet her as before. He held the Golden Goblet, and waited as she slowly passed up the length of the hall, between the goodly train of eager-eyed guests.

'We grieve for your indisposition, fair lady,' said the Lord Roderick; 'but no dame of the house of Baldrick hath passed the loving cup on Christmas eve since the night when our good Father Egbert brought it in triumph and honor from a hardly-contested chase. Prithee, your forbearance, my Lady Elvira, but we crave your goodly pledge to us from the Golden Goblet.'

He took one step forward, his eye kindling into love and forgiveness, as it rested on her fair young beauty. Indeed, she was passing fair—a queen moon amid her galaxy of stars.

But she did not lift her eyes to her lord's face. She crossed her hands upon her breast, and the gleam of the white priceless pearls upon her neck and rounded arms caught new lustre from the flashing lights above. In her shimmering gown of ivory satin, she sank on one knee before him, not touching the raised dais where her rightful seat was still placed by his side. And so, silent and with drooped head, she knelt before the Lord Roderick.

Not a sound startled the stillness of the great hall, and the lords and ladies, watching with holden breath, saw a crimson dye mount to the Lord Roderick's cheek and brow. He stopped with hurried gesture.

'You kneel, fair lady, and to me? Nay, but this shall not be.'

And he sought to raise her from her lowly posture, but she would not.

'Nay, sweetheart,' said he, with a touch of eager anxiety in his voice; 'jest not on this point any further. No wedded wife of a Baldrick shall kneel to her lord in a festal hall.'

Yet still she knelt.

'Prithee, what is it, Lady Elvira? 'Twas but a moment's anger, fair mistress, that you should have forsaken us when we craved your presence. Rise, and pledge our noble guests in the loving cup.'

'It is not your past anger that I fear, good my lord,' answered the Lady Elvira, in a low voice. 'It is that I fear to raise your anger again. I have a little story to tell into your ear, and my lord will surely listen?'

'Ay, for ever, to the music of so sweet a voice, Elvira! Speak, fair lady; but not in so lowly a position.'

'I kneel until my lord shall hear what I have to speak; and then if he can pardon, and smile upon Elvira still, she will honor him as never lord or lover was honored.'

He bent over her, touching with his hand her clustering hair.

'Speak, Lady Elvira,' said he. 'The hall of noble guests await your pleasure.'

Then she raised her sweet, sad face, whereon rested a pallor grey as that of age and sorrow.

'In a timid nest fluttered a little frightened birdling, which feared to fly, and yet longed to see the great and beautiful world. Its mother and many others had told strange and wonderful stories of the marvellous things which were only veiled by the walls of the nest; but of one great danger all warned the birdling—a danger which might not hold such covert treachery for some, but which for it was full of a fatal though subtle power. Then there came a day when a Golden Eagle saw the timid birdling, and wished to take it far away to his grand home, and the birdling was well pleased to let him carry it there. But the Golden Eagle knew nothing of the power of the danger that was lurking near, until on a festal day the poor little fluttering captive saw the coming of the fatal foe, and drooped its wings in terror, and fell well nigh aswooning at the feet of the Golden Eagle. There were those around who said the danger was but a shadow, that it was weakness to dread it; but the birdling knew it meant dishonor and death if it touched it. Only love stood between the frightened thing and the danger it dreaded. What think you, my lord? Should the Golden Eagle champion the cause of the helpless birdling or look on to see it shiver and die beneath the blight of the foe?'

The glance of his eye was like lightning as it flashed from face to face in that goodly train.

'How say you, my lords and ladies?' he cried. 'If the Golden Eagle prove faithless to his trust, shall it not be that the hapless captive seek another champion? How say you?'

A low murmur went round among the guests, and the Lady Elvira waited. Sure, so strange a scene had never been witnessed in the castle hall.

'And shall a fair lady kneel to a Baldrick in vain? It were poor gallantry in a belted knight to suffer that, good people.'

Again an inarticulate murmur. The Lord Roderick stooped.

'Elvira?'

'There has been a curse upon my father's house from generation to generation; and the stain dyes deeper, and the clouds hang thicker as the years pass on. And it will not be removed until one of our race adjoins the touch and taste of wine through life. Know, my lord, that these lips of Elvira's have never pressed the dainty delusive draught, and I have sworn by my father's name, that the curse shall die with me.'

(To be continued.)