

King Alcohol.

BY THOMAS ELMES.

PREPARE! for I come on sirocco wing;
I come, I come, saith the Alcohol King,
From the fiery bed of the hottest hell,
To revel awhile where mankind do dwell;
The last of my feast I will make the best
In the far-famed realms of this smiling west.
For oh! rich and rare shall the banquet be
On which I will feed in this land, saith he.

I come as a blast of the hot simoom,
To wither the flowers in their youthful bloom,
To level the heads of the homes of state,
To affix a band on each castle gate.
High halls shall ring with my loud alarm;
I will ruin the son in his mother's arms;
And the father's heart, in its lone despair,
Shall ask the Alcohol King for its heir!

I will wreath the snare of my blandest smile
In the taverns dark, and saloons vile,
I will creep along through the dwellings lone,
Where sorrow and famine and filth are
known,
Where the hungry mother with bloodshot eye
Mourns not that her starving child should
die;
The child shall die, but my fiendish hate
Shall dance on its grave by the churchyard
gate.

From there will I where love-cords are
strong,
And snap them asunder, though woven so
long;
I revel in cursing the human race,
And bringing all to the lowest disgrace,
Till I bring many through the fiery gates.
And Satan and I will close the gates,
Prepare! for I come on sirocco wing—
I come, I come, saith the Alcohol King,
PRINCETON, ONT.

THE DAYS OF WESLEY.

XIII.

THESE last weeks have been full of events. Uncle Beauchamp died rather suddenly two months since. The shock of his death brought on a slight attack of paralysis on Aunt Beauchamp, which has disabled her from entering any more into society.

Cousin Evelyn is left in possession of a large fortune, bequeathed for her sole use, on her father's death, by the will of her paternal grandmother. She has announced her intention of paying us a visit. Aunt Beauchamp keeps recurring, like a sick child, to a promise mother made her of coming to nurse her if ever she should need it. And since it is impossible for mother to leave home, the doctors (Evelyn writes) think that difficult as the journey is, the most probable chance of recovery is for her mother to come for a time to us if we can receive her. Mother's tender and quiet nursing may restore her shattered nerves, or at least soothe them. Betty's anticipations of this visit are not bright. A fine London man and maid, and an old madam, who (she has heard) paints her face (which no one ever did in the Bible except Jezebel), are very serious apprehensions to Betty.

Indeed, she said to-day, it was quite enough, in her opinion, to account for all the evil signs and tokens; so that, she admits, there is some comfort even

in such an upset as this, for such sights and sounds might have boded worse.

Betty's spirits are much relieved, now that our visitors have come, by discovering that the "London man" turns out to be a Methodist collier lad, promoted by Evelyn to the dignity of groom; that my aunt's woman, Mrs. Sims, is entirely engrossed with her mistress; that my poor aunt herself has relinquished the rouge; and that, in a very short time, the whole party are to emigrate from our place to the parsonage.

For Evelyn has bought the next presentation of the living for Hugh, for which, she says, we owe her no thanks, as she intends ruthlessly to rob us of the parsonage, and to convert it, with the exception of such rooms as she and her mother want, into an orphan-house for some destitute little girls she has discovered in London, for whom she believes the great hope is to take them quite out of reach of their bad relations, into such a new world as this will be to them.

We, she says, are to struggle on as we can in the old house. She insists, however, on repairing or rebuilding the fallen side of the old court, in which are situated the rooms formerly appropriated to us. The masons and carpenters are at work already.

Evelyn is altogether graver and gentler and more peaceable than I ever saw her. Her strong will seems to find its true element in action, and no more drives her restlessly against other people's wills, merely by way of exercise. At the same time she seems to me more of a queen than ever; and I delight to watch how instinctively every one yields to her control—every one except poor Aunt Beauchamp; and in her sick-chamber I love to watch Evelyn better than anywhere else. The paralytic stroke, bereavement, and change of circumstances have brought a vague irritation and sense of helpless opposition into my poor aunt's brain, very sad to see; and this chiefly vents itself on Evelyn. She seems to feel as if something, she knows not what, were always preventing her doing what she wishes; and when Evelyn appears, this tyrannical something seems to represent itself to her as poor Evelyn's will. At times she blames and reproaches Evelyn as if she were a wilful child. At other times she weeps and wrings her hands, and entreats as if she herself were the child and Evelyn the harsh guardian, to be allowed to do some impossible thing or other. And Evelyn, so strong and commanding elsewhere, by that sick-bed is tender and yielding and patient with every sick fancy. Now and then, after a paroxysm of fretting and complaining, she is rewarded by a few tender words of love and thanks, as a gleam of clearer light breaks over the poor troubled brain. And at such times it is always as to a little child Aunt Beauchamp speaks to her, calling her old, tender

nursery names, long disused, at which poor Evelyn's eyes fill with tears.

The doctors say this form of the disease will probably pass; and already mother's presence and firm, kind nursing, seems to have exercised a soothing influence.

The time for Hugh's arrival is come. Any day may bring us tidings of his ship. Evelyn is hastening the preparation of the parsonage for the reception of her mother and the orphans. Two rooms, looking on the garden, she has fitted up with every luxury her mother is accustomed to: China vases and images on golden brackets, caskets of aromatic woods, soft carpets and leopards' skins; mirrors, with little china cupids peeping round at their own reflections from the garlanded frame: everything to make poor Aunt Beauchamp feel as much at home as if her windows looked on Great Ormond Street, instead of over a patch of garden sheltered with difficulty from the storms of the Atlantic.

The rest of the house is a strange contrast. In Evelyn's own rooms the only luxuries are books and flowers, and a view, through an opening in the valley, of the sea. The furniture is nearly as simple as that of the dormitories and the school-room for the orphans, to which the remaining portion of the house is devoted.

"Cousin Kitty," she said suddenly, as we were walking home across a reach of sandy shore, "I know Mr. Wesley thinks riches the meanest of God's gifts, but I do think they are a grand gift when one is young and free. So few possess riches until their wants and habits have grown up to them, so that after all they are only enough to supply their wants, that is not riches to them at all. Now with me it is different. My tastes are as simple as possible. I have no pleasure in splendour, and no need for luxuries. God has given me riches in my youth and health; and, moreover," she continued, in a trembling voice, "he has given me to see something of the great poverty and misery there are in the world. And also he has brought me, at the threshold of my life, face to face with death. And there is nothing in the world I should like so much, I mean really like or enjoy so much," she repeated emphatically, "as, unentangled with any personal interests or cares, to give myself up, that is, all I have and am, to helping, and cheering, and serving the sorrowful and neglected and destitute people around me, all my life long, leading them to feel all the time that the love and help they found in me was only a little trickling from the great love and power of God."

While Evelyn and I stood together by the seaside that evening, I noticed at one point a bank of clouds just rising slowly above the horizon.

As we walked home the wind rose in those strange, fitful gusts, which father says are like flying skirmishing parties sent out to clear the way before the main forces of a storm.

As the wind rose all through that evening, I began to feel terribly anxious; and I knew they all felt as I did, because everyone made such lively efforts not to let the conversation flag. They talked about Evelyn's alterations at the parsonage, about the renovations in our old house, about father's old military days—about every one except Hugh, about everything except the tempestuous wind, which had now ceased to be gusty, and kept surging up the valley in great deafening waves, as regular and almost as strong as the billows it had been urging on in its course, and whose salt spray it kept dashing against the windows, mingled with great splashes of rain.

Evelyn wished me good-night in an easy, careless tone, as if it was quite an ordinary night, and no one we cared about were on the sea; and mother made no attempt to come to my chamber or to invite me to hers, as she does in any common anxiety. Only father's voice betrayed his feelings by its nervous abruptness, as he came back from an exploration of the weather, and said, as we separated for the night,—

"This weather is nothing sudden. It cannot have taken any good seaman by surprise. It has been brewing since yesterday; and no doubt any one who knows this coast is either far enough from it or safe in port."

But not long afterwards, I heard mother's closet door close, and low voices conclude what I felt had been an earnest parley; and with every sense quick as it was that night, I heard Evelyn's soft step glide stealthily past my chamber to her own.

Only Betty ventured to speak to me. She knocked at my door, and came into my chamber from her own, while I was still standing at the window, listening to the storm.

"Mrs. Kitty, my dear!" she said, in her old tone of authority, which carried me back to my childhood, and made me feel submissive at once. "Mrs. Kitty, my dear lamb, you mustn't stand staring like that;" and she began quietly to unfasten my dress, as when I was a little child. "There's nothing folks can't see and hear, if they hearken on nights like this, my dear," she continued. "I've heard the wind *creusle*, and moan, and scream in that way; I would have sworn it was folks in mortal trouble; and in the morning, when I came to ask, nothing had happened out of the way. So take heart, my dear, take heart!"

How thankful I felt to Betty for the want of tact which made her full heart come blundering out with all its sympathy, so that I could just lay my head on her shoulder and cry like a child and be comforted!

"I'm not out of heart, Betty," I sobbed. "Why should I be? His ship may not have left America yet, you know. It may be in port, quite safe; close at hand—close at hand!"