

Canada Temperance Advocate.

Temperance is the moderate use of things beneficial, and abstinence from things hurtful.

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THE TWO COMPANIONS.

From the Chronicles of Saunders Muirhead.

A number of years ago, there lived in the town of Dumfries, two men, the one named Robert Sharp, and the other Samuel Young. They were born within two doors of each other, and from the time that they could walk, were scarcely ever separated; they went to school together; and so much were they attached to one another, that if anything happened to stop the one from school for a day, no blows or entreaties could compel the other to go.

When they were about fifteen years of age, Sharp's parents wished him to be a shoemaker, with a maternal uncle he had, who was of that trade. Young no sooner knew this, than he insisted on his father to try if Sharp's uncle would also take him, that he might learn the business along with his comrade. This was agreed to, and they were both bound on the same day. They turned out active clever lads, and were both most excellent tradesmen. After having fulfilled their time honestly and faithfully, and still with the same undiminished friendship, they worked together as journeymen for some time, and then each of them took a shop and began business. As they could not then be so much together as formerly, they used often to meet in the evening to take a glass of spirits or a bottle of ale together, and to tell each other how they were coming on. But although they did their business separately, it might have been said in one sense that they were in company; if the one had a shilling and the other wanted one, it was at his command in a moment.

They continued the practice of meeting in the evening so long, and so steadily, that at last the habit got such a hold of them, that they found it almost impossible to rid themselves of it; and even as the hour drew near, they found an almost irresistible inclination to repair to the place of rendezvous. They separately imputed this to their friendship for each other; but, alas! it had a far worse foundation: they both began to have a most inordinate love for liquor, and were never so happy as when they were in the public house, to which they afterwards began to go at any time of day, and on the most trivial pretences.

After some time, they became acquainted with two girls, who were both servants in the same family, the one named Betty Wilson, and the other Mary Black. Robert was delighted with Mary's charms—she was every thing that is lovely in woman. Samuel, on his part, was as much smitten with Betty Wilson. By some she was thought rather soft in disposition, for sweetness of temper is usually set down by the world as little better than silliness, and, I am sorry to say, treated accordingly. Be this as it may, both our heroes wooed and won, after a summer and harvest's courtship. It was agreed by all parties that the lasses should leave their service at Martinmas, and be married. All this was done: and as the two bridegrooms were born nearly on the same day, and bound on the same day, and made free on the same day, it was agreed that they should be married on the same day. All was carried on in perfect harmony: the marriages were celebrated, and everything seemed to promise happiness; but, alas! we can promise ourselves nothing in this world.

The two young men had both acquired such a habit of drinking together, that, now they were married, they could not restrain themselves from carrying on as formerly. Instead of seeing each other occasionally, and meeting in a rational manner—instead of cultivating the affections of their wives—they threw aside all considerations, and continued their old practice of having what they called "a cheerful glass" of an evening after their day's labour was over. As in all cases of this nature, the taste for liquor daily gains strength, and is apt to go beyond the bounds of moderation. When they seated themselves, they sometimes forgot to rise, till after one in the night, and staggered home through the dark and

lonesome streets to their respective homes. To be sure, promises to abstain in future were not wanting—that is to say, when unwell in the morning from a night's carouse—

But, alas! when habit's rooted,
Few ha'e pith the root to pu':
Their resolves were aye nonsuited.
Promised aye, but aye got fu'.—*Macneill.*

The reception which the two boon companions respectively met with on these occasions from their wives, was very different, and it is to this point I wish to direct the particular attention of young married women. Whatever time Samuel went home, be it night or morning, Betty always received him with a smile; never one angry or reproachful word dropped from her lips, and he often cursed himself for an unfeeling brute, to abuse so much goodness. But the case was quite different with poor Sharp; if he staid a little later than usual, Mary's tongue went like a bell; her lectures continued for the most part till he fell fast asleep, and when he awaked in the morning, she began afresh: she would sometimes even follow him to the shop, and scold him there. Things went on at this rate, till he could not think of entering his own door; and instead of making him better, she made him ten times worse than he would have been; instead of alluring him home, she drove him away. Often would he sigh, and say to Samuel, "You married a lamb, but I married a raging lion."

It happened one night that Samuel got quite intoxicated, and behaved in such a riotous manner that the people of the house were obliged to call the guard (for there was no police in these days), who put him in the cell where they usually confined disorderly persons for a night. Robert Sharp, his friend, was with him at the time, and being tolerably sober, he went directly and told Samuel's wife that her husband was in confinement. Instead of scolding and calling ill names, as some women would have done, she immediately put her child into the cradle, and getting a neighbour woman to stay with it, hastened with a bowl of warm broth, a big coat, and a night-cap, to the place of confinement; having procured admittance, she got her husband to take the broth, which refreshed him much, as he had had little meat all day. She then made him put on the coat and cap, and told him she would have staid with him all night, if it had not been for the child, but bade him keep a good heart, as one night would soon wear over, and he would be liberated next day, when she would have something that was comfortable for him. She then took a large handkerchief from her pocket, and, tying it round his neck above the one he had on before, to keep him warm, kindly asked him if there was any thing further she could do for him. He answering in the negative, she said she must bid him good night, on account of the child.

There was so much genuine tenderness and forgiveness in all this, that Samuel's heart was melted—his feelings were fairly roused. After a moment's hesitation, he gently put his arm around his amiable wife's neck, and laying his head on her bosom, shed a plentiful shower of tears. At last he exclaimed, "Betty, I have been a brute, a blockhead, and a villain, to abuse such goodness! but if I am spared, I here solemnly promise to lead quite a different life, so much so, that you yourself shall be amazed at my conduct. If you had come just now to scold and abuse me, as no doubt I deserved, I should very likely have been stubborn and sly, but your behaviour has quite overcome me: therefore, go home to the dear infant; and if I live, I will follow a different line of life." Betty wished him good night, and left him. He threw himself down among some straw that was in a corner of the cell, and soon fell asleep.

As nothing very serious was laid to his charge, the guard let him out next morning, without troubling a magistrate with the business. On being set at liberty, he went straight home, where his wife received him as kindly as if come from doing the most