n, and pray to God; secondly, to combat what they foolishly call fate,—to fight bravely and in a good cause,—and sure am I, that those who do so, will, sooner or later, achieve a victory.

It is never too late to abandon a bad habit and adopt a good one. In every town of Ireland, temperance has now its members, and these members are so thoroughly acquainted with the blessings of this admirable system, from feeling its advantages, that they are full of zeal in the cause, and, with true Irish generosity, eager to enlist their friends and neighbors, that they too may partake of the comforts which spring from temperance. The Irishman is not selfish; he is as ready to share his cup of coffee as he used to be to share his glass of whiskey.

One of these generous members was the Mrs. Kinsalla whose offer of the bowl of coffee had been rejected by Roney the night his fever commenced. She herself was a poor widow, or, according to the touching and expressive phraseology of Ireland, "a lone woman;" and though she had so little to bestow that many would call it nothing, she gave it with that good-will which rendered it "twice blessed;" then she stirred up others to give, and often had she kept watch with her wretched neighbor, Ellen, never omitting those words of gentle kindness and instruction which, perhaps, at the time may seem to have been spoken in vain; but not so; for we must bear in mind that even in the good ground the seed will not spring the moment it is sown.

Roney had been an industrious and a good workman once; and Mrs. Kinsalla had often thought, before the establishment of the Temperance Society, what a blessing it would be if there were any means of making him an "affidavit man." "But," as she said, "there were so many ways of avoiding an oath, when a man's heart was set to break it, not to keep it, that she could hardly tell what to say about it.

Such poverty as Roney's must either die beneath its infliction or rise above it. He was now able to sit in the sun at his cabin door. His neighbor, Mrs. Kinsalla, had prevailed on a good lady to employ Ellen in the place of a servant who was ill, and had lent her clothes, that she might be able to appear decently "at the big house." Every night she was permitted to bring her husband a little broth, or some bread and meat, and the poor fellow was [illegible] weak. Their dwelling, however, remained without any article of furniture; although the rain used to pour through the roof, and the only fire was made from the scanty "bresnaugh" (bundle of sticks) the children gathered from the road-side, they had sufficient food; and though the lady expected all she employed to work hard, she paid them well, and caused Ellen's poor forlorn heart to leap with joy by the gift of a blanket and a very old suit of clothes for her husband.

"I have seen yer old master to-day, Roney," said the widow Kinsalla to her neighbor; "he was asking after you."

"I'm obliged to him," was the reply.

"And he said he was sorry to see your children in the street, Roney."

"So am I. But you know he was so angry with me for that last scrimmage, that he declared I should never do another stroke for him. And," he added, "that was a cruel saying for him, to lay out starvation for me and mine; because I was not worse than the rest. 'Sure,' as I said to Nelly, poor thing—and she spending her strength and striving for me, —'Nelly,' says I, 'where's the good of it, bringing me out of the shades of death to send me begging along the road? Let me die aisy where I am!'"

"Well, but the master will take you back, Roney, on one condition." The blood mounted to the poor man's face, and then he became faint, and leaned back against the wall. Three times he had been dismissed from his employment for drunkenness, and his master had never been known to receive a man back after three dismissals. Mrs. Kinsalla gave him a cup of water and then continued, "The master told me he'd take you back, on one condition."

"I'll give my oath against the whiskey—barring," he began.

"There need be no swearing, but there must be no barring. I'll tell you the rights of it, if you listen to me in earnest," said the widow. "The master, you see, called all his men together, and set down fair before them the state they were in from the indulgence in spirits. He drew a picture, Roney—A young man in his prime, full of life, with a fair character; his young wife by his side, his child on his knee; earning from fifteen to eighteen shillings or a pound a-week; able to have his Sunday dinner in comfort; well to do in every way. At first he drinks, may be, a glass with a friend, and that leads to another, and another, until work is neglected, home is abandoned, a quarrelsome spirit grows out of the high spirit which is no shame, and, in a very short time, you lose all trace of the man in the degraded drunkard. Poverty wraps her rags around him; pallid want, loathsome disease, a jail, and a bedless death close the scene. 'But,' said the master, 'this is not all; the sneer and reproach have gone over the world against us; and an Irishman is held up as a degraded man, as a half-civilized savage, to be spurned and laughed at, because—'"

"I know," groaned Roney, "because he makes himself a reproach. Mrs. Kinsalla, I knew you were a well-reared and a well-learned woman, but you gave that to the life;—it's all true."

"He spoke," she continued, "of those amongst his own workmen, who had fallen by intoxication; he said 'If poverty had slain its thousands, whiskey had slain its tens of thousands; poverty did not always lead to drunkenness, but drunkenness always led to poverty.' He spoke of you, my poor man, as being one whom he respected."

"Did he say that, indeed?"

"He did."

"God bless him for that, any way. I thought him a hard man; but God bless him for remembering old times."

"And he said how you had fallen."

"The world knows that without his telling it," interrupted Roney.

"It does, agra!—but listen; he told of one who was as low as you are now, and lower, for the Lord took from him the young wife, who died broken-hearted, in the sight of his eyes; and yet it was not too late for him to be restored, and able to lead others from the way that led him to destruction.

"He touched the hearts of them all; he laid before them how, if they looked back to what they did when sober, and what they had done when the contrary, they would see the difference; and then, my dear, he showed them other things; he laid it down, as plain as print, how all the badness that had been done in the country sprang out of the whiskey—the faction-fights, the flying in the face of that God who tells us to love each other—the oaths, black and bitter, dividing Irishmen, who ought to be united in all things that lead to the peace and honor of their country, into parties, staining hands with blood that would have gone spotless to honorable graves but for its excitement. Then he said, how the foes of Ireland would sneer and scorn, if she became a backslider from temperance, and how her friends would rejoice if the people kept true to their [illegible] how man could prove himself a patriot—a rale patriot, by showing to the world an Irishman, steadfast, sober, and industrious, with a cooler head and warmer heart than ever beat in any but an Irishman's bosom. He showed, you see, how temperance was the heart's core of ould Ireland's glory, and said a deal more that I can't repeat about her peace and verdure and prosperity; and then he drew out a picture of a reformed man—his home, with all the little bits of things comfortable about him; his smiling wife; his innocent babies; and, knowing him so well, Roney, I made my courtesy, and, 'Sir,' says I, 'if you please will that come about to every one who becomes a true member of the Total Abstinence Society?' 'I'll go bail for it,' says he, 'though, surely, you don't want it; I never saw you overtaken, Mrs. Kinsalla.' 'God forbid, and thank your honor,' says I, 'but you want every one to be a member,' says I. 'From my heart, for his own good and the honor of old Ireland I do,' he says.

"'Then, sir,' I went on, 'there's Roney Maher, sir, and if he takes and stands true to the pledge,'—and I watched to see if the good-humored twist was in his mouth—'he'll be fit for work next week, sir; and the evil spirit is out of him so long now, and—' 'That's enough,' he says, 'bring him here to-morrow, when all who wish to remain in my employ will take the resolution, and I'll try him again.'"

Ellen had entered unperceived by her husband and knelt by his side.

The appeal was unnecessary; sorrow softens men's hearts; he pressed her to his bosom, while tears coursed each other down his pallid cheeks.

"Ellen, mavourneen—Ellen, aroon," he whispered—"Nelly, agra! a coushla! you're right—It is never too late."

* * * * * *

A year has passed since Roney, trusting not in his own strength, entered on a new course of life. Having learned to distrust himself, he was certain to triumph.

It is Sunday; his wife is taking her two eldest children to early mass, that she may return in time to prepare his dinner; the little lads, stout, clean, and ruddy-faced, are watching to call to their mother, so that she may know the moment he—her reformed husband—appears in sight. What there is in the cottage betokens care, and that sort of Irish comfort which is easily satisfied; there is, moreover, a cloth on the table; a cunning-looking dog is eyeing the steam of something more savory than potatoes, which ascends the chimney, and the assured calmness of Ellen's face proves that her heart is at ease. The boys are the same who, hardly a year ago, were compelled, by cruel starvation, to exult—poor children!—that their father being too ill to eat, insured to them another potato. "Hurroo, mammy, there's daddy," exclaimed the eldest; "Oh, mammy, his new beaver shines grand in the sun," shouts his brother: "and there's widdy Kinsalla along with him, but he is carrying little Nancy. Now he lets her down, and the darling is running, for he's taken off her Sunday shoes to ease her dawshy feet. And oh, mammy, honey, there's the master himself shaking hands with father before all the people!" This triumphant announcement brought Ellen to the door; she shaded her eyes from the sun with her hand, and having seen what made her heart beat very rapidly in her faithful and gentle bosom, she wiped them more than once with the corner of her apron. "What ails ye, mammy, honey? sure there's no trouble over you now," said the eldest boy, climbing to her neck, and pouting his lips, not blue, but cherry-red, to meet his mother's kiss.

"I hope daddy will be very hungry," he continued, "and Mrs. Kinsalla; for, even if the school-master came in, we've enough dinner for them all."

"Say, thank God, my child," said Ellen. "Thank God," repeated the boy. "And shall I say what you do be always saying as well?" "What's that, alanna?" "Thank God and the Temperance! Thank God and Father Mathew!" "Oh! and something else." "What?" enquired his mother. "What!—why 'That it's never too late!'"—*Scottish Temperance League, Crown Octavo Tracts, No. 24.*

THE STUMP OF A SIGN-POST.

The following is the story told by a country pastor concerning the stump of a sign-post near a house formerly occupied as a country-tavern by an intemperate and wrecked man.

One day I mustered courage to approach him. As I stopped in front of the house, about to step out of my carriage, and kindly saluted him standing on the porch, he said:

"I do not want your services. I shall have nothing to do with ministers. They are a set of scoundrels, and churches are nothing but places of corruption. I do not want you here."

You may well think how I felt as I drove away homeward. A few weeks later he sent for me in great haste. As I entered his sick chamber he screamed: "O pastor——, I have committed the unpardonable sin. I have abused and slandered God's Church and his ministry. Oh! I am suffering the torments of hell!" In broken sentences he detailed to me some particulars of his wicked life, and his opposition to the Church of Christ, interspersing his confessions with exclamations: "Oh, I am suffering the pains of hell!"

"Shall I pray for you?" I enquired.

"Yes, you may; but it will do me no good. It is too late."

After I had began to pray, he screamed: "Stop, O stop praying, I can stand it no longer; I am suffering the torments of the lost!"

He then called his children around his bedside, and besought them to take warning from the wicked life of their father, lost forever; that they should attend church, and lead a Christian life. Moreover, he made them solemnly promise him that they would at once saw off the sign-post, close the tavern, and never sell any more rum in that house. The children wept aloud as he thus admonished them. The sign-post was sawed off. The tavern and bar closed. Six hours later he was a corpse. To the end he uttered the wailing of a lost soul.

Before his death he charged the pastor to tell the people at his funeral how he bewailed his wicked life, and how his soul was lost; that he should warn his boon companions to flee from the wrath to come. Many a wicked comrade of the deceased came to hear what a minister could preach.

* * * * *

Coming home we met a man and woman in a covered market wagon. He had a black bruise on his face, and tried to hold the lines, but was so drunk that he could scarcely keep on the seat aside of his wife. "That is one of the sons of the lost father," said our friend, "who helped to saw off the sign-post."

Alas, one may saw off the sign-post when it is too late, after the taste for rum and the habits of sin have become too strong; when the evil days come, and the years draw nigh when they shall say, "I have no pleasure in them." Eccl. xii. 1.

On our return home we told the story of the sign-post to a friend, who added the following leaf to it: Some years ago I and a few friends happened to stop at this man's tavern. The old landlord was behind the bar handing out the bottle to my friends. "What will you take?" he enquired of me. "Nothing," I replied; "I use no strong drink."

"My dear sir," said the landlord, "I use it and sell it, but I know that it is wrong to do either. Although it is my business and pecuniary profit to sell it, I tell you, sir, you are right and I am wrong. It were much better if no one drank or sold strong drink."

Alas! this poor man fought his way to hell over his better convictions, wilfully hardened his heart and sinned against the strivings of God's Spirit; knew his Master's will and did it not.

"To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation," Heb. iii. 7. 8.

STRONG DRINK AND HARD TIMES.

The mischief of the use of strong drink, in an economical point of view, is not thought of, perhaps enough, or pressed enough upon the public attention. The direct cost, even to the moderate drinker, amounts to a considerable sum for a year. It is probably a much larger sum than the man who spends it thinks for. Then here are indirect losses, which in many cases are greater; as by the time wasted in the places where liquors are sold and drank, and through habits of idleness and improvidence which may be formed. The whole effect upon a man's standing as to property is likely to be a very serious one. It must be remembered that the gains of most people above their necessary expenses are, at best, but small. If, however, some slight annual saving can be made, especially in one's younger life, he may reach in time to a comfortable position as to property. If the margin he has is narrow, it is the more needful to keep it all. Now it is just the narrow margins that a costly habit like this of using strong drink cuts off. It makes the whole difference, with multitudes of men, between competence and poverty. Many families of laboring men, now cramped and straightened in their living, might fare well, and save money, but for the cost to the father, or the brothers, of this worse than useless indulgence.

This is a most appropriate matter to be brought forward in these hard times. It ought to be pressed especially upon the attention of our younger working men. The great and useless expenditure for tobacco can be treated of also after the same fashion. If both these things could be set right, "the times" would begin shortly to grow easier and brighter in many homes.—*Congregationalist.*

A HELPLESS VICTIM.

"Did you notice that fine-looking gentleman, that left the office as you came in?" asked a physician of us, the other day.

He was a marked man physically, tall and well-formed, with the stoop of a scholar in his shoulders.

"He is, or has been," continued our friend, "the Congregational pastor of P——; but he has just been obliged to send in his resignation. He has become an almost helpless victim of an appetite for alcoholic stimulants. He has been seen under the influence of liquor in our lowest saloons; and this is the third Church that he has been obliged to leave for the same cause. He is a man of more than ordinary ability, was specially popular in his present place, and it has almost broken the hearts of some of his best friends to be obliged to demand his resignation. He began the use of stimulants on account of nervous irritability and weakness, and now the appetite for them utterly overmasters him."

We are too apt to forget the terrible scourge that lies in this frightful temptation. A half century of earnest temperance labor has defended, to a large degree, our families; but the present remission of interest, and breaking down of public sentiment on this question is ominous. We remember, in our boyhood, when it was seriously feared that we might become a nation of drunkards; when the early apostles of the temperance movement, like the elder Beecher, lifted u their voices, and spared not. They saved the land. Shall we give it back again to this foe of human peace and virtue?—*Zion's Herald.*

—Dr. Fergusson, "certifying surgeon under the Factory Acts," testifies to a "steady degeneration" going on among the factory population. This he attributes to the intemperate habits of the factory workers, who debilitate their constitutions by liquors and tobacco, and so transmit an impaired vitality to their children. He suggests also, as a subsidiary cause, that children, instead of being fed on milk, as formerly, after weaning, now are made often to drink tea or coffee even three times a day. He has found by actual experiment that feeble children between 13 and 15 fed on milk night and morning will grow 15 lbs. in a year, while such children fed on tea or coffee, will not exceed a growth of 4 lbs. in a year.—*Congregationalist.*