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## THE YOUNG RECRUITING OFFICER, IN THE COLD WATER ARMY.

"Can I get something to drink here?" said a tall heavy made man to a boy of about fourteen years. The boy paused in the occupation in which he was engaged, and deliberately surveyed the stranger who had entered the shop. His beard had been unshaven and his face unwashed for a week or more, judging from appearance. His hair was arranged much as if each particular hair was standing on end, so far as it could be seen under a particularly shabby old hat that looked as if the writer of this article was very young:

"When that old hat was new."

There was no coat upon his back, and his pantaloons and shirt wore most apologies for those articles.

"Can I get anything to drink here—*anything*?" repeated the stranger, in an imploring tone; "for all last night I lay upon a bale of hay with a dry cow-hide over me, and some liquor I must have."

"No," said the boy, with a look full of compassion, "we can give you nothing to drink, but we can give you a bowl of hot soup and something to eat. And," he continued, "let me tell you it would do you good to go to the temperance meeting to-night in Wesley Chapel, and sign the pledge."

"Temperance meeting? Pledge? What are they?"

"We have a society here called the Cincinnati Washington Temperance Society. All who join it sign a pledge, that they will drink nothing that can intoxicate. Hundreds and thousands have joined, and a great many just such men as you—once drunkards, but now reformed respectable men. Come here to-night, and I will go with you to Wesley Chapel."

The stranger stood as if amazed, there was so much earnestness, so much benevolence in the language of this young lad, that he seemed overcome. The tear stood in either eye, as he said,—"My young friend, these are the kindest words I have heard for many a day, and all you say is new and strange. I will be here to-night and go with you to the Temperance meeting." That night you might have seen this same youth pursuing his way through a dense mass of human beings, standing thick in the middle aisle of Wesley Chapel. The exercises were already begun, and one of our most popular speakers was upon the platform.—Close behind the youth, the heavy made man was elbowing himself along wherever the lad, like a wedge, opened the way.

"Don't crowd so much here," whispered one on one side; "a little less of your impudence, you greasy loafer," as the heavy man jostled him, on the other side.

Almost any one would have been discouraged, but our hero kept on, amid rebukes, with his protege close behind him, until by dint of hard labour he made his way nearly up to the Secretary's table.

"There is no one here," said the speaker on the stand, "so lost that he may not be recovered—that has fallen so low that he may not be raised up; for it is one of the glorious characteristics of this reform, that it stoops to the lowest, and pursues after him who has wandered longest. It takes the drunkard from the curbstone and the gutter, and restores him to a standing among men—such as the most respectable occupy. Who has not a heart to give to this glorious cause—aye, and a hand too? Who would not labour when every blow he strikes brings a diamond from the mine? If there is a poor, lost wanderer here, who once had friends, but has them no more—friends who turn from him with loathing—if there be a man here who once moved in the higher walks of life, but

who has fallen from the rank that he occupied, come up now and sign the pledge, and you shall again have friends, rank, and salvation. Here thousands of bounding hearts will greet you as a brother. Come up now, and sign the pledge. The speaker paused, and almost instantly, while the house resounded with loud applause, our strapping hero was seen leaping on his price; and he stopped not till he saw his name affixed to the pledge.

In answer to a call of those around him, the now recast ascended the platform—told in a few words a little of his story.—He had moved in a respectable station in society—had been abroad—had seen the Hottentot in his hut, and the South Sea Islander in his canoe—had visited various countries, and been through many perilous and trying scenes. But worst of all, he had been for long, long years, a degraded drunkard, and my salvation, said he, I owe to your boy." He spoke to me words of kindness. He told me of this Society and of this meeting. He was the recruiting officer that brought me this night to enlist in the Cold Water Army, and wherever I may go, however tempest-tost, I will never forget the solemn vow which I have taken this night. And he set down with a full heart, almost bursting with emotion, while on all sides the tears glistened on many an eye, and deep sympathy glowed in many a heart. Never had a more hopeful case been before that audience. All saw that though a drunkard, there was an honest, noble soul within him, and the stamp of a benevolent mind was on his face, marred, as it was, with the iron heel of the "monster."—He had been tossed on many a sea, but he had come into a safe harbour now. He had been at the mercy of many a storm, before him now was the prospect of sunshine and calm.

When that audience dispersed, provision was made to sustain and encourage the heavy made man in the course which he resolved to adopt. He became an inmate of the asylum for reformed inebriates, under the care of the Washingtonians.

Here he was strengthened and encouraged in the course which he had pledged himself to pursue. He was clothed and supplied by benevolent hands, and in a little time his habits of sobriety had become so fixed that he felt he could rely in a great measure upon himself, and *was safe*. We go a little further on in his history, and we find him again under very interesting and solemn circumstances—you see him in the house of God. You notice his attentive countenance, up-turned, as he listens, with a tearful eye, to the theme of mercy that dwells upon the lips of the living preacher.

"I have presented before you in this discourse," said the minister, "the mercy of Him, who though he was rich, became poor that we, through his poverty, might become rich. I have brought to your view to-day, the Saviour as he is revealed in the gospel—able, willing, and waiting to save. There may be those in this house who may have gone far on in the ways of iniquity and folly—who may have squandered the best energies of mind and body in vain and vicious pursuits. But hear me now, as I would plead with you as one friend pleads with another. If you are ready here to abandon all your false and wicked ways, and *this very hour* to humble yourselves before God—if you are ready now to make the publican's prayer, and say from all your hearts—*God be merciful to me a sinner!*—If you, with the Prodigal son can say—*I will arise and go to my Father!*" then we are ready to say, there is mercy for you, even though you think there is no mercy for yourselves. Here, then, in this very temple, put that high resolve in practical execution. Now while we go to the throne of grace in prayer, make that prayer your own, and let it be the prayer that shall come up from your heart every day of your life, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

From about that period there was a manifest change in the