

\$7.11; London, \$69; Kincardine, \$34; South Maitland, \$12; St. Catharines, \$35; Belleville, \$30.37; Paris, \$10; Montreal Emmanuel, \$206.25; New Durham, \$18.43; Noel, N. S., \$15.52; Debt Fund, St. John, N. B., \$5; Debt Fund, D. H. Burpee, \$5.

B. W. ROBERTSON, *Treasurer.*

## TWENTY YEARS AGO!

BY EARNEST GILMORE.

In the dear old library at home I used to sing that sweet, quaint song, thinking at the time that it surely belonged to old people, but I have changed my mind since then. I can say it now—"twenty years ago"—and still I am young. Twenty years ago, and I, a happy young girl, rode very frequently along a beautiful country road to my father's mill and farmlands. He, my father, was in business in our native town, but he never neglected to make a daily visit to the pretty lands in the suburbs. At that time, while father looked about the mill to see that all moved smoothly, I amused myself playing with a fair, blue-eyed girl of sweet disposition, a daughter of one of the farm-hands. That, remember, was twenty years ago. To-day that fair girl is no more, but in her place is a dissipated, painted woman, a woman who carries long and frequently at the cup? Could twenty years so change a character? Ah! yes; less time than it takes to transform purity and sweetness into disgusting sensuality. To-day a faded, powdered, bold, painted woman walks the streets boldly when sober, scolds and quarrels at home, yes, and fights fiercely, when drunk, who, twenty years ago played about the fair meadows, made daisy-chains, tossed the fragrant hay, laughed, shouted, and smiled, a happy, pure-hearted child. My house-cleaner—a woman who has been in the habit of coming quite frequently to give us house-service—said to me as she busied herself washing the windows:

"I had no dinner for my husband when he came home yesterday."

"No dinner!" said I, knowing her general punctual habits. "No dinner! how was that?"

"Because I was too much afraid to cook it."

I laughed. "Afraid of what?" I questioned,—“of the fire or the dinner?"

"Neither," she answered, "but of the woman from the other part of the house: she was on a spree again, and I dared not step out of the door for wood and water."

"For fear she would invade the castle?" I asked.

"Yes, that was the reason, so I locked myself in. and when my husband came to dinner, he called me a 'big goose.'"

"And no wonder," laughed I, "the idea that such

a great, stout woman as you certainly are should be afraid of a 'wee mite' like your neighbour."

"Well, perhaps, if you could see her and feel her as I have done, you would call her a strong mite. One day lately she came in my back door bringing a glass of liquor. She was drunk, and of course when I refused her request to accept it, she was quite angry, so angry that before I knew what she was about she threw the liquor in my face. She's a regular fighter when she's drunk, I can tell you."

And the fighting, degraded woman was my little-country acquaintance twenty years ago!

Twenty years ago I was attending school at a far-distant seminary. I visited at a beautiful and lovely home occasionally, a home where wealth and love walked hand in hand, where peace and happiness and intellect found an abiding place; to-day, though an only son's dissipation, the stately homestead is in the hands of strangers, the fair and tasteful grounds are trodden by unknown feet, which but for the "cup" would never have found entrance there. The sweet mother who used to reign is resting under the summer flowers beside her two fair daughters. Twenty years ago, in the same city just mentioned, a lovely intellectual family rejoiced in their brave, growing boys and girls; to-day the dear, white-haired father is resting from all his sorrow in his "house not made with hands"; the equally dear and lovely mother is failing rapidly, the sisters are mortified and broken-hearted, the home broken and sorrowful, because the elder brother, the father's hope and sisters' pride, went astray.

Twenty years ago, in that same city, a bright, gifted girl graduated, was soon after married to a handsome, winning man, who loved to tamper with the glass—one of the extremely moderate drinkers; to-day he is an outcast, and she a worn and weary woman, plodding a hard road, working at whatever she can find to do to get bread and clothes for her little flock.

Twenty years ago, in the above-mentioned city, a pretty girl, only daughter of a wealthy gentleman, danced and laughed, and some years later stepped over the threshold into womanhood with bright anticipations; to-day blasted hopes are her portion, heavy eyes and burdened heart make life bitter, oh! so bitter.

Twenty years ago a merry little girl, another only child, sang in sunny glee about a happy fireside; to-day she is a changed and faded woman, her life seems to be existence only. Do you ask why? I answer; because of moderate drinking—first moderate, afterward immoderate.

These are not pen-pictures, not one of them; they are drawn from the lives of my own friends, true, sadly true.—*National Temperance Advocate.*