

Family Weaving.
"Too Late for Me."

MRS. FRANCES W. HARPER, IN THE "DUPLEX."

A hard drinker is reported as having said: "I can't reform, but for God's sake save the boys."

Like Dives in the doops of hell,
I cannot break the fearful spell,
Nor quench the fires I've madly nursed,
Nor cool this dreadful raging thirst.
Take back your pledge, ye come too late!

Ye cannot save me from my fate.
Nor bring me back departed joys,
But ye can try to save the boys.

Ye bid me break my fiery chain
Aside, and be a man again,
When every street with snares is spread,
And nets of sin where'er I tread.
No! I must reap as I did sow—
The seeds of sin bring crops of woe;
But with my latest breath I crave
That ye will try the boys to save.

These blood-shot eyes were once so bright;
This sin-crushed heart so glad and light—
But by the wine-cup's ruddy glow
I traced a path of shame and woe.
A captive to my galling chain,
I've tried to rise, but tried in vain.
The cup allures, and then destroys—
O, from its thralldom save the boys.

Take from your streets those traps of hell,
Into whose gilded snares I fell.
O freemen, from these foul decoys
Arise and vote to save the boys.
O ye who license men to trade
In draughts that charm and then de-grade,
Before ye hear the cry, "Too late!"
O save the boys from my sad fate.

"Am I My Brother's Keeper?"

BY MAUDE MEREDITH.

It was a lovely day in early spring, and young Mrs. Bray was hovering over her tulip beds, and snipping off her rose bushes with all the animation of a true lover of flowers, as, indeed, she was. The sun shone brightly, and a sweet odor of fresh earth and springing grasses dallied by on the soft spring breeze. Suddenly she looked up, pushing back her garden hat, and allowing an ugly pucker to settle on her fair brow.

"I know I ought to go in and cook something, but, dear me! the house is so poky on a pleasant spring day. It's cook, cook, and wash up the dishes, and I just hate the thought of it."

A purple crocus, veined with white, had sprung up in a sly corner, and now caught her eye. "Oh, you little beauty!" she cried, running over and kneeling down beside it. "This is something new; and if there aren't two more buds!"

The frown was all gone now, and the thought of supper gone with it.

An hour later, Mrs. Bray hurried into her pretty little house, tossed her hat and garden gloves into a corner, and began to prepare the seven o'clock dinner. As her husband was a book-keeper in the heart of the city, he could not come home at noon, but carried a cold luncheon instead.

To-night the pantry seemed particularly empty, and the little housewife hurried about, burning her fingers in her haste, and at last, after her husband had waited for some time, setting on a very poor dinner indeed.

As Mr. Bray rose from the table he said, in his usual quiet way: "I wonder if you couldn't fix me up some little thing or other, Frankie, for lunch that would make a change. I've sort of lost my appetite with this spring weather, and yet I get faint if I go all day without eating anything."

"Oh, dear, dear! what can I fix up? I've heard it said the way to a man's heart was through his stomach, and I believe it. I'm sure I don't care what I eat, and I just can't bear to stand stewing over the stove all these pleasant days."

"Perhaps I'd better go to a restaurant," her husband said, thoughtfully, "but I have not gone because I've been saving up the pennies to make the last payment on this place. I mean to put it in your name."

"Oh, goodly! do! I never owned anything in my life, and it would be just too sweet to be able to say 'my house,' wouldn't it?"

"Have you a luncheon ready for me to-morrow, or had I better buy a cheap dinner?" he inquired.

"Let me see," mused his wife, pushing back the tufts of golden hair that were tumbling into her eyes; "there's crackers—and a little cheese left, and some cookies—and—well I guess that is every living thing."

"No," her husband answered, slowly, "I'm sort of tired of cookies and crackers. I've had them every day for a week. I'll get a warm bit somewhere."

"Well, I'm sure I'll be glad if you will," she said, and the matter dropped.

The following day, as Mr. Bray wandered down a side street, looking for that paradox, a clean, cheap restaurant, he stumbled upon one of the clerks, a new man in the house, but a very pleasant fellow.

"What ye lookin' for, Bray?" he asked. "A decent place where a Christian can get a bite? I'll tell you what I've found; just this way a step; follow me."

A turn to the right, a dive down a few stone steps, and they entered a clean, pleasant room, set with small tables, decorated with pots and baskets of growing flowers, and neatly scented with fresh, pinoy-smelling sawdust.

"What kind of a place do you call this, Jim?" Bray asked, seating himself.

"Do you ever take a glass of beer?" Jim asked, motioning a waiter. "Take one! shall I order two glasses?" the man persisted, and Bray nodded reluctantly.

"I do not drink a glass once in two years," he exclaimed. "My mother used to make spruce beer, and I learned to like it, but since coming to the city, I have let such things alone."

"Well, this is not for the beer, you need not drink that," Jim replied, "just wait and see."

Presently a waiter appeared bringing the two glasses of beer, and also a plate of baked beans, one of bread—rye, but very fresh and sweet, two small pats of butter, and two apple tarts. The beans were piping hot, and, taken all in all, the dinner was exceedingly good. Bray rose from the table with quite a different feeling from that usually experienced when he finished his customary lunch of cookies and crackers washed down with a swallow of hydrant water.

"Only five cents!" he exclaimed, "is there not some mistake?"

Jim laughed and shook his head. "Not a shadow of one," he answered. "Of course if you smoke you are expected to buy a cigar or two here at the counter, and most fellows take two or three glasses of beer, some of them a glass of whiskey at fifteen cents, and often more than one, so that is where the profit comes in. Fellows like us, who take the lunch for a single beer, are what they call 'lunch fiends,' but who cares! so long as they make the offer, we've a right to accept, if we choose."

"But I've been told that there were cheap counters where one could get a hot bite without the beer," Bray said.

"Y-es," Jim answered, "there are. Some places you can get a stew for ten cents, but nobody knows what it's made of; then there is the coffee—ugh! bit-cory; for five more, they give you a bit of poor baker's bread and a pat of villainous looking butter, and the big cock-roaches come out and devour the lay-out before you can get it into your mouth; and moreover, these places are none of them clean."

"I'm an entire stranger to restaurants," Bray said, as they separated at the store for their afternoon's work.

The next day as he came out he found Jim waiting for him on the sidewalk, and they drifted, almost unconsciously, to the place they had visited the day before. A murder had been committed, and as the murdered man had held a prominent position, the matter was the subject most talked of by business men that day, and Bray drank his beer and ate his hot pea soup and rye bread almost unconsciously.

After this, as though by common consent, the two men wandered down to the Washington Exchange, the name of the place, for their dinners, and to insure a welcome, bought now and then a small bottle of wine, or a few cigars, the latter going to Jim as soon as the two men were out of the establishment, for Bray did not smoke.

As the weeks went on, one after another of the employes of neighboring firms came in with them, and although they were all poor men, they made quite a jolly crowd, laughing and jesting over their soups, and beans, and stews, and enjoying their dinners much better than did many many a millionaire at his own table.

Of course it was only natural that, in course of time, with so many offering to treat, they should have sampled about everything in the place, and that they should, also, step back, now and then, and have a game of billiards.

Bray noticed that his five-cent lunch had changed into fifteen or twenty cents, and he realized with a start that he often paid twenty-five cents for a lunch there that gave him not a whit more or different food than did that first five cents, while the twenty five cents at a regular restaurant would have bought him a very good, wholesome lunch. But then the "fellows would make a fuss" now if he tried to break away, and a "bite with such a jolly crowd" was, he argued, worth more

than an elaborate dinner eaten in silence without companionship.

Little Mrs. Bray had a beautiful display of flowers that year; her small front yard fairly blazed with them; and the kitchen was, for the greater part of the time, left to take care of itself. When time for the last payment came about, she wondered more than a little that her husband did not present her with the deed of the place, but a sense of delicacy prevented her inquiry.

As for Bray himself, he had not been able to meet the payment, but had paid what he could, and had given a new note for the balance, mentally laboring himself for allowing the dimes to slip through his fingers as he had done, and promising himself to reform from wine and billiards; at least, until the remainder of the indebtedness was paid off.

Facilis est descensus avernæ. We all know how it is. The down grade is always easy, and when the next payment came due there was no money to meet it.

Little Mrs. Bray began to feel the pinch of poverty, and, when it was too late, mistrusted its cause, and tried, with tears and complainings, to remedy the evil.

A few more turns of the wheel of time, and the little house, with its cosy rooms and flower-bordered walks, passed into the hands of the mortgagee, and the family moved into a small rented tenement.

As hope lies always at the bottom of Pandora's box, we may still hope that the foolish husband may drop the bad habits that he contracted so late in life, and that the wife may care first for her family, then, after that, for her own pleasure. Many a home has been redeemed; so, too, may be this one.—*Union Signal.*

Rum's Ruinous Reign

Hack! hack! hack! The dull, uncertain strokes of an unskilled workman's axe reverberated through the white birch grove, through the fiercely whirling snow of a winter's day. Strange, unwonted sight, in a land of boasted civilization! A woman swings the axe! A woman clad in a scant calico dress, ragged shoes, stockings with no bottoms, was essaying with queer little unskilled strokes, to fell the trees near the miserable wreck of a house. She worked as awkwardly as only a woman brought up to indoor work and laboring under the double infliction of pain and weakness can, sometimes stopping to press one hand to her side, and at others to wipe her freezing tears from her blurring sight. When a tree fell she hacked till it was fitted for stove wood. Hack! hack! hack! till her children shouted again and again, "Come, mother, come; you've chopped enough; baby's starving, and we're freezing."

Despite their frenzied cries, despite the cold, despite the mortal anguish only a mother may know, she worked on till the sun went down on the short, dreary, freezing winter day. Then laying down the axe she loaded her frail arms with all they could hold of the seal-like, frozen sticks, and slowly entered the house, well knowing that she would not be able to leave it on the morrow. Here were her babes, her very life, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten—each and every one dear to her noble heart as are your tender ones, favored mother, crouched over the dying fire in the black, cooling stove, bare footed, half-naked, with hunger-pinched faces, and blue, claw-like hands, some were crying vociferously, while some only moaned in low, plaintive tones of cold and hunger.

For two weeks these eleven had subsisted on the milk of one cow, and turnips. The cow had come so short of food as to be fed from their straw beds. After giving the starving children the milk and feeding the dumb giver the last armful of straw in their beds, she build a fire and sat down to warm her frozen feet. First, she took off one thin petticoat and pinned it about the shoulders of the oldest child, and pulling off her ragged shoes and stockings for its feet, sent it off to the wood pile to bring in the wood she had chopped.

The fire burned up bright and warm and the famished children cuddled down beside the stove under their scant bed-covers, and forgot their woes in sleep. Not so with the tired, starving mother. She took a turnip and sat up to scrape it as she warmed her frozen feet. Ere the morning dawned another babe was added to the ten starving beside her.

Think of this true story, mothers, you who have passed the fiery ordeal of motherhood amid the luxuries of warmth, food, clothes, comforts, husband, friends and physicians—think of this frail, starving, frozen woman alone with the rayless midnight and her mortal anguish. Have you forgotten with what grateful avidity you seized a cup of hot tea held by the

hand of ministering friends? Contrast that moment of grateful refreshment with the empty, craving stomach of this long-famished creature, comforted only by the cold, scraped turnip she would have, perhaps, given worlds for a taste of had it not been frozen. Can you not drop a tear over this poor neighbor? My own flow like summer rain as I write.

You will ask where this "brute of a husband," the father of eleven children, was at such a time. Hush! indignant matron! Name not one of the "lords of creation" in such a tone.

I'll whisper it in your ear; be careful your busy tongue reveal not the secret. He was only down to Passadumkeag on a little bit of a spree, lasting a couple of weeks or so! They can drink or let it alone, you know; so we must not say anything about their doing either, lest we get to saying it on the wrong side, and pop over into prohibition. One of that heretical party is all that this good town can tolerate.

Two or three days after the new babe came to the poor woman a neighbor learned and reported her condition. A noble Scot came gallantly to her relief with food, clothes and firewood. The eager, starving children crowding about the hunger-queller could not be fed carefully enough to save them from the reaction consequent upon repletion after famine. Tears flowed so thickly over the cheeks of soney Scotch build, that one poor, naked starveling got just a cake too much, and though the physician was called, its little life went out, a sacrifice to the god Bacchus to whom the nations of earth deem it necessary to sacrifice so many human lives yearly.—*Portland (Me.) Herald.*

Sam Small, the well known evangelist, is editing the "Southern Star," a lively prohibition paper published at Atlanta, Ga. Five cents a year. It is said that the politicians are very much opposed to the new paper (which is being run in the interests of the Third Party), and are getting up a joint stock company to start a non-partisan, prohibition paper, which they hope will crowd Sam Small out. They will not succeed.

The National Temperance Society is publishing a very valuable series of temperance Sunday school lesson leaves this year, prepared by Albert G. Lawson, D.D., which our temperance friends would do well to introduce in their Sunday schools.

The lesson for the last Sunday in June is entitled "Liberty and Love," found in I Corinthians xiii, 1-13; the Golden Text is: "Where I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble." Valuable notes and suggestions are given, besides daily readings, lights on the lesson, an appropriate piece of music, and black-board designs. Four cents a quarto, 50 cents per hundred. Address J. N. Stearns, Publishing Agent 38 Itasca Street, New York.

We desire to call the attention of readers of the CANADA CITIZEN, who are interested in the popular pastime of bicycling, to the advertisement of A. T. Lane of Montreal, which may be found on this page. We have very carefully examined the attractive catalogue published by this firm, and would recommend any one who is contemplating investing in a bicycle to send for a copy of it.

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