

A FENCE OR AN AMBULANCE.

By Joseph Malins.

'Twas a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed,
Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;
But over its terrible edge there had slipped
A duke and full many a peasant;
So the people said something would have to be done,
But their projects did not at all tally.
Some said, "Put a fence round the edge of the cliff;"
Some, "An ambulance down in the valley."
But the cry for the ambulance carried the day,
For it spread through the neighboring city;
A fence may be useful or not, it is true,
But each heart became brimful of pity
For those who slipped over that dangerous cliff;
And the dwellers in niggaway and alley
Gave pounds or gave pence, not to put up a fence,
But an ambulance down in the valley.
For the cliff is all right if you're careful," they said,
And it folks even slip and are dropping,
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much
As the shock down below — when they're stopping."
So day after day as these mishaps occurred,
Quick forth would their rescuers sally,
To pick up the victims who fell off the cliff
With their ambulance down in the valley.
Then an old sage remarked: "It's a marvel to me
That people give far more attention
To repairing results than to stopping the cause,
When they'd much better aim at prevention.
Let us stop at its source all this mischief," cried he,
"Come, neighbors and friends, let us rally;
If the cliff we will fence we might almost dispense
With the ambulance down in the valley."
"Oh, he's a fanatic," the others rejoined,
"Dispense with the ambulance? Never!
He'd dispense with all charities, too, if he could,
No, no, we'll support them forever!
Aren't we picking folks up just as fast as they fall?
And shall this man dictate to us? Shall he?
Why should people of sense stop to put up a fence
While their ambulance works in the valley?"
But a sensible few, who are practical, too,
Will not bear with such nonsense much longer;
They believe that prevention is better than cure,
And their party will soon be the stronger;
Encourage them, then, with your purse, voice and pen,
And (while other philanthropists dally)
They will scorn all pretense and put a stout fence
On the cliff that hangs over the valley.
Better guide well the young than reclaim them when old,
For the voice of true wisdom is calling;
"To rescue the fallen is good, but 'tis best
To prevent other people from falling."
Better close up the source of temptation and crime
Than deliver from dungeon or galley;
Better put a strong fence round the top of the cliff,
Than an ambulance down in the valley.

MODERATE DRINKING.

The deadly fallacy of the moderate drinker — so unreasonably persisted in by the rum victim and preached in the thunder tones of lying greed from two hundred thousand protected pulpits of the traffic — is being exposed now in prominent journals with a vigor commanding heartiest praise. The Press (Independent, Cleveland, O.), under the caption, "One Risk Too Many," speaks as follows of one of the many sad items found in the news dispatches:

Two young people marry and go to housekeeping. About the first thing which they discover is that they don't agree on all matters and that each has some little habit, or fact, that the other never suspected. Sarah, perhaps, is too fond of dress, and Martin has a habit of going out for beer every evening, "rushing the growler, as it is called. There comes a tacit agreement to the effect that Sarah can wear good clothes and Martin have his beer.

You see, Martin is a "moderate, regular drinker," one of the fellows who think they can keep on putting their hand in the fire AND NEVER GET BURNED, and Sarah says:— "Pshaw, Martin is accustomed to his beer and I don't care if he does have it regularly."

The years go along, and with them Martin continues to educate his liver and stomach up to the alcoholic stage. He isn't yet a drunkard.

More years go by, and, it having been ordained from the beginning that alcoholic livers and stomachs require more AND MORE alcohol, Martin's "growler" grows bigger and is more often "rushed" and soon he gets drunk occasionally — then often, then continually.

This stage of regular drinking discourages Sarah. She is getting along toward old age. She has outgrown, perhaps, her love for dress. A divorce would not help her. She is too old to work for her own support. She TRIES DRINK, and pretty soon there are a drunken husband and wife in that house.

One night, when Martin has reached the age of sixty-three years, he goes home drunk and finds his wife in the same condition. Why this sight enrages him no one can tell, but suddenly the demon which he has been educating "regularly" all these years rises within him. Martin roars with rage, seizes his revolver, goes to where the besotted woman crouches in her chair and shoots her in the head. Old Sarah, with blood bubbling from her pierced lips, springs to her feet and rushes round the room, seeking the door. Her husband fires at her again and again, laughs fiendishly as she shrieks, sends more bullets into her and then fires at the ceiling and objects in the room. He even shoots himself in the leg.

Hours later a policeman finds Martin bending over the corpse of his wife, at his back door, and Martin says HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW IT ALL HAPPENED. He probably doesn't. It was happening all through those years when he was drinking moderately, regularly, for he was one of those brave, strong fellows who make a mistake in their own case, in feeling sure that they can drink "moderately." It is not always a mistake. There are men who can drink moderately. There are men who take this risk of hell, and win out. Only, in Martin's case, as in eight cases out of ten, it was a mistake.

Well, the police drag the old man off to jail. He sobers up. Bless you, he doesn't even know, sober as he now is, what he did that night. But circumstances all point to his guilt and he knows, when too late, that he might have done anything while drunk, and, with the electric chair as his future and the bloody corpse of his wife as his past, two objects always to occupy his mental vision during the remainder of life, the old man tears up his sheet and hangs himself to the door knob of his prison cell.

The newspapers say it was a horrible suicide.

IT WASN'T

"The jail guards had been keeping a close watch on Martin Lynch because he had threatened violence to himself."

Why? Simply because the law was greedy to take his life, for he had made the mistake of thinking he

was strong enough to drink moderately, because he took, in early life, the risk of some time becoming a demon who would butcher a woman, the risk taken by thousands of other young men every day.

This is not a temperance lecture. It is just an ordinary story of two young people who started in married life together. Married life is always full of risks. It is full of chances to quarrel. It is full of obligations to condone and forgive and to make mutual self-sacrifice. Look at all these natural and unavoidable risks from a business standpoint purely, and then consider if you want to ADD TO THEM the risk of "moderate drinking" taken by Martin Lynch, the uxoricide, who, at 63 years of age, found that the best thing left in life was a chance to hang himself.—The New Voice.

THE CANTEN QUESTION.

In view of the discussion over liquor selling in military canteens, a good deal of interest attaches to certain statements made by Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces. In his forty-one years in India, and which reads as follows:

"My name appeared in the Jubilee 'Gazette,' 1887, as having been given the Grand Cross of the Indian Empire, but what I valued still more was the acceptance by the Government of India of my strong recommendation for the establishment of a club or institute in every British regiment and battery in India. In urging that this measure should be favorably considered, I had said that the British army in India could have no better or more generally beneficial memorial of the Queen's Jubilee than the abolition of that relic of barbarism, the canteen, and its supersession by an institute in which the soldier would have under the same roof a reading-room, recreation room, and a decently managed refreshment room.

"Lord Dufferin's Government met my views in the most liberal spirit, and, with the sanction of Lord Cross, 'The Regimental Institute' became a recognized establishment, a fact which my colleagues in council referred to as a second jubilee honor for me!

"At a time when nearly every soldier could read and write, and when we hoped to attract to the army men of a better stamp and more respectable antecedents than those of which it was composed in 'the good old days,' it appeared to me a humiliating anachronism that the degrading system of the canteen should still prevail, and that it was impossible for any man to retain his self-respect if he were driven to take his glass of beer under the rules by which regimental canteens were governed. I believed, too, that the more the status of the rank and file could be raised, and the greater the efforts made to provide them with rational recreation and occupation in their leisure hours, the less there would be of drunkenness, and consequently of crime, the less immorality and the greater the number of efficient soldiers in the army.

"Funds having been granted, a scheme was drawn up for the erection of buildings and for the management of the institutes. Canteens were reduced in size, and such attractions as musical instruments were removed to the recreation rooms; the name 'liquor bar' was substituted for that of canteen, and, that there should be no excuse for frequenting the 'liquor bar,' I authorized a moderate and limited amount of beer to be served, if required, with the men's suppers in the refreshment room—an arrangement which has been followed by the happiest results.

"At first it was thought these changes would cause a great falling off in regimental funds, but experience has proved the reverse. With good management, the profits from the coffee-shop and the soda-water manufactory far exceed those to be derived from the canteen, and this without permitting any one outside the regiment to purchase from the coffee-shop, and without interfering at all with local tradesmen."

OUR DUTY.

The importance of the present crisis in the temperance cause and the duty of Christian citizens in relation thereto, was forcibly set out by Rev.

Dr. Carman in his address to the Toronto Conference of the Methodist Church on the 5th inst. His able statement of the situation and his stirring appeal for united action are reported as follows in the Toronto Globe:—

"He said that in this matter he believed the present to be no time for looking back. They could not at the present juncture follow the example of Lot's wife, and if they did there was a danger that they would not be turned into as good a thing as a pillar of salt. This was no time to make any reflections or to look round for faults, but it was the time to look for the straight line of duty ahead and to follow it with faith in God. It was sometimes said as a boast that the temperance sentiment in the country had declined. (Cries of "No.") It was very easy to say "No," but when he looked at what the Government had done with the temperance question and how the temperance people had been teased by it, he was not so sure but that here and there some people had fallen out of the ranks. In view of that it was the duty of prohibitionists to stand together as men, to be strenuous men in the cause. To do this they must put down the little considerations and the carpings and objections to small matters. Degenerate Party Politics.

"He mourned over some of the developments of party politics. He did not wish to say that the existence of parties was not necessary to the good government of the country, but when parties operated to make noble men mean, grand men weak, when good-living men, men pure in their private relations and private life, when party politics exerted an influence on them which degraded them and degraded their country, then it was time that a pretty sharp eye should be kept on party politics. (Cheers.) The entire situation, he thought, could be summed up in three words. The question in our Legislature was "Caucus against Conscience," and, alas, caucus won.

"Men in that Legislature went back on their own statements and their own convictions, because the caucus ordained that they should. The forces that permitted the intelligence and conscience of a man to be taken away from him at the cry of a party caucus had to be driven from this country. The moral energy of the people had to be awakened, and it was the duty of the members of the conference to work in the quiet of their own church services in lifting the people to a realization of the problem before them.

"The speaker urged that every effort should be made to bring out the temperance vote in December. "Let you and I," he said, show one-half of the zeal for the Kingdom of God that the political parties did for themselves in the last election, and we will secure the 250,000 votes we want and expect. Is not the Kingdom of God a more worthy object than the success of a political party? Don't let the total be one vote fewer than 100,000. If you put up 200,000 votes no government will dare despise or deny it."

CHRISTIANITY AND THE Grog-SHOP.

"We claim to be Christians, and daily say (and call it praying): 'Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' and then go to work deliberately and systematically to establish by law a system which, if the Bible be true, educates and prepares men for the regions of despair where the fire is not quenched." Christianity and the grog-shop are diametrically opposed to each other, and no millennium morn will ever dawn on this sin-cursed and whisky-soaked world until all drunkard manufactories are swept from existence. When we can harness the pulpit and ballot box together, in a holy crusade against the rum traffic, we may reasonably look for the dawn of the day when there will be nothing to hurt or destroy in all lands and on all mountains. The churches and the different temperance organizations of the land among which the women occupy a prominent position, are the sources from whence help must come in our contest with this bitter enemy of God and humanity.—The Hon. Hiram Price, Washington.