

# THE RED, RED WINE:

A TEMPERANCE STORY.

THE REV. J. JACKSON WRAY'S LAST STORY.

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## CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

The old man's visit on the evening I have referred to, when Tom Smart's tears were being kissed away by his loyal and loving little daughter, was doubly welcome. They resolved themselves at once into a committee of three, on the grand question of finding work for 'feyther.'

'I hev it!' said old Aaron, at last, slapping his hand upon his knee triumphantly, 'we'll try Mr. Allamore again, at the new railway.'

'It's nut a bit o' use,' said Tom, shaking his head dolefully. 'Ah've been tiv 'im an' asked him ower an' agean te tak' me on, but he says he weean't; an' when he says he weean't; he weean't; that's the soort o' chap Maister Allamore is.'

'Yes, you've asked him,' said Aaron, whose voice was full of hope, 'but Kitty hezn't asked him, an' I'm goin' to pin my faith to Kitty, bless her, an' the kind Providence of God.'

Smart still shook his head. What could a bairn like Kitty do? But if Aaron pinned his faith to Kitty, that trustful and loving little maiden pinned her faith to 'gran'feyther.'

'If gran'feyther'll go wi' ma,' she said, 'ah'll go an' ax 'm. He weean't hurt ma, will he?'

Kitty's voice, and the shade of anxiety on her bonnie face, betrayed a little fear.

'Hu't thoo?' said Aaron. 'Mah poor bairn! Kitty, my sweetheart, thoo'l tek Allamore's heart by storm. We'll go an' see him te-morrow mornin'.'

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Mr. Allamore, the contractor, having paid his early morning visit to 'the works,' which at that time described a series of heavy chalk cuttings through the wold hills, was just entering his house on the Lonsdale Road when he was accosted by a little girl. At first he thought it was a tiny old woman that stood before him, so prematurely had care and hardship set their marks upon her. She was accompanied by old Aaron Brigham, who left her to tell her own story, and wisely so, while he stood a little behind, ready to speak if he was appealed to.

'If yo' please, sir, will yo' let me speak to yo'?'

Kitty spoke with 'bated breath,' making a couple of low curtsies to the 'great railway man,' by far the greatest man that had ever risen on her small horizon.

Mr. Allamore rapidly concluded that he had to do with a little tramp, and was about to dismiss her with a word, when he found himself looking curiously into a pair of speaking eyes that held him, and would not let him go.

'Why, why. Yes, my small lassie,' he said. 'What is it you want to say to me?' While he spoke he felt that he should have to do it whatever the request might be, for the angel in that face could never be said Nay, least of all from Mr. Allamore, who had great reverence for 'the least of these.'

'If yo' please, sir, will yo' give feyther some work on t' new railway? He can't get nowt te do, an' I havn't any bred fo' t' chilter.'

'Why who is your feyther? What's your name?' asked Mr. Allamore, kindly. He was intensely touched with the assumption of responsibility for the children's bread.

Poor Kitty drooped her head upon her breast as she gave her answer. She knew, alas! too well in what bad estimate the name was held. 'Feyther's Tom Smart, sir.'

Mr. Allamore shook his head; but before he could open his lips to speak accordingly, Kitty had laid her small fingers on his arm, had lifted her speaking face to his, and pleaded, in a voice that had in it an anxiety too deep for tears—

'Feyther's tryin' so hard to be better, sir.

He hezn't been drinkin' for iver so long. Hez he, gran'feyther?'

'Hallo, Aaron, is that you? Why, you are not this little woman's grandfather, are you?'

'Nut be blood, I isn't; but I is by love an' by the Providence o' God. It's a comfort to the lahtle lassie to call me gran'feyther; an' she gets sitch a poor share o' comforts a' ony sort, that she may call me all t' relations in t' Prayer-book if it'll do her ony good. I might as well admit it noo, as well as efter, that she's my lahtle sweetheart. God bless her. I love her dearly.'

The glow and the smile that suddenly kindled in Kitty's face as she put her small, rough, swollen hand into the old man's palm was such an eloquent response that Mr. Allamore, though not used to the melting mood, felt his eyes dimming as he said,

'And she loves you, Aaron, with a love that'll last till death.'

'Ay, and longer!' said Aaron Brigham; then, turning 'an aside' for the contractor's private ear, he said, 'She's a jewel, an' a gem, an' a d'mond, sir, and so you'd say if you knew all I knoa. She's Tom Smart's one hope under God. I hope you'll listen to her.'

'Well, but what about Smart? Do you honestly think there's any chance of his reform?'

'Yes,' said the old man. 'If he hez a fair chance, an' if good folks like you'll help him against hisself, I think he may be saved even yet. That lahtle lassie of his,—pointing to the 'little mother' by his side,—hez melted his heart for him, an' he's under sitch good feelin' noo, that I should be thankful if yo'd give him a chance.'

'But I thought Smart was employed by Farmer Barrass. Wouldn't it be better for him to take him on again?'

'If yo' please, sir,' put in the anxious Kitty, 'Farmer Barrass said he didn't want feyther ony mair; an' I wasn't sorry, 'cos he had to go by sae many public-hooses to get there, that—that—O—I wish there wasn't one i' all Netherborough, that I do!'

'If you'll let feyther work up' your railway,' continued Kitty, opening her big, round eyes in prospective wonderment of relief, 'he wouldn't ha' to pass mair than one public-hoose, an' he could run past the door and ha' done wi' it! Please, sir, tek feyther on, else what shall I do to get 'm an' the childer bread?' Gran'feyther, come an' help me!'

'Nay, nay, no need of that, my dear. I'll give your father work, little maiden. Let him come as soon as he likes; and, look here, there's half-a-crown for you to get the children something good.' So saying, he laid his hand on the child's head, bade God bless her, and turned hastily away.

Aaron Brigham followed him.

'Excuse me, sir,' he said, 'I should like another word wi' yo'. Me an' Kitty's goin' to tek it i' turns to bring her feyther an' fetch him ivery day, that is if yo' don't see ony objection. And if yo' wadn't mind—'

'You would like me to keep an eye on him myself. To be sure I will, Aaron. I hope it will be the turning point of his life. That child of his is a perfect treasure.'

'Yes,' replied Aaron, 'I think she is a fulfilment o' the Lord's prophecy, "A little child shall lead them." At ony rate, Kitty's leadin' her feyther, nut from drink only, but to Jesus Hisself. O, Mr. Allamore, if it wasn't for t' public-hooses, there wad be a chance of heaven eaven for poor, lost Tom Smart! But I see sadly frightened they'll suck him in.'

Kitty's sky was blue that day, from horizon up to zenith.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

When Kitty arrived at home, she found her father absent, and for a moment her heart sank within her. Her little sister, however, was able to assure her that Mr. Norwood

Hayes had sent for feyther, to help to store a load of hay that had come to Throstle's Nest, and that feyther would be back soon. So our little, much-encumbered Martha, and her small lieutenant, made the bare house as tidy as circumstances would allow, and the half-crown was changed to provide father with a little relish when he should come home to tea. This, however, did not happen till the evening began to darken, for Alice Hayes had found something else for him to do, and, ultimately, when he did come, and found a cheery fire, and a fresh loaf and a savoury bloater, and some fragrant tea in the spoutless tea-pot, he was overwhelmed with astonishment and delight. And so was Kitty when feyther kissed her, and put into her hands a whole half-crown, which he had received in liberal payment for the work he had done at Throstle's Nest.

After tea, the chilter were put to bed, and the small lieutenant went along with them. Kitty and her father were alone. So she told him all that had happened in the interview with Mr. Allamore. Tom was silent. He heaved a great sigh, and looking at his little lassie, whom he valued now at something near her worth, he said,

'Kitty, my lass, we mun pray.'

I do not think that Tom was suggesting actual prayer there and then. He was impressed with the greatness and the value of the opportunity that had come to him by the kindness of Mr. Allamore, and he was afraid of his own weakness. So he had suggested that they must ask help from God.

But Kitty was practical. So there and then she arose from the little stool on which she had been sitting, waited till her father rose, too, and then knelt by his side, her small hand still lying in his willing palm.

'Say summat, Kitty,' said Tom, who was not learned to devotion.

Said Kitty, 'Jesus, good Jesus, you does help poor little Kitty. Help poor feyther an' all. Do, please! Do! do! do!'

And Tom Smart said, 'Amen!' as well as he could for the choking in his throat, and I don't think he could have said anything better. The angels said of him, 'Behold, he prays!'

And Tom Smart was helped. He went to 'The Works' on the morrow. Mr. Allamore spoke to him kindly, and put him on a job.

Nobody was more highly delighted at the change which had come to Tommy Smart than was Mr. Norwood Hayes. In the course of a conversation with Walter Bardsley, his son-in-law elect, he said: 'By the way, I'm glad to see that man Smart manages to keep himself sober. Well, I'm glad of it. He's a very decent fellow when he keeps away from the drink. Now that's a case,' he added, laying his hand on the arm of the young man, 'where teetotalism is really a good thing. You will do me the justice to own, Walter, that I've never taken up a position in antagonism to total abstinence. For those who need it, it is the most splendid thing in the world, and Tom Smart could not possibly have done a wiser thing except, indeed, to give his heart to God, than to join the Temperance ranks. But, for those who do not need it, say what you like, Walter, it is the abnegation of self-rule. It is an acknowledgment of the total absence of backbone. The power to say, "I will" is one of the most royal gifts of God; and when it comes to this, that you've got to sign your name in a book, or to be afraid to touch a thing lest it becomes your master—well, I call it a cowardly confession of weakness; and the man that has to do it is a mere mollusca, a gelatinous creature that can't stand without leaning, and can't walk without wobbling. Now let me put it this way, Walter, my boy, just for you to look at it fairly. Total Abstinence is a good thing for Tom Smart, therefore total abstinence is a good thing for—Norwood Hayes.'

(To be continued.)