



Temperance Department.

THE LIFE PROMISE.

BY MARY R. BALDWIN.

It was one of summer's most sultry days and in a little parlor, where a middle-aged lady sat with a young girl, the air seemed almost stifling. The two were engaged in an earnest conversation, and did not seem to notice the voice of a coming storm, in the deep, long sound of thunder.

"Oh! my child," the lady was saying "I fear for your future with him. A first intoxication is a long step in a downward way. I promised your mother that I would watch over you—promised her at the very last."

"And I have promised Henry that I would be true to him through everything. I must keep my promise," the girl answered, with glowing face.

"My poor child, you have not considered, I am sure, what the being true may require of you. There may be nights of watching for an unsteady step; there may be endurance of neglect, of injustice, of cruelty, even from this one you have promised to stand by through all. There may be hours when your soul will abhor the bond between you, moments when you pray to be released from it."

The young girl, leaning her head upon her hand, and looking out upon the earth, that seemed to wait sullenly for the bursting storm, turned and cried:

"Oh, a! you do not know Henry! you can see how noble and true he is."

The storm broke the silence, and in this earnest plea of the enthusiastic girl, who had promised to give her life into the keeping of the handsome, attractive young man, who, loving the sweet, trusting maiden, loved also his cups.

Aunt Esther said no more upon the subject to her niece. Through that afternoon's storm she gathered the timid girl to herself, and her soul had its deep, long agony, as it prefigured through the raging of the elements a storm that sooner or later, she felt, would burst upon her precious charge when there could be for her no longer an earthly protector.

To the gentle Alice, Aunt Esther had been a mother since the real mother had died. She loved the self-sacrificing auntie dearly, but she felt she worshipped Henry, and so when he asked her to leave this tried love for a new one, her heart promised more even than her voice.

She went forth at last with a man to whom she had promised to cleave until death, and Aunt Esther's prayers, as well as fears, followed. The letters that came from the young bride were full of joy and hopes and Aunt Esther was beginning to feel that, her fears might have been groundless; when one day, after a baby had come to the young wife, she received a letter that caused her to renew her old forebodings.

But what could she do now? The time was past for warnings; the time had come when she must be the comforter. With letters full of love and hope, accompanied by parcels for the baby, she answered the pathetic letters of the wife over whom the storm had burst.

"Dear, dear child! if I could only take her to myself and shield her! But, Lord! who can shield a wife from a husband who is a drunkard?"

Thus the living soul agonized for the child who seemed lost to her as to happiness.

Months after, when the autumn was sighing itself to sleep, on one of its most lovely nights, Aunt Esther was startled by the appearance of Alice, with her child in her arms. "I have come, auntie, I can never go back!" a thrill of joy shot through the soul of the woman who had been so long bereaved of her precious charge. And the first thought—she has come to stay with me always—took possession of her senses.

She gathered the two to herself as she had once taken one to her heart. There was the

long cry, the explanations of the young wife: "I can not go back—Henry has forgotten the old love; he is in love with liquor now! He does not seem to care for the baby, nor for me!"

"But you, my child, you promised to cleave to him through until death! That was an awful promise to make, but you made it child! You must keep it. If your husband had been afflicted with some terrible disease of the body, you would have clung to him. Now that his soul is diseased, is your duty any the less? If he has not kept his promise, you must keep yours?" Thus Aunt Esther's quick following thought of right, took the place of love's desires.

Aunt Esther took the two back to their home, the mother seeming almost as helpless as the baby. They found the husband and father about to start in quest of his wife and child; for he had been shocked into a sober, repentant mood.

Aunt Esther said to herself, "Nothing remains for me but to stay and help the poor stricken child to keep her promise."

From that moment she consecrated her desires and efforts to this one great purpose.

Day by day she gave lessons of trust, and patience, and hope, when there seemed no hope in the case.

The sweet, pathetic face of the wife, as it was lifted to hers, bore so often the expression of "How long can this be borne?" that the loving heart of the watcher came near breaking at sight of the soul-burden of its darling; still she never counselled anything but the strictest fulfilment of the promise. And what came of all this sacrifice for so unworthy a subject? I hear one of the world's people ask.

I do not think Aunt Esther expected any sudden and remarkable results for the man who seemed given over to his drink. She had always held firmly to the belief that there was really no help for a drunkard but through Christ; but her teaching had been in the interest of simple right; she had long felt that women as a whole were strangely recreant to their marriage vows: "Until death," meant with her a literal truth.

But I hear the voice again from the world that clamors for answer. "What came of all this sacrifice?" I answer, wonderful results! The wife became an almost transformed being, under the influence of her devotion. Duty; the husband, catching a reflection of this pure light that covered her as with a garment, was forced to a change.

Do not understand me to say that a reformation with him was a sudden and complete thing.

No—there were strong crying and tears, many blackslidings, much discouragement; but I can say that after a life of fighting the tempted, struggling soul went away from life's temptations with a firm hope of an immortality awaiting one who has conquered through Christ. Was not such a result worthy of the sacrifice?—*Church and Home.*

WHY JEM SMITH TURNED TEETOTALER.

There was a group of men standing before a bar drinking in a public-house in Salford, Lancashire. It was a festive time, in which a great number of men had plenty of leisure to indulge in intoxication. They were deep in conversation also, admiring a sparkling glass of beer which one of the men held up before their eyes, remarking what good stuff was kept at that establishment. How it glistened in the eyes, as the bubbles arose to the top; it helped on their appetite to have glass after glass, until their heads were swimming round. Manhood had gone from them. A child's birthday party was being held; the publican's child was twelve months old. What rejoicing there was amongst the children! They seemed so happy their voices mingling together. Care was unknown.

"Jem," says the landlady, as she came into the bar carrying a young child, "what do you think of my pet; is she not pretty?" showing a chubby, round-faced child, decked with ribbons, which were attached to the beautiful clothes it had on. What admiring looks they gave, as they gazed upon its innocent face! All love of their own children had vanished; their thoughts were not at home. They had need to be, for their children were crying for bread. To play with their little ones was a misery to their wives and families; it was so with Jem Smith's wife, who was waiting at home before the fire, which was very near out, be-

cause there was no more coal. Hour by hour passed away, but no husband came to gladden the desolate hearts of the wife and forgotten children. She was weary, tears streaming down her careworn cheeks. She was thinking when she was a girl how happy her life was, with a good home in the country, where the birds sent their shrill notes up to the blue skies. But now, what a contrast!—living in a garret, with the windows patched up with brown paper!—the room destitute of furniture—no bed, but an old crib, to lie down upon at nights.

A neighboring clock struck the hour of six as Mrs. Smith wended her footsteps towards where her husband was, trembling at the reception she would meet with. She could hear the merry prattle of the children whilst standing outside, being afraid to go in; but at last, with a panting heart, she entered. There was her husband, with the landlady and child. He was saying, "What a fine child!" when his wife, with his child, came in. A frown passed over his face, and he was going to strike her; but all at once, his child, with its little hands, touched the publican's baby, quite the natural instinct of all sweet babes. There was disdain pictured on the countenance of the landlady when she saw what the poor innocent child of the drunkard was doing. She said, "Take that nasty dirty thing away!" What a pain shot through poor Mrs. Smith's heart! Picture the mother's thoughts, as she hugged the dear child to her breast. There was parental love developed. Jem, as he heard these words, was almost sobered. Oh, how it awakened his better feelings lying dormant! It seemed that, all at once, the scales upon his eyes fell off. He looked at his wife, and said, "She calls my child a dirty child, and well she may." Turning round to the landlady, he continued, "I have helped you to deck your child, whilst my wife and children were starving. I will, by the help of God, never touch, taste, or handle strong drink again." He moved to go.

What a mistake the landlady saw she had made! She wanted him to excuse her, but all to no purpose, for the bolt had shot home to Jem's heart. He saw how foolish he had been in letting his dear wife and children starve, whilst he was seeing to the comforts of the publican. When they arrived at home, he and his wife went down upon their bended knees; how earnestly he prayed to God to give him strength to sign the pledge and to keep it. Next day he did so—his fetters were broken, and he became free! A few months passed away. What a change it made with them! They became respectable, removing into a better home. Strife is unknown now; bright smiles beam on their faces. All is peace, for they are rejoicing in the Saviour's love, and are travelling to that better world above, where all is peace, contentment, and joy.

Dear reader, the moral is plain. If you are spending your earnings in drink instead of making your home comfortable, ask yourself the question—Is it not better for me to clothe my dear wife and children than the publican's? If you want it to be so, sign the pledge, and this true tale, written from life, will not be in vain.—*G. Lowe in British Workman.*

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE?

How often this question is asked by men accustomed to the use of intoxicating drinks! Suppose we put the question in a more practical way? Will you take ten cents' worth of poison? Will you take a pain in the head? Will you take a rush of blood to the heart? Will you take a stab at the lungs? Will you take a blister on the mucous membrane? Will you take a nauseating sickness of the stomach? Will you take a redness of eyes or black eyes? Will you take a tint of red for your nose? Will you take an offensive breath? Will you take a touch of *delirium tremens*? Suppose we change the question a little. Will you take something to drink when you are not dry? Will you take something to drink which will not quench your thirst when you are dry? Will you take something to drink which will make you more thirsty than you were before you drank it? There would be some sense in asking a man out at the elbows to take a coat, or in asking a bareheaded man to take a hat, or in asking a shoeless man to take a pair of boots, or in asking a hungry man to take something to eat; but it is a piece of insane absurdity to ask a man to take something to drink—that will not quench his thirst. Why should

he take something? Will it make him stronger, wiser, better? No; a thousand times no! It will make him weaker; it will make him idiotic and base. What does he take if he accepts the imitation? He takes an "enemy into his mouth which steals away his brains." He takes a poison into his stomach which disturbs digestion. Could he make a telescope of the glass which he puts to his mouth, and look into the future, what would he see? He would see in the distance, not far away, a man clothed in rags, and covered with the blotches of drunkenness. He would see a man deserted by his friends, and distrusted by all his kindred. He would see a wife with a sad face and a broken heart, and children growing up in ignorance and vice. He would see the poorhouse, the penitentiary, the gallows, and the graveyard within easy approach. Take the pledge, and keep it.—*National Temperance Orator.*

BRICKS V. BEER.

At a meeting of the abstaining mayors in March last, at the Guildhall, presided over by the Lord Mayor of London, the Mayor of Birmingham (W. White, Esq.) said:—

"I can find you a company of a few hundred men who because, to use their own expression, they had learned to 'knock off the fourpenny' (that is the favorite drink in Birmingham), have managed to save something like £14,000, and put it in a savings fund with which I am associated. I know also that they have as much invested in a building society—altogether pretty nearly £30,000—saved by 2000 men who have learned the very great blessing of a sober life. What a multitude of little homes I could take you to and there show you the fruits of temperance. I think of one. Twenty-five years ago I was speaking in one of our mining districts ten miles from Birmingham. It was a crowded meeting in a little inconvenient Methodist chapel. The place was so brimful of people that some of the congregation occupied the pulpit stairs. A great miner in his woollen garb was standing close by me as I occupied the pulpit and gave a temperance address. I began to speak, among other subjects, of how much ale drunk would pay for a yard of land. I enlarged a little upon it, and tried to make it as simple as possible to the audience. By-and-by this miner, who sat with his wife upon the pulpit stairs, began to puff very loudly, and almost shook me out of my shoes with a loud thump on the side of the pulpit, which made the whole fabric crack and tremble, and he shouted, 'Ah! what is that, gaffer? say it again, gaffer. That is the best bit I ever heard in my life. Say it over again, gaffer!' So I had to go through the little arithmetical sum again, and to explain how soon, by giving up intoxicating drinks, how soon by knocking off the 'fourpenny,' a man might possess himself of a piece of land, how he might build a house upon it, and so forth; and the man said, 'Halloo! see if I don't take that little bit of advice.' 'Not you, Jim,' said a man in the audience; 'you like to lush too well for that.' 'Now, lads, see if I don't do it,' said the first man; and again he gave a thump on the pulpit, with such tremendous force that I was afraid for my own safety. The man went home after he had signed the pledge. Three years after that I visited the place again, and I was invited to have a meal in that man's house. He had persuaded a neighbor to join him, and together they had built on a piece of land two neat little houses through the instrumentality of a building society, and that with us means being genteel—a parlour in front, and a kitchen behind. This man had his house furnished, he had a row of books on the shelf, he had the china in a corner cupboard, and every comfort that a working man could reasonably expect to have, and that with three years' exertions and perseverance in the total abstinence principles and practice."—*British Workman.*

THOMAS CARLYLE's temperance appeal to the "free and independent" voter long since became famous. He said—"No one oppresses thee, O free and independent franchiser; but does not this stupid pewter pot oppress thee? No son of Adam can bid thee come or go, but the absurd pot of heavy wet, this can and does! Thou hast the thrall, not of Cedric the Saxon, but of thy own brutal appetites and this scoured dish of liquor, and thou pratest of thy liberty! Thou entire blockhead!"