

which we did not get off for some days during which we visited some friends at the nearest town where we prolonged our bacchanalian festivities, putting in a season of mirth and riot that would have been no discredit to the modern Damon and Pythias, whom Burns depicts as full of brotherly love and whiskey as Tam the farmer, and Souter Johnnie. But our spree, though not so protracted as theirs, was more deadly in its results. We saw our friend off to the west in a condition far from sober or fit for traveling, and then returned to the nearest hotel to wait for the down train. A number of the choice spirits from N—— had joined us, and in the midst of our glee we heard the whistle of the locomotive. Down we rushed and scrambled on board as the cars were moving off. When we had collected our breath and looked around, we discovered that my friend was missing. But this gave us no uneasiness, as it was no uncommon occurrence for one or more of our number to be left behind on such an occasion. That night I slept long and soundly till late in the morning. During the forenoon I walked up to my friend's house to see him, for I knew he would be down on the morning train. When I inquired for him his mother told me he had not returned to me, and asked why he had not come with me? I told her how it happened, and rose to go when the bell was loudly rung. She ran to answer it. A breathless messenger, pale and almost speechless, held out a sealed telegram. She motioned to me to take it from him, seeming to know there must be unwelcome tidings that caused him to make such haste. It was from the town we had been at. Trembling I sank into a chair unable to communicate the dreadful contents that must pierce that fond mother's heart. By this time her three daughters had come in, to the nearest of whom I handed the terrible news for her to read. A loud shriek and she fell into my arms in a fit. No questions were asked, they instinctively knew that a fatal catastrophe had overtaken their only brother and son, and the room was filled with wailings for poor Frank, whom they should never see again.

"Your son Francis was killed by falling from the bridge between here and N——. His body was found this morning."

So read the message of death. In a moment I was thoroughly sober, and did everything in my power to soothe the suffering ladies, who needed a better consoler than I could be. Soon kind friends came to show their sympathy for them in their distress, and I was left to my own sad reflections, which were in no way alleviated by the sounds of sorrow from the bereft relatives of my deceased friend. Could I hear those wailings and answer that I was in no way responsible for their ills? Guilty, I slunk from that house feeling that I could not wash my hands and say I was clear of his blood. I did not dare to stay till that mangled corpse was brought home. Was not his blood crying to me from the ground? I had failed to be my brother's keeper. I had not kept myself. I felt myself on the crumbling verge of a fiery volcano, yawning to devour me. Retiring to my room at the hotel, I locked the door, and falling on my knees I prayed to God to take away my vile appetite and restore me

to my former condition of sobriety I had lost in my youth.

The funeral of my friend's remains was attended by a vast number of people from miles around. The awful suddenness of his death, together with the high esteem he was held in combined to make his death a public bereavement. The whole town and vicinity were affected by it. I had been battling with my desire for the deadly poison which almost overcame my stern determination never again to taste "that divine spring of woes unnumbered." My dismay was great when the aroma of port wine, old and very fine, filled the house of death with its fragrance, so that I had to rush out into the open air to avoid being recaptured by the enemy of my temporal and eternal happiness. What madness to bring the tempter into the home he had robbed of a beloved member! Ah ye simple ones, why will ye love simplicity and hate wisdom? How subtle is the influence of the vinous monarch who smites with one hand and soothes with the other, who is at once the bane of happiness and the antidote of woe, who first lacerates bereaved hearts and then soothes them with the false consolation that seems like the balm of Gilead to their wounded spirits! I sat down on a seat in the garden to compose myself for the struggle. My thoughts fled across the bourne whence cometh no returning traveller. Imagination depicted six wan spectres waving their shadowy hands across an awful abyss warning me to avoid meeting them in that dolorous region. I knew those ghastly visages that once smiled in glee on one another, and on me also. No sound was heard, for their voices were mute, but the gestures were eloquent urging me to flee from the wrath to come upon the workers of iniquity, and despisers of God's law.

I had written home an account of the catastrophe with a statement of my renewed determination to quit the path that leads to the grave of those who cannot "inherit the kingdom of heaven." My mother received me with outstretched arms—me, the prodigal who had been in the far country so long "feeding on the husks that the swine did eat." We knelt in prayer, she leading and I following in humble devotion, feeling myself an unworthy sinner, to whom I asked God to be merciful and who answered the prayer of the contrite heart. Weeks of illness, accompanied with excruciating tortures followed, during which my mother was aided and supported by my Mary who had clung to me through all the hopeless years of a whole wretched decade, lit up by only occasional gleams of hope. The tortures of the morning after my first debauch were repeated and prolonged through a seeming eternity. At length I revived. The devil was cast out. I was in my right mind. When I was able to go out it was the end of genial June when nature is at her best, and I seemed to hear the songs of the hills and the valleys and the trees of the forest clapping their hands. Those were halcyon days when the influence of the Comforter descended in a sweet effusion in my happy heart, making melody therein. Never had the birds sung so sweetly, nor the flowers bloomed with such fragrance as they then did. "Old things had passed away. All things had become new."

I was soon able to resume business,

and that in such a manner as I had never before done, so that my employer, Mr. Robinson, expressed himself as highly pleased with my zeal and ability. In a few more months he increased my salary; then I ventured to renew a question I had more than once asked my Mary, but which she had always answered in the negative for only too sufficient a reason. She looked calmly at me with her deep blue eyes, saying, "I must continue in well-doing a whole year," as she must be certain that she would never be the wife of a man whom she could not respect and trust as a sober man. This was so firmly said that I resigned myself to my long probation with the best possible grace knowing that she had for long, weary years waited for me. But before it was ended my only surviving comrade, the Adjutant, had died, the last of the seven victims, in an inebriate asylum. How lonely I felt when I heard the news of his decease. Ten years before we were attending the Military School, and enjoying a season of brilliant pleasures which to me seemed the dawn of brighter days. Alas! we were repairing to streams of false delight to drink the draughts of unlawful pleasure whose mortal taste-dragged all except me into that fearful maelstrom in whose vortex are the undying worm and the unquenchable fire. Alone I was spared—a monument of God's grace to "the chief of sinners."

At the end of that year of trial, Mary asked me if I had been true to my vow! When I answered her she laid her hand in mine with smiling confidence saying, "I can trust you now, dear Charles." With God's grace I have been enabled to hold on to the right amid every trial, and have been brought forth more than conqueror through Jesus Christ who hath loved and given himself for me, so that nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Him. Verily it is the Lord's doings, and wondrous in mine eyes.

KNOW THYSELF.

ABOUT 2500 years ago Solon, the great Athenian, and one of the seven wise men of Greece, wrote the two words at the head of this article. It is excellent advice. Every one of us ought not only to be acquainted with our neighbours, but with ourselves. We ought to know all about our minds, and hearts, so that we may, by the grace of God, strengthen our weak points and overcome the bad ones. Many people would not know a good description of themselves. They would think it looked like some one they know, but would scarcely take it for themselves.

There is a story in the New Orleans Times about an East Tennessee mountaineer and raftman who came out of his rough mountain home to that city, which illustrates this idea very nicely. It is amusing and may be instructive. Here it is:

"A raftman, fresh from the mountains, was coming up the street at a rapid rate. As he passed Facier's jewellery house, he happened to glance in the store, and saw his body reflected in the large mirror in the rear of the store-room. He had never seen a mirror before, and recognized a familiar object in the figure, and supposed it was one of his friends. He glanced a second time, and exclaimed:

"Wait a minute, I'll be there, Bill!" and the same instant he hurried around the store to meet his supposed friend.

"He found no one, and looked rather perplexed. He returned to the door and looked back, and on seeing the frown, felt his face, and shaking his fist, he exclaimed:

"Wait for me, Bill! I'll come right away," and ran around the corner again as quickly as he could.

"He searched for several minutes, and on failing to find his friend, returned to the street, looking more perplexed than ever.

"He glanced slyly into the store, shook his head, and continued up the street, completely nonplussed and evidently deeply disgusted with the queer antics of his imaginary friend."

BEHIND THE SCREEN.

Al but a rustic country lad,
And have not learned the ways
That village boys so soon adopt
In these progressive days;
And some things I can't understand
Which I have often seen,
One is, why all the saloon bars
Are hid behind a screen.

Another is, why men who work
Ten hours every day,
And constantly are grumbling at
Their small amount of pay,
Shrink squander it for worse than naught,
Tis appetite, I ween,
That makes them spend so much for drink
Behind the saloon screen.

Another is, why many that
Should early be at home,
Night after night till twelve o'clock
Prefer the streets to roam;
E'en boys of young and tender age,
From ten years to sixteen,
Are forming habits hard to change
Behind the saloon screen.

Another is, how men can feel
Tis right to dim the brain,
And stimulate the baser thoughts,
Where reason ought to reign;
And if the men who sell and drink
Don't think the business mean,
Why do they always strive so hard
To hide behind the screen?

All this, I honestly admit,
I cannot understand,
And to this question pertinent
An answer I demand:
If whiskey, wine and lager beer
Do not mankind demean,
Why not dispense them openly,
And not behind the screen?

—Selected.

DESIRING AND CHOOSING.

"OH," said a poor drunkard, "I desire above all things to reform, and be a steady man."

Yes, you may desire it, but do you choose it? There is a great difference between desiring a thing and choosing a thing. If you choose to be a reformed man you will be one.

Ask a poor, ragged vagabond, "Do you wish to become rich." Of course he will say, "Yea." But he does not choose it; he desires to be lazy much more than to earn a living; therefore he is a vagabond.

"Charlie, do you desire to be a scholar, and stand at the head of your class?"

"Indeed I do," cried Charlie; but Charlie is at the foot of everything, because he likes his ease better than he likes to study.

Lucy said, "I really desire to be obliging and sweet-tempered." "Then you must choose to be," answered her mother.