



Temperance Department.

THE SERPENT IN THE HOME.

In looking over a newspaper lately I saw a paragraph telling how a party of sixteen travellers in Russia were overtaken by the darkness: how, when some miles from the town to which they were bound, they heard that terrible sound which makes the blood of the bravest run cold, the baying of wolves; how in horror and affright they struck spurs into the sides of their panting steeds; how the hideous pursuers gained on them; how one after another fell a sacrifice, and how out of that gallant party of sixteen only one arrived at his destination. What a narrative, how ghastly, how thrilling. As I thought of the moments of concentrated suspense and horror experienced by these travellers, of the tragic termination, and of the grief and desolation of those with whom they were connected, my heart sank within me at the ravages of these merciless monsters. But though we are not living in the wilds of Russia, I shudder to think that we are exposed to a far more destructive enemy than the hungry wolf, but one who would not only attack its victim openly, but also approaches with stealthy, treacherous step and springs on them ere ever they are aware. And how many gay travellers in life's journey this enemy overcomes! Some years ago, in a small suburb of one of our most prosperous cities, one physician alone counted, among the circle of his own patients, thirteen ladies whose disease was drink. How many of that company of thirteen escaped the fangs of the destroyer I do not know, but I would like to tell of one who came under my own observation.

When first Miss Martin came to our town she was a bright, attractive girl. Her eldest sister had married one of the doctors of the place, and she came on a visit to her, and as was right and fitting her friends and she enjoyed themselves visiting all the places of interest round. One day, after "doing" a number of the sights of the neighboring city, and when waiting the time for a train to take them home, they stepped into one of those fashionable restaurants with which our cities abound to rest and have a refreshment. As it was a hot day the sandwich was followed, at Dr. Black's suggestion, by a glass of wine. Chemists tell us of the affinities of certain substances. Dr. and Mrs. Black drank their glass of wine, and, as the saying is, felt neither up nor down after it. With Miss Martin it was different. She had never all her life drunk a whole glass of wine before, and something, I know not what or how, in her constitution answered to its subtle qualities, and she felt exhilarated all over. A pleasing, indescribable sensation came over her. Before, she was exhausted, worn-out, sunk; now she felt light, vigorous and happy. And it is to constitutions of this kind that stimulants are an unspeakable temptation. Favoring circumstances, I grieve to say, were not wanting. Mrs. Black's callers were numerous, and wine and cake were regularly presented. They were asked to dinner and supper parties to get acquainted with the neighborhood, and at most of these also wine was abundant, and just because other people took it Miss Martin did so too. She thought the place delightful and the people exceedingly pleasant, and if in a forenoon she felt exhausted and nervous after a party a glass of wine put her all right. No wonder that when she returned home life seemed dull, flat, and heavy. Of old she used to awake in the morning with a bright, cheery feeling, and begin to lay out her plan of work for the day. But things of an ordinary kind had no interest for her now. She became restless, her appetite failed, and she got pale and thin. Her mother, anxious and alarmed, called in the doctor, whose verdict was, "A little out of sorts—trying season of the year—liver dull—a little stimulant set all to rights." Her father, good, confiding man, at once ordered in a dozen of port, which was to be administered to the patient twice a day. And so the spark was fanned, and cherished which in due time was to become the raging conflagration in which health, comfort, the approval of conscience, the smile of friends, character, and life itself were to be engulfed.

I have said Miss Martin was a very prepossessing girl, and, as was natural, she was admired by many; so in a little while, when on a second visit to her sister, no one was surprised when it was announced that she was to be married to one who stood high in the opinion of all, and was indeed a young man of great worth and excellence. It happened that winter that a young men's mutual improvement society was set agoing in our town, and a scientific association, and a total abstinence

society. Now into the first two of these Dr. Black and Mr. Bennet, his intended brother-in-law, entered readily, and were quite willing to attend meetings, and give readings and deliver lectures; but for the last: "Well, really," they said, "it did seem a kind of insult to introduce the like of that among respectable people. No doubt there were many who should not drink, because they could not stop in time, and in such cases drink was a great curse; but with the like of them it was different." And when Mr. Bennet saw Miss Martin sipping her glass of wine he thought, as of everything else about her, how graceful it seemed, and how well the action became her. It was but a few months after that the poor illusion was dispelled.

Some gentlemen friends of Mr. Bennet's from a distance had come to spend the day with them, and a few neighbors had been asked to meet them at dinner. Mrs. Bennet had, like other young housekeepers, made great exertions for the entertainment of her guests. Who does not sympathize with her wish to do the honors of her house in a way worthy of the husband so devoted to her, and of whom she was so proud? Well, all went off beautifully, and she had left her guests in the dining-room over their wine; but when seated by herself, with the excitement run down, a feeling of excessive fatigue and languor came over her. As on other occasions she at once thought of a glass of wine. This was just the very time it was needed, and so without further consideration she drank one and another, and so on, till before she knew, she was sleeping the sleep of the drunkard in her own elegant drawing-room. By-and-by the door was thrown open, and Mr. Bennet, in his usual cheery voice, said, "Here we are, Mary, all ready for your nice cup of coffee." But, alas! there was no answering greeting, nothing but an inarticulate sound from the prostrate figure on the rug. The company took in the situation, but too well, and all retired as gracefully as possible, sorry to see Mrs. Bennet so poorly, &c. Mr. Bennet was bewildered. Of all the possibilities in life this was the last that could have occurred to him, and there he sat with that terrible, mysterious smile which you may have seen on the face of the strong man when shame and agony were gnawing at his heart.

It would be tedious to record Mrs. Bennet's resolutions of amendment made and broken, to be again renewed and with the same result; or her husband's patience, so often abused and still so ready to forgive. But the most long-suffering patience may be worn out at last, and it seemed to Mr. Bennet that the only chance was to send his wife—once his pride as well as joy—to one of those asylums for the drunkard called refuges. The arrangements were made and the day she was to go fixed. I shall never forget that afternoon. The poor husband was utterly prostrated with grief and shame by an outbreak of his wife the day before, and as an old friend he requested me to accompany her, for he could not trust himself, and feared his resolution would give way at the parting scene. She, poor creature, not only acquiesced in the plan, but earnestly besought her husband, on her knees to help her to get free from the wretched slavery in which she lived. It is easy for people outside to speak, but I do think drunkards are often deeply to be pitied as well as much to be blamed. She had been some months in this establishment when her husband, hoping against hope, removed to the city of which I have spoken, with the view of giving her the benefit of new scenes and new surroundings in her future life, and brought her home. How he congratulated himself, how his love and long-slumbering reverence revived, as day after day and week after week passed and still she stood the trial!

Some time after this I was invited to the marriage of their only daughter. She was one of whom any mother might have been proud, and on whom her father doted. I had been greatly gratified at hearing of my friend's continued reformation, and when I arrived that summer evening and found the three sitting together on the lawn under a spreading tree, enjoying the sweetest hour of all the day, I thought the outward scene a fitting symbol of the inward peace, and caught myself whispering, "At evening time it shall be light." Looking back on the past it seemed as if we had awoke from a frightful nightmare, and were being reassured by the calm and peace of returning morning.

Next day, as the wedding guests were strolling through the grounds after the marriage till lunch was announced, and everything seemed the embodiment of calmness and comfort, he would have been thought a hard-hearted prophet of evil who would have predicted the events of the following hours. I stepped aside and went into the house to see if I could give any assistance in the finishing of the arrangements. On looking into the dining-room what was my amazement to find the table furnished with a profusion of wines and even brandies! Thinking there must have been some strange mistake I hurried

out and sought Mr. Bennet, to whom I told what I had seen, saying that his orders must surely have been misunderstood. He looked wonderingly at me. "Not at all," said he; "you do not suppose I could let such an occasion as this pass without giving it all the honors." "Honors!" I thought some people have strange ideas about honors. I implored him to alter his arrangements even yet. "Thanks," said he, "for your kind interest; but pray don't trouble yourself, you will see all will go off well." And then in a lower tone, "Mary has promised me." With a sorrowful heart I turned away. The party had not been long in the dining-room when I saw Mrs. Bennet, who had hitherto been acting the part of the hostess with all the ease and grace which in her early days had charmed so many, become suddenly pale and seem to put a strong restraint upon herself. I felt deeply grieved when I saw those around her carelessly sipping their wine, ignorant of the fierce war they were kindling within her. At last she could bear it no longer, and it seemed as if a thunderbolt had fallen amongst us when suddenly she rose and seizing a bottle darted to the door. Mr. Bennet's face turned ashy pale, and when he attempted to rise his knees smote against each other, like the monarch of old when the handwriting on the wall announced his doom. When I got outside the door the poor woman looked round on me with a half-triumphant, half-scared expression, and the brandy bottle, as it turned out to be, was lying empty beside her. I got her to bed and the doctor was sent for, but no human power could save her, and as we watched her tossing to and fro, and wildly appealing for protection from the fiery serpents which she averred were swarming around her, I wondered if her husband did not ask himself if he had fulfilled that vow made long ago of loving, cherishing, and protecting her when he exposed her to what was indeed supreme danger possible, the smell of what, to her, was deadly poison. At length the storm subsided, and wan and worn out she lay on her pillow. Leaning over her, I heard in a low whisper the words, "They shall thirst no more." The pathos was inexpressible. These were her last words. No doubt there is pardon for the penitent drunkard as well as the penitent thief, even at the eleventh hour; but turning away from that death-bed I could not but say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

I have spoken of some of the outward incidents of Mrs. Bennet's history, but who shall imagine her inner life? Sure I am that the most exquisite tortures ever invented by cruel Turk fell very far short of those she inflicted on herself and her dearest friends. When bidding good-bye to the silent and mournful mansion, where all had but the other day seemed so bright and happy, I felt with new power and emphasis the force of the wise man's words, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." At last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."—*Scottish Temperance League Pictorial Tract, No. 258.*

APPALLING STATISTICS.

Dr. Scotchburn, Medical Officer of Health for Driffield, in his annual report, after in part attributing the raising of the death-rate to the drinking habits of society, said that "What habits of intemperance do for the adult population, the various compounds containing laudanum do for the infant population. The extent to which the practice of administering opiates to children has gone is something beyond belief, though latterly it has been somewhat checked by the operation of the Pharmacy Act. The certainty and speed with which the illegitimate children died who were born in the workhouse under my care led me some time ago to enquire into the fate of twenty children who left the workhouse in apparent health, and it was found that only three out of twenty survived the effects of drugging and neglect to reach the age of one year. With a view of providing myself with some reliable statistics for the information of the Health Authority, as to the purchase by mothers of compounds containing laudanum, I have made personal enquiries and find some surprising results. Before the act which effects the addition of laudanum to 'Godfrey's cordial,' white mixture, and similar compounds, their sale was immeasurably greater than since the act came into operation. One gentleman informed me that as soon as mothers found out (which they very soon did) that 'Godfrey's sine opio'—that is without the narcotic—ceased to stupefy their children, his sale, which had reached the astonishing quantity of two hundred gallons in the year, fell at once to fifty, this being the quantity sold wholesale. The present retail sale amounts to about 144 pints. Another manufacturer's sale is about 24 gallons annually, 50 pints being sold retail in addition across the counter. A smaller dealer in these compounds averages two pints of 'Godfrey' per week and eight pints of white mixture. The facts relating to the use of laudanum or the tincture of opium and the solid

opium itself are even still more surprising. 1865 one local firm sold 45 gallons, not of 'Godfrey,' but that which alone gives potency to the tincture of opium—as much as eight gallons being sent to one village to sell across the country. In addition to this quantity of the tincture of opium, as much as forty gallons of 'Godfrey' are sold at this establishment in the year. Latterly this sale has dropped to ten gallons of laudanum, which is still an enormous quantity, but it is right to add that some small part of this quantity is sold to veterinary surgeons. When it is remembered that practically the whole of this immense quantity of soporific compounds is administered to young children, it will not be denied that drugging swells very largely the list of deaths amongst young children. Nor are children the only sufferers from this baneful practice. Equally surprising facts followed enquiries respecting the consumption of crude opium and laudanum amongst adults in the town and neighborhood. One instance is given, where an adult person has taken two pints and a half in a fortnight; another where 64 fluid ounces were taken in a similar period. Two pints a week have been bought in one instance. One gentleman assured me that he had known an instance in a neighboring village where a pint of laudanum along with a pint of rum were drunk by a female every day when she had the means to purchase it. A most incredible case being that of a young person who not unfrequently purchased, and drank at the counter, four fluid ounces in a forenoon, and the same quantity in the afternoon. As regards the practice of opium-eating, equally incredible quantities are reported to have been taken. An old man, a pauper, regularly laid out the 3s. a week he received from a board of guardians in the purchase of about two ounces of opium, two or three drachms of which he would pinch off the mass and put into his mouth as he stood in the shop; and when it is stated that this represented about a hundred and eighty times as much as would be given medicinally, some idea may be formed of the quantity."—*League Journal, Glasgow.*

DRINKING IN COLLEGES.—The *National Temperance Advocate* (New York) says:—Among the most dangerous and demoralizing obstacles to the progress of the cause of temperance among young men may be found the social drinking habits of college students. The sons of wealthy parents, with a liberal allowance of spending money, often provide wine for themselves and a coterie of friends, and rate as "mean" those who, having the means, will not do likewise. We are told on good authority of one young man, connected with a college well known to our citizens, whose yearly allowance for his personal expenditure is \$7,000, and whose common beverage, not deigning to drink water at all, is champagne! With too many college students their code admits of not infrequent instances of disgraceful inebriety—a code which is too often encouraged by the pernicious example of a president's or professor's winecup. That in some colleges there is a healthy temperance tone is shown by a recent incident among the students of Knox College of Toronto. A junior student of that college lately delivered a lecture at Barrie on the subject of temperance, in which he favored moderate drinking. His fellow-students felt themselves so much scandalized by his conduct in the matter that they subsequently held a mass meeting and passed unanimously a resolution condemning the moderate drinking views of their associate. Those young men are creating not only for the present, but for the future, a safeguard of character of incalculable value.

—The "beer" expedient for the cure of drunkenness in Great Britain—an alleged specific, strongly recommended by brewers and other beer advocates for this country also—is shown by the test of practical experience to be a most disastrous failure. In England and Wales in 1860, with a population of 19,900,000, there were 88,361 committals for drunkenness. In 1875, with a population of 24,000,000, the committals for the same cause were 203,886! The quantity of ale and beer consumed is in the aggregate enormous, and, so far from proving a specific for the cure of drunkenness, it will be seen that there has been in the fifteen years a fearful increase of inebriety. Commercial, physical, and moral ruin for the nation will be the inevitable, ultimate end if the untoward tendency cannot in some way be arrested and reversed. Total abstinence only can prove an adequate remedy.—*Temperance Advocate.*

Best in the Lord, and
wait patiently for Him.