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NOTICE.

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Temperance Department.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE
(From "Boons and Blessings.")

BY MRS. S. C. HALL.

"What I'm thinking of Nelly, darlin'," said Roney Maher to his poor pale wife,— "what I am thinking of is, what a pity we were not bred and born in this Temperance Society, for then we could follow it, you know, as a thing of course, without any trouble!"

"But—"

"Whisht, hold your tongue, Nelly, you've one great fault, avourneen; you're always talking, dear, and won't listen to me. What I was saying is, that if we were brought up to the coffee instead of the whiskey, we'd have been natural members of the Temperance Society; as it is now agra! why, it's meat, drink, and clothing, as a man may say."

He paused, and Nelly thought—though in his present state she did not tell her husband so—that whiskey was a very bad paymaster.

"You're no judge, Ellen," he continued, interrupting her thoughts, "for you never took to it; and if I had my time to begin over again, I never would either; but it's too late to change now,—all too late!"

"I've heard many a wise man say that it is never too late to mend," observed Ellen.

"Yah!" he exclaimed, almost fiercely, "whoever said that was a fool."

"It was the priest himself then, Roney, never a one else; and sure you would not call him that?"

"If I did mend," he observed, "no one would take my word for it."

"Ah, dear! but deeds, not words,"—and having said more than was usual for her in the way of reproof, Ellen retreated to watch its effect.

Roney Maher was a fine "likely boy" when he married Ellen; but when this dialogue took place, he was sitting over the embers of a turf fire, a pale emaciated man, though in the prime of life,—a torn handkerchief bound round his temples, while his favorite shillelah, that he had greased and seasoned in the chimney, and tended with more care than his children, lay broken by his side. He attempted to snatch it up while his wife retreated, but his arm fell powerless, and he uttered a groan so full of pain, that in a moment she returned, and with tearful eyes enquired of him if it was so bad with him entirely as that.

"It's worse," he answered, while the large drops that stood on his brow proved how much he suffered, "it's worse—the arm, I mean—than I thought; I'm done for a week or maybe a fortnight; and, Nelly, the pain of my arm is nothing to the weight upon my heart. Now, don't be talking, for I can't stand it. If I can't work next week, nor this, and we without money or credit!—What—what!"

The unfortunate man glanced at his wife and children,—he could not finish the sentence. He had only returned the previous night



VERY REV. PRINCIPAL SNODGRASS, D.D.

Dr. Snodgrass was born in Renfrewshire, Scotland. He studied for the Holy Ministry at the University of Glasgow and spent a large portion of his holiday time in the Highlands, where he acquired a slight knowledge of "the language of Paradise"—which on more than one occasion has served him in good stead since he became a minister. Dr. Snodgrass was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Nist, Scotland, on the 18th August, and ordained by the Presbytery of Glasgow on the 3rd September, 1852, immediately after which he commenced his pastoral work at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. In 1856 he removed to Montreal, and was minister of St. Paul's Church in this city, until the third of August, 1864, when he received an appointment to the office he now holds—Principal and Professor of Divinity in Queens'

University, Kingston. While resident in Montreal, Dr. Snodgrass was Clerk of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland. In testimony of his aptitude for business, and of his admirable administrative qualities, he was twice elected to the highest position in the Church, that of its Moderator. For the first time in 1866, and, secondly, as Moderator of the last meeting of the Kirk Synod, held in Montreal on the 15th of June last, he was one of the four who appended their names officially to the document by which the union of the Churches was declared to be accomplished. For several years he was editor of the *Presbyterian*. In acknowledgment of his learning and ability, the University of Glasgow conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1864.

from having been "out on a spree" as it is called, spending his money, wasting his health, losing his employment,—not thinking of those innocent children whom God had given him to protect.

When sober, Roney's impulses were all good; but he was as easily, perhaps more easily, led away by the bad than the good. In the present instance he continued talking, because he dared not think,—and it's a fearful thing for a man to dread his own thoughts! It was a painful picture to look upon this well-educated man. He had been an excellent tradesman; he had been respected; he had been comfortable. He felt lost, degraded, in pain, in sorrow; and yet he would not confess it;—ashamed of the past, yet endeavoring in vain to convince himself that he had no right to be ashamed.

It was evening. The children crept round the fire, where their mother endeavored to heat half-a-dozen old potatoes for their supper, looking with hungry eyes upon the scanty feast. "Daddy's too badly entirely to eat to-night," whispered the second boy to his oldest brother, while his little thin blue lips trembled half with cold, half with hunger, "and so we will have his share as well as our own," and the little shivering boys ran over again, poking them with their lean fingers, and telling their mammy that they were hot enough. Shocking that want should have taught them to calculate on their parent's illness as a source of rejoicing!

"Nelly," said her husband at last, "Nelly, I wish I had a drop of something to warm me." "Mrs. Kinsalla said she would give me a bowl of strong coffee for you, if you would take it." What drunkard does not blaspheme? Roney swore; and though his lips were parched with fever, and his head throbbed, declared he must have just "one little thimble-full to raise his heart." It was in vain that Ellen remonstrated and entreated. He did not attempt violence, but he obliged his eldest boy to beg the thimble-full; and before morning, the wretched man was tossing about in all the heat and irritation of decided fever. One must have witnessed what fever is, when accompanied by such misery, to understand its terrors. It was wonderful how he was supported through it; indeed, his ravings, when after a long dreary time the fever subsided, were more torturing to poor Nelly than the working of his delirium had been.

"If," he would exclaim, "it wasn't too late, I'd take the pledge they talk about, the first minute I raise my head from the straw! But where's the good of it now?—what can I save now? Nothing,—it's too late!"

"It's never too late," Ellen would whisper,—"it's never too late," she would repeat; and, as if it were a mocking echo of her husband's voice, would sigh, "Too late!—too late!"

Indeed, many who looked upon the fearful wreck of what had been the fine manly form of Roney Maher, stretched upon a bed of straw, with hardly any covering,—saw his two rooms, now utterly destitute of every article of furniture,—heard his children begging in the streets for a morsel of food, and observed how the utmost industry of his poor wife could hardly keep the rags together that shrouded her bent form,—any one almost who saw these things, would be inclined to repeat the words, which have unfortunately but too often knelled over the grave of good feelings and good intentions, "Too late!—too late!" Many would have imagined, that not only had the demon habit which had gained so frightful an ascendancy over poor Roney banished all chance of reformation, but that there was no escape from such intense poverty. I wish, with all my heart, that such persons would, instead of sitting down with so helpless and dangerous a companion as despair, resolve upon two things,—first of all, to trust