

stairs I said to his wife, "I need not trouble you by saying what is the matter with your husband." She said, "Sir, I do not understand you." I said, "Your husband is a habitual drunkard." She said, "Drunkard, sir, you never made a greater mistake in your life; he only drinks water," which was plain evidence to me how quietly a man may drink day by day, and almost kill himself with drink, and even his near friends not know it. He was a sly drinker, drinking all day, most likely in a sly way. There is a point short of drunkenness in which a man may injure his constitution very materially by means of alcohol. I should say from my experience that it is the most destructive agent that we are aware of in this country. Setting aside the drunken part of the community altogether, great injury, I think, is being done by the use of alcohol in what is supposed by the consumer to be a most moderate quantity. I think that, taken as a whole, there is a great deal of injury done to health by the habitual use of wines in their various kinds, and alcohol in its various shapes, even in so-called moderate quantities. That remark applies to both sexes, and to people who are not in the least intemperate; also to people who are supposed to be fairly well. I think drinking leads to the degeneration of tissues; it spoils the health, and it spoils the intellect. There is also a certain amount of degeneration of the nervous system where drinking is carried to excess.

SELF-LOVE.

Oh, I could go through all life's troubles singing,
Turning earth's night to day,
If self were not so fast around me, clinging
To all I do or say.

My very thoughts are selfish, always building
Mean castles in the air;
I use my love for others for a gilding
To make myself look fair.

I fancy all the world engrossed with judging
My merit or my blame;
Its warmest praise seems an ungracious grudging
Of praise which I might claim.

In youth, or age, by city, wood, or mountain,
Self is forgotten never:
Where'er we tread, it gushes like a fountain,
Its waters flow forever.

O miserable omnipresence, stretching
Over all time and space,
How have I run from thee, yet found thee reaching
The goal in every race.

Inevitable self! vile imitation
Of universal light,—
Within our hearts a dreadful usurpation
Of God's exclusive right!

—F. W. Faber.

HOW TOM SIGNED THE PLEDGE.

While speaking, one night, at a series of meetings in B——, I saw in the back of the church Tom Hill. Now, Tom kept a place about two miles out of town, known as the "Fish Ponds." It had, at one time, been a favourite resort for myself, as well as many of the boys, in our drinking days, for Tom was a social, jolly fellow, kept good liquors, and could always give us a good trout supper. Knowing our meetings were taking from Tom his best customers, we looked for little sympathy from that direction. With a prayer in my heart that he might be reached—a prayer that I fear had but little faith in it, for in those days I was a new convert, and had seen but little of the wonderful working of the Holy Spirit among men—as the meeting progressed, and man after man stood up and expressed a determination, with God's help, to lead a new life, I watched Tom, and saw that he paid close attention. At the close of the meeting, when we called for pledge signers, to my astonishment Tom began to elbow his way through the crowd until he stood before the Secretary's table, and with a trembling hand took a pencil and began to sign his name. Before he had finished I was at his side, and as he turned round, taking both his hands, I said, "Tom, what does this mean? are you in earnest?"

With a laugh, he said, "Why, yes; what is the good of keeping a rum-shop if you boys all sign the pledge?"

But I knew when I looked into his eyes and saw them glistening with tears he was trying to keep from shewing that something had touched his heart. Putting my arm on his shoulder, I said, "Yes, but there's something more; tell me what it is."

"Well, Doc, you know my little Liz; last night she did not come home, and staid in town with a schoolmate, and came to your meeting, and all day to-day I have been hearing of the excitement down here, how the 'blue ribbons' were as thick on the streets as flies in summer-time. I had been drinking a good deal to-day; when I saw Liz coming down the road with a blue ribbon tied to her jacket, I was mad, and when she came in, I said, 'What have you got that thing tied in there for?' Drooping her head, she said, 'Papa, I've signed the pledge, and this is my badge.'

"Don't you know, child, you've disgraced me? don't you know your father sells rum? what right have you to sign?" Her little lips quivered as she said, "Yes, papa, I know it, for when the children get mad at me in school, they call me the rum-seller's daughter, and tell me my father gets drunk; and, papa, I thought if I signed the pledge and put on a ribbon, they'd know I didn't like to have you do so, and would not say so any more." I turned and went into the bar-room and began to think the matter over; you know I love that girl, and I never thought before I was a disgrace to her, and I always meant to get out of the business before she grew up. I never liked it, and only sold it for the money there was in it, but I've thought it all over. I've done wrong.

I've wronged myself. I've wronged you boys, and God helping me, I'll never do it again."

The boys had gathered about us, and when Tom had finished, with a shout, they took him in their arms, placed him on the platform, the meeting was called to order, and Tom, with tears running down his face, told the audience the story. I wish you could have heard the audible "Thank Gods and hallelujahs," and seen the men crowd forward to sign, until 380 were enrolled. "A little child shall lead them."

Who shall say, "Tis foolish for children to sign the pledge?"

Several years have passed, and Tom stands a temperate man, and has done grand work for the Master. Little Liz is budding into womanhood. God grant it may be such a fair, sweet, living example, as her childhood gave promise of. I know both will forgive me for making public this little incident, so precious to us, and so fruitful of good results.—*Dr. H. S. Rankine.*

MY LITTLE WOMAN.

A homely cottage, quaint and old,
Its thatch grown thick with green and gold,
And wind-sown grasses;
Unchanged it stands in sun and rain
And seldom through the quiet lane
A footstep passes.

Yet here my little woman dwelt,
And saw the shroud of winter melt
From meads and fallows;
And heard the yellowhammer sing
A tiny welcome to the spring
From budding sallows.

She saw the early morning sky
Blush with tender wild-rose dye
Above the larches,
And watched the crimson sunset burn
Behind the summer plumes of fern
In woodland arches.

My little woman, gone away
To that far land which knows, they say,
No more sun setting!
I wonder if her gentle soul,
Securely resting at the goal,
Has learnt forgetting?

My heart wakes up, and cries in vain;
She gave me love, I gave her pain
While she was living;
I knew not when her spirit fled,
But those who stood beside her said
She died forgiving.

My dove has found a better rest,
And yet I love the empty nest
She left neglected;
I tread the very path she trod,
And ask—in her new home with God
Am I expected?

If it were but the Father's will
To let me know she loves me still,
This aching sorrow
Would turn to hope, and I could say,
Perchance she whispers day by day,
"He comes to-morrow."

I linger in the silent lane,
And high above the clover plain
The clouds are riven;
Across the fields she used to know
The light breaks, and the wind sighs low,
"Loved and forgiven."

—Good Words.

LUNCHING WITH GLADSTONE.

A few hours spent in the home and company of Mr. Gladstone was a glimpse of English life not to be forgotten. The invitation to a lunch at Hawarden Castle, which our little party of Americans had so gladly accepted, suggested three in the afternoon as an hour when Mr. Gladstone's carriages could be in waiting for us at the little railway station, sitting by itself in the meadows, two or three miles from the castle. Turning from the highway into the magnificent park in which the castle stands we drove for about a mile along its perfect road, overhung with grand old trees, through which we caught charming pictures of vale and slope studded here and there with the finest oaks and beeches. Approaching the castle, a large structure overhung with ivy and tipped with turrets and battlements in Tudor style, heavy oaken doors swung open to admit us to the court. A bevy of dogs—hound, collie, mastiff and I know not what other breeds—studied the visitors with dignified interest as they alighted at the door, and footmen shewed the way inside. Whappings laid off, we were ushered into what seemed to me, in Yankee term, the family sitting-room, where we found Mrs. Gladstone and other members of the family, including one of her sons, the Rev. Stephen Gladstone, who is the earnest and esteemed rector of Hawarden parish.

The room was richly but not showily furnished, the two features which most quickly attracted the visitor's eye being, perhaps, the glistening candelabra holding scores of wax tapers which did service instead of gas, as in most English mansions, and the full book cases that had taken possession of all otherwise occupied space upon the walls, even to the back of the swinging doors which opened into the dining-room, to which they hung like barnacles. One door, through which the grand old commoner—surely the greatest commoner of his generation, to say no more—by-and-by came in to greet us, opened into the library, the shop in which so much wonderful literary work has been done. Here again book-cases

ruled supreme upon the walls, while up and down the long, wide room were table-topped cases filled with the scholar's tools and treasures. One table was an odd exception to the rest, for on it lay nearly a dozen axes of varying English and American patterns. Mr. Gladstone's penchant for wood chopping is well-known, and this table was to him (something what stables and kennels are to so many Englishmen. We recalled the familiar story told of him to the effect that he never lost but one night's sleep in his public life, and that was because of his anxiety lest a high wind should blow down a tree—which he had partly felled the previous day—before he should have the pleasure of finishing his task. He laughingly confessed to its substantial correctness. He dwelt with the interest of a connoisseur on the merits and defects of the various patterns in his kit of axes, and shewed us his favourite—a bit of Yankee make, with a waxed end wound around the cracked helve!

If my feminine reader asks what we had for lunch, I have to plead that I could hardly have told an hour afterward. I only know that the company was broken up into little groups at round tables; that Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone would not take their own seats until they had helped to serve every guest; and that thenceforward the wide-ranging, delightful conversation of the great scholar and statesman was more than meat and drink to all who sat near him. None of the pictures which I have seen of Mr. Gladstone do justice to the genial spirit that plays over his face at such a time, no picture could do justice to a certain light and depth in his eyes, which I shall always remember as the finest thing in his fine face.—*Good Company.*

"NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP."

By virtue of its age and value and previous associations, this little prayer has become a classic. It must be very ancient, for who can tell when or by whom it was written? Thousands, from the silver-haired pilgrim to the lisping infant, sink to nightly slumber murmuring the simple petition. It has trembled on the lips of the dying. One instance was that of an old saint of eight-six years, whose mind had so failed that he could not recognize his own daughter. "Very touching [says the *reliator*] was the scene one night after retiring, as he called his daughter as if she were his mother, saying like a little child, 'Mother, come here by my bed and hear me say my prayers before I go to sleep.' She came near. He clasped his white, withered hands, and reverently said:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take;"

then quietly fell asleep and woke in heaven."

A distinguished judge, who many years ago died in New York in extreme old age, said that his mother had taught the stanza to him in infancy, and that he never omitted it at night. John Quincy Adams made a similar assertion; and an old sea-captain declared that, even before he became a decided Christian, he never forgot it on turning in at night. An eminent bishop, in addressing a Sunday school, said that every night since his mother taught it to him when a babe at her knee he was accustomed to repeat it on retiring.

There is an *addendum* (by whom unknown), which brings in the Intercessor, giving a distinctively Christian tone to the lines:

"And now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take,
And this I ask for Jesus' sake."

From another unknown source is a companion prayer for morning, which may be welcome to some of our readers:

"Now I wake me out of sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before the eve,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul receive,
That I may with my Saviour live. Amen."

—*The Churchman.*

MINISTER VS. LECTURER.

A Boston paper has raised the question which other journals are discussing, "Why don't people go to Church." There is another question to be answered—Why people do go to church; answer that first, and then an answer can be given why some people don't go. The truth is, nothing attracts like the pulpit. A rationalist will come to New York and lecture to a full house, and go away carrying his honours; and some people say, "See what a success! what a crowd he draws! if only the ministry drew as well!" But notice that this lecturer, sharp and shrewd as he is, keeps away from New York for a whole year. He knows people will not come to hear him twenty, ten, or even five times a year. Yet the thousands fill the Christian pulpits fifty-two days in the year, and send of their substance to the heathen. Cold as religion is to-day, it is yet the one thing that lives and burns in the hearts of men; before its shrines the world delights to assemble and worship. Why don't people go to church? Tell us why they do, please, and then we will tell you why some don't.—*Christian at Work.*

SIGHT will not gladden him in his home whom faith consolet not by the way.—*St. Augustine.*

LET friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.—*Fuller.*

WE are upheld by the truth that God once walked on the earth and that a man sits on the throne.—*H. G. Weston.*

OLD, inbred habits will make resistance; but by better habits they shall be entirely overcome.—*Thomas a Kempis.*

EVERY day is all noon, every month is harvest, every year is a jubilee, every age is full of manhood, and all this is our eternity.—*Baxter.*