

SCOTTIE AIRLIE.

THE WAREHOUSE,

TORONTO, June 27th, 1885.

DEAR WULLIE,—There never was a truer word said than that nobody can tell what a day may bring forth. Hech! hech! wha wad hae thoct it? that I, Hugh Airlie, could hae lived an' de'ed through the awfu events o' this last week! An' mo a temperance man! Losh! it beats a'! Yo see, I was stappin' awa hame frae the airt gallery on Saturday afternune, when just at the corner o' Yonge Street I sees a man stannin' glowrin' at me in a maist conspicuous manner. He kept on luckin' at me, an' me luckin' at him, wonderin' what he was luckin' at, till at last he staps up, an' wi' a bit lauch in his e'e, says he tae me, "Man, I ken yer face weel, but I canna name ye."

"Weel," says I, "I'm the same way o' thinkin' respectin' yersel'; yer face is quite familiar. Hooever, ma name's Airlie," says I. "The very thing," says he, comin' doon wi' a great stelp on ma shoulder, "the very name. It was just on the neb o' ma tongue. Losh, Hughie! d'ye no mind Tawse?—Jock Tawse, o' the Hech-howe Hotel?"

Sure enouch, it rairly was Jock, but wha wad ever hae thoct o' meetin' him oot here? When I left hame he was doin' a thrivin' business on the Hech-howe roadside. He explined tae me, hooever, that the temperance movement had played the vera deevil wi' the publics an' halfway hooses in the auld kintra, an' that instead o' waitin' on the bar an' takin' life easy crackin' tae drouthy customers, he had actually tae either turn tae an' work like ither men, or come tae Canada to seek his fortune. He had some cash left yet frae the proceeds o' the sale o' his place on the Hech-howe road, an' he said he was gaun tae enjoy himsel' a bit an' luck aroon a wee afore settlin' doon. It wad be time enouch, he said, tae luck for wark when he was short o' siller. After answerin' a' ma questions aboot the auld place, a' o' a sudden he turns, an' says tae me, "Hae a cocktail, Airlie?"

"A cocktail!" says I. "What d'ye ca' that? I'm vera fond o' sheeps' tails an' pigs' tails an' oxtails, but I canna say I evor tasted a cocktail—in fack, hae nae notiou what kind o' an eatable it is."

"Airlie," says he, "ye're naething but a barbarian. Come, we maun hae ye ceevilized. The cocktail is the great offspring an' efflorescence o' Christian ceevilization. Let's hae a cocktail first thing." An' cleckin' ma airm in his, aff he tuk me tae get a cocktail, whatever that might be. Afore I kent whaur I was he had me inside o' a bar-room. I kent it was a bar-room by the smell o' beer an' tobacco, the extraordinary big chromoses on the wa's, the windows covered up frae the gaze o' the public e'e, an' by the barkeeper, a kind o' white-dickied, gold-greened, hair-oiled high priest o' Bauchus like, stannin' ahint the bar, an' receivin', it appeared tae me, the greatest reverence frae the votaries o' cocktail. Of course the meenit I fand oot it was a bar-room I tellt Jock it was against ma principles tae be seen in siccan a place, but he protested it was against his principles as weel as mine, a' he wantit was a cocktail—an' wi' that he winks tae the high priest, an' says he, "Two cocktails, prime—Old Tom." Wi' that the barkeeper he whusks his towel ower his shoulder, an' takin' a tumbler he rins aff a quarter o' a pint or sae oot o' a silverezed tap labelled "Old Tom." Then he takes a lang-neckit bottle, an' flurishin' it high abune his head, he povers wi' a practised e'e a lang jet o' some ither liquor intill the tumbler, which he hands gracefully doon as far as the length o' his airms will allow. That feat o' airms he repeated wi' anither bottle, garrin' the liquor i' the tumbler froth an' fizz as brisk as penny ale. Then intae that he draps a strawberry, a slice o' lemon an' a chunk o' ice, an' "Noo," says

Jock, takin' the decoction frae the hands o' the high priest, an' handin' it ower tae me, "drink that—that's a cocktail, the best temperance drink oot." As I said afore, an' I say again, I'm a temperance man, but if the weel-meanin' temperance folk wad just pit up a reward o' say twa-ree hunder dollars or sae, tae the man or woman wha wad invent a temperance drink equal tae that cocktail, there wad be nae nece sity for a Scott Act. Man, it was grand! it was fine! it just gaed creepin' doon ma weasand wi' the maist delightfu' sensation imaginable. I thoct at the time that the nectar o' the gods we hear sae muckle aboot maun hae been a kind o' celestial cocktails. Anyway, Jock, seein' me smackin' ma lips wi' sic evident pleasure, says, "Hae anither ane, Airlie." Weel, as Jock was payin' for't, I thoct I micht as weel be hang'd for a sheep as a lamb, an' sae tuk anither, an' sae did Jock. We were just comin' awa, me feelin' like as if I was stappin' on air, sae free an' light-hearted like, when wha should step in but oor book-keeper. "Hello, Airlie," says he, "how do?—how-d'ye-do?—have a cocktail?" Ma surpris at meetin' Maister Jones, whom I had aye luickt up tae as a pauttern man, in a bar-room, was only equalled by ma heartfelt grief at him catchin' me there. Hooever, no tae appear self-righteous, I accepted his offer, an' swallowed his cocktail wi' a "Here's tae ye" that wad hae done credit till a practised bummer. Then I introduced Jock till him, an' after crackin' a wee wi' oor backs tae the bar an' oor elbows restin' on't backwards like, we cam awa. Jock said he couldna part wi' me yet, an' for the sake o' auld lang syne, he tuk me intill a restaurant an' gied me ma supper. He was extraordinar' kind. I'll say that. Then he tuk me intill anither place whaur we had anither cocktail, an' then naething wad dae but he maun hae me tae gang tae the theatre, willy-nilly. Ye ken, Wullie, we were a' brocht up tae consider the theatre the road tae perdition an' the very mooth o' hell; but I thoct noo, when I had the chance, I wad just mak a'e nicht o't for ance in ma life, an' see what the mooth o' hell was like onyway. I was maist agreeably disappointed. I cud see naething tae indicate onything waur than mase, an' as for the folk i' the audience, they were a' as decorous an' decent as tho' they had been in the kirk—in fack, I've seen a camp-meeitin' a great deal mair indecorous an' unbecomingly ordered in behavior than the audience in the theatre that nicht. I've nae time tae tell ye aboot the play, only, Wullie, it was beautifu'—maist beautifu'—an' I'll never forget it till the day I dee. The curtain had hardly weel fa'en on the first act when Jock he gies me a nudge, an' says he, "Let's go out, Airlie, I want tae see a man." "What man?" says I. "Wad he no wait till the morn's mornin'?" "Weel, Airlie, says he, "You are verdant! Come on; I must see this man at once." "But," says I, "I wad like tae see the rest o' the play; this is only a'e act dune." "Why, of course! We'll be back in a jiffy," says Jock, sae there was naething for't but resignation. He tuk me oot along a lang passage, an' we landed intill a bar-room where there was a great mony mair men, a' come, as Jock tellt me, tae see a man. That man was the barkeeper, as I began tae find oot—but this time it wasna cocktails, it was "invariables," a whiskey composition, that they ordered. I had come tae this noo, that I cud drink onything, sae I whuppit ower ma allowance wi' the best o' them, though tae tell the truth, I was beginnin' tae feel a by ordinar' dizziness in ma head an' an oncomon slackness in ma joints, an' a terrible inclination tae sing "Auld Lang Syne" a' the time. This seein' a man was repeated between every act, a maist extraordinar' proceedin'. I didna see what way they couldna speak oot honestly an' say they wantid anither dram. But, of course, it wad hae been clean oot o' place to advertize ma

temperance principles there at that oor o' the nicht. At length the play cam tae an end—at least sae Jock said, for ma brain was sae muddled, the hale thing, stage an' audience, were whirlin' aboot waur than the witches in Tam o' Shanter. Jock, he grippit ma airm, an' we got safely oot o' the theatre, whaur a whiff o' the fresh air just seemed tae sober me up a bit. We were fairly on the road hame noo, I thoct, very thankfully, when suddenly Jock turns at a door, an' leads me up a stair as dark as a coal-pit. "Whaur are ye gaun, Jock?" says I, wi' some alarm, for I never lost sight o' the "mooth o' hell." "Sh! sh!" says he, "close at eleven o'clock, you know—law very strict—can't get a drop o' liquor, not if you were dyin' for it, Airlie." "I dinna see," says I, "what that hae tae dae wi' me an' you crawlin' up this stair at twal o'clock at nicht. Afore I gang anither fit I maun ineist on kennin' whether this is the mooth o' hell ye're takin' me till, for if it is, deil anither fit will I tak up that stair." "Sh! sh! you galoot," says Jock. "Why, we're only going to get another cocktail to sober up on—and, say, by-the-bye, Airlie, lend me ten dollars till I get into the bar-room. I've dropped ma pocket-book." Of course ma heart boin' weel open wi' Jock's kindness an' cocktails, I made answer by handin' him ma pocket-book as a proof o' ma froenship. "I thoct," says I, "ye couldna get a drap tae save yer life after eleven o'clock." "Sh! sh!" says he, an' by this time we had gotten hae the tap o' the stair, whaur there was a door. Jock he chappit at this door an' said something, when it opened, an' then we gaed along a lang passage, up anither stair, through anither door, an' doon anither twa pair o' stairs, an' then, as sure's ma name's Airlie, there we were richt intill the bar-room we had veeited five or sax times that nicht already. Jock ordered twa cocktails, an' of course we drank them doon, Jock drinkin', "Here's wussin' success tae the Scott Act," an' winkin' ower his tumbler tae the barkeeper. The last thing I mind after that was me stannin' under a street lamp wi' anither three Scotchmen, kiasin' ane anither an' shakin' hands ower an' ower again, an' singin' "Auld Lang Syne" wi' the tears poorn' doon oor checks in the maist affectin' manner.

The next thing I kent, I was lyin' on the braid o' ma back i' ma boordin' hoose at twal o'clock o' the Sawbath day, wi' a pain in ma head that made me feel as if ma skull was crackin' open in a' directions, an' ma tongue was rattlin' in ma head like a dry burr thrustle. It was awfu! I thoct shame tae show face, but kennin' ma landlady—decent woman—was at the kirk, I crawled oot o' bed an' got ma head doon below the kitchen tap, an' after drinkin' like a fish, I lut the tap rin full belt on ma puir burnin' skull for mair than a quarter o' an' oor. If ever there was a repentant sinner it was me that Sawbath mornin'. On Monday I was still a kind o' thorougher, an' afore I could get doon tae the warehouse a policeman cam in in a hurry tae get some o' the boorders tae sit on a coroner's inquest on a body. Bein' in a solemn frame o' mind, I gaed wi' the policeman. The body was lyin' covered up whaur they had fished it up frae Yonge Street Wharf. I didna look at it, but spoiled gin they kent wha the corp was. Just inaugin ma feelin's, dear Wullie, when they tellt me it was mase!—Hugh Airlie, o' Tamson an' Tamson's warehouse—a puir deevil, they said, that Tamson had employed oot o' charity tae soop up the warehouse, but wha had ta'en tae drinkin' an' dissipation at nicht, an' wha was last seen drunk on the street on Saturday night at twal o'clock. I was sick, Wullie, dead sick, an' when I luickt at the body, an' thoct hoo that was me, I slippit awa, tellin' them they wad hae tae get a substitute as I couldna stand the sight o' a corp. It was puir Tawse! We had exchanged hats in the confusion o' cocktails an' pawtriotism, an' the puir onfortu-