

Tales and Sketches.

THE POWER OF A KISS.

BY A. D. WALKER.

Some years ago, and before the Woman's great temperance movement, there was, in one of our large cities, a temperance society organized, and it originated from the following incident: A good minister, who was deeply interested in the poorer classes, was one day accosted by a woman, who said:

"Mr. L——, I don't know what to do with my mother."

"Why," said the minister, "what is the matter with her?"

"She is a common street drunkard, and pawns every thing for drink. Since Saturday night she has drunk up two washtubs and a boiler."

"Is that possible!" said Mr. L——. "Why, she is a sort of an alligator-y woman: what do you mean?"

"I mean that this is my stock in trade, and she has sold it all for drink; can you help me?"

Mr. L—— talked encouragingly to the poor woman, and promised to aid her if possible.

And now he went to the drunkard, and endeavored to impress upon her a sense of her guilt, and she promised to do better; but she minded her promise only while he was present, and it was broken before the day was done.

Again and again he pleaded with her, and she at each interview promised to abstain from drink, and yet drank daily.

Others became interested and a temperance society was organized and the poor creature was one of the first to join it.

We have been informed further regarding her, but will relate a story truthful and interesting, of another intemperate female.

This same good minister told us the following story. Said he:

"There was in our city, a few years ago, one of the hardest cases I have ever met in the form of a woman. She would drink at morning, noon and night, and drink made her like an infuriated beast. Why, I have seen her led along by two policemen, one not daring alone to lay hands upon her. She wholly lost her self-respect, and was the most degraded object that could be met anywhere.

"After the temperance society, of which I have spoken, was organized, one good lady said to another: 'I am going to call on poor Mrs. W——, and see if I can do her any good.'

"Do not go! I beg you not!" said the other frightened at the thought.

"And why not pray?"

"The reasons for not going are strong. She will not heed you, or if she does she will kick you down stairs. She is a perfect brute when in liquor, and my advice is to stay away from her; and you will do well if you listen to my warning."

"I must go and see her, and try to aid her," answered the benevolent woman, whose mind was fully made up on the subject.

"And go she did, intent on doing good. She reached the place, and mounted the rickety stairs that led to her miserable room, groped her way to the door, and peeped cautiously in; and in the far corner of the room she saw what seemed to be a great bundle of rags; going over to the spot she found it was the poor wretch she was seeking, and she laid her hand upon the inebriate's shoulder without speaking a word. The fallen woman raised her face, and oh! what a face it was, bloated, scarred, red and vicious.

"The benevolent woman silently leaned over, and kissed that truly repulsive face, still without speaking."

"What did you do that for?" eagerly questioned the poor creature.

"Because I love you and want you to do better."

"Heeding not the answer, the drunkard rocked back and forth, still repeating the question, 'What did you do that for? I have never had a kiss like that since I was a child—a pure little child, not a vile drunkard. Oh! what did you do that for?'" and she broke into sobs, uncontrollable sobs.

"The good Samaritan assisted her to rise, helped her down the stairs, and led her to her own house, where she was decently clad, and when evening came she willingly went with her benefactor to a religious meeting, a meeting where the poor outcast was welcome. The good minister who led the meeting was pastor over a church situated in a locality where vice grew like weeds, and he labored willingly as a missionary among the poor and degraded, feeling that such was his Master's work for him."

"After service, it was his wont to ask any that felt their need to stand up for prayers, and on the evening above referred to he followed his usual custom, and up before his view arose the drunkard, Mrs. W——.

"Ah!" thought he, "now here is trouble; there will be a row raised," for well he knew the vileness and strength of the fallen woman.

"What do you wish, madam?" he politely asked, hoping to quell her rage.

"I wish—to—be—prayed—for," she stammered.

"What do you wish?" repeated the pastor, not believing his senses.

"I want—to—be—prayed for," she again answered, looking him full in the face from out her bleared eyes.

"He was just about fulfilling her request, when the poor wretch added, 'But I want her to pray for me,'" and she pointed to the good woman at her side.

"What could I do?" said the pastor: 'it was against the rules of our church to ask a woman to speak in meeting, but I could not heed rules under such circumstances, and I said: Madam here is a poor soul who wants your prayers—pray for her. Down knelt the good sister, and she earnestly prayed. The prayer was not eloquent, neither lengthy. It was simply these words: Oh, Lord, help her to do better; she wants Thy help. Do come and help her to do right, for Jesus' sake. Amen.'"

"They arose and went their way, but God hears prayer, and that was the commencement of better things for the poor, degraded Mrs. W——."

"Two years after this, there was in the same church a great temperance meeting, and the women marched in the procession. At their head came a large, handsome woman, bearing a blue silk banner on which appeared the words: 'Woman's work for woman's weal.' The good pastor had a friend with him in the pulpit, who asked:

"Who is that large, fine looking woman?"

"That is Mrs. W——."

"And, pray, who is Mrs. W——?"

"The pastor then related the story we have here told."

"And what wrought a reform in one so base?" asked the friend in surprise.

"It was the power of the Gospel, sir," answered the pastor.

"And how did the Gospel reach her?" was asked. "Was it through your preaching?"

"I think not, but let us call her and ask her," and the pastor beckoned the woman to come forward. She modestly advanced, and he asked: "Mrs. W——, what wrought your reformation?"

"It was the power of a kiss," and she again repeated the story we have told, and added: "Ministers of the Gospel had talked to me of my degradation, and told me how dreadful the life was I was leading; other men had upbraided me, and told me that I ought to be ashamed; a woman making herself such a spectacle, and sternly bid me to do better. This did no good, nor influenced me in the least; but when that good, dear, angel woman came to me and kissed me, my hard heart was softened, and when she told me that it was because she loved me, I was melted to the soul, and she, under God, was the means of my reform."

"And now, Mrs. W—— to-day is leading the life of a Christian."—*Christian & Work.*

For Girls and Boys.

"I WANT TO VOTE FOR MY PA!"

"Good morning my little man; and who will you vote for to-day?" So said a neighbor to little Jimmie Lambert, a brave five-year-old. It was village election day, and the neighbor was on his way to the polls. Jimmie straightened himself up and was puzzled but for a moment; a bright thought struck him.

"I—I'm going to vote for my pa," he said, as if there could be no doubt about the propriety of that.

"I guess you are not big enough," replied the man, laughing, "but you might try."

Jimmie's old plays suddenly grew stale. Here was a new thing that men were doing, and he wanted to do the same: for all play is but an imitation of real life, whether it be the play of children in the nursery, or of grown people on the stage. But he was sorely puzzled how to do it, and after trying several things, and calling them voting, he said to his little sister, fourteen months younger than himself:

"Mamie, let's go an' vote down town," and off they went. But mamie saw them. Now Mrs. Lambert was somewhat out of temper that day, for Mr. Lambert, while fuddled with beer at the saloon, had just made a peculiarly unfortunate bargain. He had traded his cow, one main support of his family, for a washing machine which some smooth-tongued guzzler assured him would do their washing before breakfast—meaning, of course, if they commenced early enough! Mrs. Lambert was kneading bread and brooding over this matter when she spied the two children just turning into the street.

"Jimmie!" she cried, "James Henry! Do you hear me? Come into the house."

James Henry obeyed, though reluctantly.

"I'm goin' to vote for pa," he said by way of apology.