

## Tales and Sketches.

## SOME CHEESE AND A GLASS OF ALE.

BY ELLA GUERNSEY.

"Dear, how pale you are this morning! Surely you are not well. Let me give you a bit of brown bread and a glass of ale; and try some of this cheese—Mr. Hallam brought it home yesterday; it is very fine and strengthening."

Mrs. Hallam, with kindly intent hustled about her pantry. She really loved the eighteen-year-old daughter of their neighbor.

Susie ate to please her hostess; twice did Mrs. Hallam fill the large goblet with fine old ale.

"There, dear, you look brighter; and now tell me of the company at Mrs. Howard's last night."

Susie did look rosy. Her brown eyes sparkled, her tongue ran glibly. An hour passed; she began to feel stupid; her head ached dully. More wine was brought in, and drank by Susie to cure the headache.

"I think I must go now, Mrs. Hallam. You are my good physician; I shall come again when I feel dull and weak."

"Ah! do, Susie. Mr. Hallam always has brandy, ale or wine in his cellar. He thinks brandy or ale, with a morsel of fine cheese, an aid to digestion and good health. I am glad to be able to bring color to those pale cheeks."

"What a darling she is, and how proud we should be of a daughter like her!" said Mrs. Hallam, looking after her.

Another besides Mrs. Hallam admired the slender, pretty, brown-eyed girl, and Richard Hildreth, the matrimonial prize of Lambton, had made up his mind none other than Susie Severn should be mistress of the old Hildreth homestead.

True, she was eighteen, while he was thirty-four; but he thought he could keep young for her sake. He had made known his wishes to Susie's parents, who, knowing him to be a good, true, as well as a wealthy man, was willing to give him their daughter, but desired him to plead his cause in his own time and way.

In some manner Susie was launched into a series of gay dances and theatre-goings. This was not as Mrs. Severn desired. Though not a religious woman, she was an old-fashioned mother, who believed in girls keeping their freshness, and not learning the ins and outs of fashionable society too young.

Susie's health began to fail with such a draft upon her strength, and Mrs. Hallam was ever so kind and ready to "tone her up" with a glass of ale or wine; lately it had come to sipping a tiny glass of brandy.

"What should I do without you, Mrs. Hallam? you are my good angel. When I come over here, a bundle of aches, you rouse me up. I feel new life and strength." And the gay girl sat down to the piano and began to sing:

"There's much good cheer in youthful age,  
When fairy scenes the hearts engage!"

then stopping abruptly, and whirling around upon the piano stool, she asked, "Could I become a drunken woman? Sometimes I fear I am getting to love your cellar too well. Mother is so strict in her 'temperance notions,' and some way I don't feel free to tell her of my wine-drinking over here. This morning I read of some young girls being arrested for drunkenness; it made me shudder as if I had been with them. Dear friend, is there danger for me in the glass of ale or wine?"

"Susie! you a drunken woman! Impossible! Those girls were born with depraved tastes. When I see danger for you I will tell you of it in time."

All winter and summer Susie was gay and happy. Richard Hildreth proposed, was accepted, and the wedding day appointed.

Susie was very much in love with her grave lover—practiced the music he admired, read the books he liked, and was eager to learn the mysteries of housekeeping.

Mr. Hildreth would have lavished costly presents upon Susie, but Mamma Severn had old-fashioned scruples, and would not permit her to accept many.

At last the bridal day came. "Pshaw!" said the vexed little lady, as she was awakened by the drip, drip, of a downpouring rain, "What is the old proverb? 'Blessed is the bride the sun shines upon;' but then, I am sure nothing but blessedness awaits the bride of Dick Hildreth."

The wedding journey was over, and Susie settled down into a demure little home maker; and Richard Hildreth thought he had found paradise, so fond and proud of his young wife, who in turn cared only for his society.

In his cellar was a goodly store of ales, brandies and Widow Cliquot's clarets and rare whiskies. Not that he drank or it often came to the table, but then, it was the correct thing to have it when wanted, and he had never suffered in any way from the evil. It was not strange he took little thought of the temptation he was placing before Susie.

She began to run to the cellar every time she felt languor; her headaches became more frequent, then more wine was taken to deaden the pain.

At length, frightened by the empty bottles that were telling the shameful story, she watched for cook's absence and stealthily hid them away.

Once she tried to break the chain, but soon grew weak. At breakfast, while handing "Dick" his chocolate, the cup fell from her hand, the frail china shattered into tiny fragments; another cup, and another, shared the same fate, and she fell fainting at his feet.

The doctor came—a good man who loved Susie, but never guessed her weakness, and did not know that he was placing a stumbling-block in her path, or giving her a push down the road to death that her feet were even now treading.

"Nervous system all run down; must have brandy, wine, porter, and plenty of it, Hildreth."

Will not something else answer, doctor?" asked Mrs. Severn. "I do not like to give any such dangerous things to Susie."

"Madam, your daughter is a lady, and a very sick woman—comes of no depraved family. A little wine is a good thing in its place, and here seem to be one of its places. We all know, Mrs. Severn, of your prejudices, and think you carry them a little too far. Pardon me if I seem rude."

Richard and Mrs. Severn petted and nursed Susie back to health. A glass of wine or brandy stood near at hand, and one day Richard awoke to the knowledge that his wife was an inebriate.

Only the God who knoweth all hearts can enable us to endure such sorrows as were the mother's and husband's. And now was told to Mrs. Severn the beginning of the drinking at Mrs. Hallam's, and a battle between appetite and desire to break the chain that held her fast.

Richard banished all spirits from his cellar; one night he was awakened by a slight noise. Looking up, he saw Susie take money from his purse. He guessed it would go to the wine-seller, and took care to remove the temptation from her way. Soon he saw cook flaunting about in a violet velvet bonnet Susie had always looked so modest in; she had sold it to get brandy! One by one the dainty bridal robes went the same way.

Do what Richard could, her appetite for brandy increased. She shrieked and raved like a mad woman when deprived of it. "Oh, give me a teaspoonful or just one drop, if you love me, Richard!" But the husband was firm in his refusal to give her the fiery poison.

One night Susie was to spend the evening with her mother, and Richard was to call for her on his way home from the store. He was in a honey-mood, as Susie had for some days abstained, and was her gay, usual self; but his heart sank upon reaching Mrs. Severn's, and no Susie had been there.

He hurried home. All was dark. Smelling smoke he rushed to the door of his wife's room and opened it. There upon the floor lay the charred form of Susie Severn Hildreth. A decanter of Otard brandy upon the table, and a broken lamp at her feet, told the miserable story. Cook had again smuggled brandy into the room, the lamp had slipped from the unsteady hands, and a fiery death claimed the young wife.

"God forgive you, Mrs. Hallam, and help me to do so!" sobbed Mrs. Severn. "I did not know when my sweet little daughter visited you that you were luring her to death. How can I lose my darling so!"

Mrs. Hallam approached her with a glass of ammonia. "O, take it away! O, take it away! there's a death, a fiery death in the bottle and glass!" screamed the half-crazed mother, and Mrs. Hallam, conscience-smitten, left the poor mother to her grief.

The sighing and whispering pines chant the requiem of Susy Severn Hildreth. We often meet in the cemetery a stern, sorrowful middle aged man, supporting a bowed, white-haired mother. They stand by a marble shaft marked, "Our Susie." The mother wails out over and over again, "There's death, a fiery death, in the bottle and glass! Oh, when I find my poor little girl that is lost, will I warn her of the death—a fiery death! My lost darling!"

Richard comforts the feeble, deranged mother as best he can, but his heart cries out with the mother, and he longs to know "when shall he find his girl that is lost."

Mrs. Hallam banished wines and ales from the cellar. Daily she weeps when she sees the ruin her work has wrought in the Severn family, and no one tends more lovingly the demented mother than she; while by her earnest work she now tries to save other young and tender feet from the snares that she helped entangle around poor, weak Susie Severn.

"May God forgive me and mine evil deed!" is her daily prayer.—*Morning and Day of Reform.*

## WHAT DRINK WILL DO.

A child of twelve years came to school one day with tears, entreating us to go to her home. Her excitement was so great that we went at once, and beheld a scene too dreadful to describe. It was a drunkard's home. The father lay upon the floor, helplessly drunk, where he had fallen, cutting his face, which was covered with blood. The mother, so intoxicated she could scarcely stand, was holding an iron poker in her hand and threatening the lives of four children, from three to ten years of age. Such is the result of rum-selling and rum-drinking! the curse of our land, and the cause of most of the wretchedness, want, suffering and crime we see among us! Oh for the power to remove it!—*Advocate and Guardian.*