



Temperance Department.

POTATOES: AN ILLUSTRATION.

BY THE REV. THOMAS SNOW.

For the purpose of illustrating a certain subject I draw a fancy sketch, and ask the reader to accompany me in imagination to another country.

After landing on its shores we make our way to one of the principal towns, and on the morning of the following day we sally out to make our observations.

In passing through a street, we hear the question asked at an open door, "How is your husband this morning?" and we are startled by the reply which the wife gives: "We've had a terrible night with him. I had to call the neighbors in to hold him, or else he would have jumped out of the window. O these potatoes—these potatoes—they are killing him! When he keeps from potatoes he's all right, and we've a comfortable house; but there's so many shops open he can't pass 'em by, and when he takes one potato he will have more, and they get to his brain and make him into a madman."

Going further on we hear the noise of crying children. "What is the matter?" we ask. "O, they're Mary Tomkin's children. A kind lady saw them in 'e street yesterday all in rags, and asked 'em where they lived, and their mother told her a fine tale of poverty and destitution. So this morning the lady sent them some clothes that had belonged to her own little 'uns. The servant tried 'em on the children, the poor little things was wonderfully pleased, and Mary was all smiles and thanks. But as soon as the servant was well out of sight what does Mary do but strip them off the children and put on their rags again, and now she's off with them to pledge for money to take to the potato shop. And so that's what the crying's about." "Is this the way with the mothers of this country?" we indignantly ask. "O dear no," is the ready reply. "It's only when they take to potatoes. I remember Mary Tomkins when she was as good and kind a mother as ever lived; and when that oldest girl was about the size of the youngest but one, we used all of us to notice how clean and tidy Mary kept her, but since she took to potatoes they're always just as you see them now."

Proceeding on our way, we see men here and there staggering in the street, and we ask, "Are those men ill?" "No—they've been eating potatoes."

We go out after nightfall. We hear loud shrieks, and hasten in the direction whence they proceed. We see a group of people standing in the light proceeding from an open door. We come forward and behold a woman laid upon the floor. We hear her heavy and painful breathing until it ceases, and ceases finally. We notice a man leaning back upon the arm-chair, the only person present who does not comprehend the meaning of the scene. He came from the potato-shop not many minutes ago in a state of frenzy, which is now followed by stupefaction. He commenced beating his wife as he was wont to do in his madness; but this time, after felling her to the ground, he inflicted a violent kick in the region of the heart, and now the police have come to take him to prison.

Next morning we take our walk in the suburbs. We find ourselves approaching the public cemetery. We enter the grounds, and are civilly accosted by a townsman whom we overtake. He joins us in our walk round, chatting pleasantly as we go along. Looking at a head-stone in front of us he remarks, "Poor fellow, I knew him intimately. His father and I were boys together. He was a bright and promising lad as ever you saw, but he fell into bad company and got a liking for potatoes, and then it was all over with him. He was mad after them, though we could all see they were bringing him to the grave. He would have been alive and well and prosperous now if it had not been for potatoes." We look at the lettering, and read, "age 23."

On returning into the town we enter the

Town Hall. The magistrates are on the bench and are trying the "cases," and we soon find they are nearly all potato cases. One after another the bleary-eyed victims of potatoes stand in the dock. Some have been drunk and incapable, some drunk and disorderly, some are charged with crimes more or less serious, but the great bulk of them have been brought to their disgraceful position through eating potatoes.

We begin to conclude that we have lighted upon a very unfortunate town. So we take our departure and make our observations in another part of the country. But here again we encounter scenes of the same character. And go where we will, we find a most fearful amount of crime, pauperism, lunacy, and premature death chargeable upon potatoes! Nay, so common is the vice of excess herein, that the articles themselves do not require to be specified when reference is made to that vice. The indefinite expression "he eats," or "she eats," or "they eat," conveys a meaning unmistakably particular, viz., that the persons referred to eat potatoes, and eat them to a degree which is discreditable to the character, and detrimental to all the qualifications of well-being and well-doing.

If you knew such a country you would say that it was in very deed suffering from a potato blight—not a blight upon the potatoes, but unspeakably worse than that, a blight inflicted thereby. You would deem it an honor and privilege to contribute in any way towards the removal of that blight. You would scarcely, methinks, plead for the use as distinguished from the abuse but would rather urge in the name of common humanity and common sense that the whole thing, root and branch, be swept away altogether.

The above is an imaginary sketch. But dear reader, you know a country, and you know an article in that country concerning which every word in the above sketch is no fiction and no exaggeration, but a great and terrible reality. That country is our own beloved England, and that article is intoxicating drink, an article which owes its injurious and fatal properties not to the God of nature but to human manipulation—an article the evil results of which beggar description and defy exaggeration, while the supposed beneficial effects of its use as an ordinary beverage constitute the greatest and most unfortunate error the world was ever beguiled with. Do you doubt this latter statement? The accumulated testimony of the past fifty years to the superior health and greater longevity of hundreds of thousands, yea millions of total abstainers from this beverage, amounts to a demonstration which whose runs may read.

Ponder well, dear reader, these two facts—(1) the unspeakably appalling and widespread evils of the immoderate drinking of intoxicating liquors arise directly from its moderate use as a beverage; and (2) that moderate use as a beverage is useless.

Underbarrow Parsonage, Milnthorpe.

CARDS AND DRINK.

"Cards and wine, the two great breakers
That have wrecked so many souls,
Wrecked and shattered, lost to heaven,
At the table, in the bowls."

In the winter of 1870 I had occasion to go from Green Bay to Chicago, on the N. W. Railway.

I noticed an old lady who had got on board at Menasha, I believe. Gray and bent with age, she had sat abashed, and with eyes closed, seemed asleep most of the time till the train, stopping at Oshkosh, took on board a company of lawyers. Her manner then changed and she became greatly interested in the company, looking often from one to the other as if she recognized them all, or was trying to recall the faces. When the game of cards was started she became very restless; she hitched uneasily about in her seat, took up the hem of her faded apron and nervously bit the threads. She got up after a time and tottered forward, holding the seats as she passed. Reaching the players, she paused directly in front of them, and looked around the company. Her action at once arrested their attention and they all looked up inquiringly.

Gazing directly into the face of Judge—, she said, in a tremulous voice; "Do you know me, Judge—?"

"No, mother, I don't remember you,"

said the Judge pleasantly. "Where have we met?"

"My name is Smith," said she; "I was with my poor boy three days, off and on, in the court-room in Oshkosh, when he was tried for—for robbing somebody, and you are the same man that sent him to prison for ten years, and he died there last June."

All faces were now sobered, and the passengers began to gather around and stand up all over the car to listen and see what was going on. "He was a good boy if you did send him to gaol. He helped us to clear the farm, and when father was sick and died he done all the work, and we was gettin' along right smart till he took to goin' to town, and keards and drinkin', and then, somehow, he didn't like to work after that, but used to stay out often till 'most mornin', and then he'd sleep late. And then the farm kinder run down, and then we lost the team; one of 'em got killed when he'd been to town late at night. And so after a while he coaxed me to let him sell the farm and buy a house and lot in the village, and he'd work at carpenter work. And so I did, as we couldn't do nothin' on the farm. But he grew worse than ever, and after a while he couldn't git any work and wouldn't do anythin' but gamble and drink all the time. I used to do everythin' I could to get him to quit and be a good, and industrious boy agin, but he used to get mad after a while, and once he struck me, and then in the mornin' I found he had got what little money there was left of the farm, and he had run off. After that I got along as well as I could, cleanin' house for folks and washin', but I didn't hear nothin' of him for four or five years. When he got arrested and took up to Oshkosh for trial he writ to me."

By this time there was not a dry eye in the car, and the cards had disappeared. The old lady herself was weeping silently and speaking in snatches. But, recovering herself, she went on:

"But what could I do? I sold the house and lot to get money to hire a lawyer, and I believe he is here somewhere," looking around. "Oh, yes, there he is, Mr.—," pointing to Lawyer—who had not taken part in the play. "And this is the man, I am sure, who argued agin him," pointing to Mr.—, the district attorney. "And you, Judge—, sent him to prison for ten years. I s'pose it was right, for the poor boy told me that he really did rob the bank, but he said he must have been drunk, for they had all been playin' keards' most all night and drinkin'. But, oh, dear! it seems to me kinder as though if he hadn't got to playin' keards he might a-been alive now. But when I used to tell him it was wrong and bad to play, he would say: 'Why mother, everybody plays now. I never bet only for the candy or the cigars, or somethin' like that.' And when we heard that the young folks played keards down to Mr. Culver's donation party, and that 'Squire Ring was going to get a billiard table for his young folks to play on at home, I couldn't do nothin' at all with him. We used to think it was awful to do that way, when I was young, but it jist seems to me as if everybody nowadays was goin' wrong into something or other. But maybe it isn't right for me to talk to you, Judge, in this way, but it jist seemed as if the very sight of them keards would kill me, and I thought if you only knew how I felt, you wouldn't play on so, and then to think, right here afore all these young folks. Maybe, Judge, you don't know how young folks, especially boys, look up to such as you, and then I can't help thinkin' that maybe if them as ought to know better than to do so, and them as are higher larnt, and all that, wouldn't set sich examples, my poor Tom would be alive and carin' for his poor old mother; but now there ain't any of my family left, only me and my poor little gran'chile, my dear darter's little gal, and we are going down to stop with my brother in Illinois."

Tongue of man or angel never preached a more eloquent sermon than did the gray, withered old lady, trembling with age, excitement, and fear that she was doing wrong. I can't recall the half she said as she, poor, lone beggared widow, stood before those noble-looking men, and pleaded the cause of the rising generation. To say they looked like criminals at the bar would be a faint description. I can imagine how they felt. The old lady tottered to her seat, and taking her little grandchild in her lap, hid her face on her neck. The little one

stroked her gray hair with one hand, and said, "Don't cry, ganma, don't cry, ganma." Eyes unused to weeping were red for many a mile on that journey. And I can hardly believe that any one who witnessed that scene ever touched a card again. It is but just to say that the passengers generously responded to the Judge, when he, hat in hand, silently passed through the little audience and made a collection for the poor widow—*Leaflets for Young People.*

HOW THE LEAK WAS MENDED.

BY REV. EDWARD A. BARD.

"Uncle Timothy!"

Uncle Timothy looked up from the shoe whose sole he was vigorously hammering. "Why, bless you, John, ef I'm not glad to see you, man alive!" exclaimed Uncle Timothy, jumping up so suddenly that his last went one way, taking the shoe with it, his hammer went another, while his spectacles fell into the water pail close by.

There stood Uncle Timothy grasping the arm of his favorite nephew, John, as if he were a pump-handle, and the day being hot, and Uncle Timothy being dry, the pump-handle was worked with emphasis.

"Set down, John, and tell us how the folks are," said Uncle Timothy. "You have come to make me a visit, and have time enough to tell me all I want to know."

John was telling about "the folks," when Uncle Timothy said:

"What's that? Thunder, I do believe, rollin' down old Bear Mountain! We shall catch a rain now. There it is comin' down the mountain."

Come it did, furiously. Soon the water began to drip down from the ceiling.

"Uncle Timothy, your roof is leaking."

"I know it, John; I know it. I will just put this pail under that 'ere."

"Why don't you have the roof mended?"

"Well, John, carpenters, you know, do charge so! La! John, they'd make a forenoon's work of it stoppin' up that 'ere hole, and I don't seem to have the extra chink. Fact is, John, it costs suthin' to live in this world, and it keeps a feller poundin' all the time."

Here Uncle Timothy took up his work and began to ring out a series of responses to the thunder rolling at nine-pins overhead. In the course of his visit John noticed that every forenoon Uncle Timothy would leave his shop, step across the yard to his house, bring out an immense yellow mug, and passing to a saloon in the neighborhood, bring home a mug full of beer.

"Ah!" thought John, "I see how it is that the roof is not mended."

The next day a surly, growling wind brought rain that began to pour early in the morning.

"Uncle Timothy," said John, after breakfast, "could I borrow that mug I see in the closet?"

"Oh! sartin, sartin."

Uncle Timothy was not going to his shop very early that day, and John knew it, business at another part of the town calling him away. When he returned it was about eleven o'clock, and his beer gnawing visited him.

"Where is my mug?" said Uncle Timothy, going to the closet. "Oh! John has it. Well, I guess I'll let my beer go this forenoon."

The rain was still dripping when he passed from his house to the shop. John was standing in the door.

"A wet day, nephew," said Uncle Timothy, "and there is not much hope given by the clouds."

Here he looked up, and there on the shop roof, covering the leak, he saw his old yellow beer-mug! For a minute Uncle Timothy gazed in silence. Then he broke out:

"Thank ye, John; I'll take the hint."

It was the last day Uncle Timothy owned a beer-mug. It was the last day that roof leaked, for it was soon mended with the beer-money he saved.—*Watchman.*

THERE ARE FIFTEEN times as many saloons in Chicago as there are in the entire state of Kansas. Does this prove that prohibition is a failure and high license works satisfactorily?

IF THE PUBLIC drinking places of England were placed side by side, in a straight line, they would extend a distance of 700 miles.