

Then right behind them, like a wall of defense comes a mighty host of reformed men—clothed, thank God, to-night in their right minds and as they build, their manly voices sing out, "Hold the fort for we are coming." Then behind them comes an army of wounded and bereft ones; wives, broken hearted; mothers bowed down, sisters, brotherless; sweethearts, loverless. Yet, with faith, like John of old pictured on their sweet faces, they, too, sing—listen! it is faith and victory linked—

"My faith looks up to Thee
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine."

And thus they build. By and bye this pyramid will be complete. What shall its capstone be? I look up, and in glory tinted letters I read "National Constitutional Prohibition." May its counterpart be erected beneath the flag of your Queen, and later a grander civilization than ours,—grander because they shall be children born of men and women who did not drink,—shall surge around their base and look up their rugged sides and shall say who built these, who built these pyramids? who built these pyramids? Then I trust you and I looking over the aspired walls of heaven may see the very stones we set in place, and I know that the surging will be happier and the rest sweeter and the hallelujahs longer because we helped to build them. They say to us in Iowa that we will retreat. They point to the Good Templars and the men who have been redeemed, and say "they'll not last; they'll go back." Remember during our unhappy war, when valiant brave men fought on both sides, there were those who talked this way of freedom, but I remember standing before Pittsburg once and seeing long rows of them, "when teeth gleam and eyeballs shine." Up through the dew and smoke they marched, the dead and dying on every hand. In advance of one company a color bearer was shot, but another grasped the flag and on he marched till his arm was crushed, when a third grasped it and far on ahead of his company he ran, when the captain shouted, "Sam, bring back those colors." The black man with flag aloft shouted over the smoke and blaze of battle, "Dese yere colors never go back; bring de men up to de colors." So we in Iowa have planted the white banner of Prohibition out in the very foremost of battle and we shout back to the enemy "These colors never shall go back; bring your men up to the colors!"

Tales and Sketches.

OVER A COFFIN LID.

"She—was—a—good—wife—to—me. A good wife, God bless her." The words were spoken in trembling accents over a coffin lid. The woman asleep there had borne the heat and burden of life's long day, and no one had ever heard her murmur; her hand was quick to reach out in a helping grasp to those who fell by the wayside, and her feet were swift on errands of mercy; the heart of her husband had trusted in her; he had left her to long hours of solitude, while he amused himself in scenes in which she had no part. When boon companions deserted him, when sickle affection selfishly departed, when pleasure palled, he went home and found her waiting for him.

"Come from your long, long roving,
On life's sea so bleak and rough,
Come to me tender and loving
And I shall be blessed enough."

That had been her love song—always on her lips or in her heart. Children had been born to them. She had reared them almost alone—they were gone! Her hand had led them to the uttermost edge of the morning that had no noon. Then she had comforted him, and sent him out strong and whole-hearted while she stayed at home and—cried. What can a woman do but cry, and trust? Well, she is at rest now. But she could not die until he had promised to "bear up"—not to fret, but to remember how happy they had been. They? Yes, it is even so. For she was blest in giving, and he in receiving. It was an equal partnership after all!

"She—was—a—good—wife—to—me!" Oh man! man!—Why not have told her so, when her ears were not dulled by death? Why wait to say these words over a coffin wherein lies a wasted, weary, gray-haired woman, whose eyes have so long held that pathetic story of loss and suffering and patient yearning which so many women's eyes reveal—to those who read. Why not have made the wilderness in her heart blossom like the rose with the prodigality of your love? Now you would give worlds—were they yours to give—to see the tears of joy your words have caused, bejeweling the closed windows of her soul. It is too late.

We have careful thoughts for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest,
But oft for our own
The bitter tone,
'Though we love our own the best.

Detroit Free Press.

"NELLIE'S WEDDING-RING."

It was wet and cold outside, a drizzling chilly rain was falling, and those who had a home to go to, hurried on as quickly as they could, to get into shelter. The sky was unlighted by moon or star, and the wind moaned with a pitiful wailing sound; altogether the state of the weather seemed bent on making those who were unfortunate enough to be out in it quite gloomy and spiritless.

Hurrying along as fast as she was capable up one of the streets of our city, was a woman poorly clad; she paused many times to catch her breath, and one had but to hear her hacking cough to know that her weary form would soon be tired no more. She stopped at length outside of the "Pride of Ulster"—a public house whose name was certainly a misfit. She peered through the window, but the shutters were closed, then through a chink in the door, but apparently without success. She strained her hearing to catch if possible the sound of a voice, which, alas, she had often heard there before, but she could not now discern it in the dinning chorus that rose from the throats of those within.

Poor woman! what a mission! What made the memory flash through her brain just then, of a church in the valley of Glen—of a young man's voice proudly vowing to love, honour, and cherish his wife till death did them part. Well, death had not come between them, but drink had.

Could we but lift the veil of futurity and see the fate that awaited some of our loved ones, or perhaps ourselves—the hushed up memory, the dishonoured grave, all brought to pass through drink, we should say with shuddering breath, "Death! death before drink ten thousand times!"

With trembling hands she knocked at the door, once, twice, but no answer; again, and yet again she sought in vain to draw attention, and still the rain and wind played about her sadly, the cruel drops seemed determined to soak the thread-bare shawl and dress, and torn shoes, while the wind blew coldly and drearily, making the thin form cower for shelter still closer to the doorway. Ten o'clock struck, once more the feeble hands sought for admittance in vain. Half-past ten, eleven—the door opens, the publican peeps out carefully to ascertain the state of things outside, if the weather is genial enough for his drunken customers to face home in; he rubs his greasy looking hands together, and draws back with a shiver as the cold air meets him, and a few cold drops of rain sprinkle his highly-colored face. He pushes the door with a bang almost, but it won't shut. Why, what is this? A woman's cold thin hand caught between the door and the threshold.

The landlord is terrified, and runs to the room from whence issue a villianous perfume of cheap tobacco, porter, whiskey, &c., and the usual accompaniment of drunken oaths, and vile songs. "Here, Barnes, quick, I tell you! Edwards, come along! here's a case at the door, be quick! some old hag been and got drunk, and trying to shove her hand in thro' my door-way. Lucky I didn't break it."

Barnes and Edwards, the only two capable of walking, rose and tottered after him.

"What the—does she mean by throwin' herself at my door?" said the landlord indignantly, as he held the lamp that its light might fall on the threshold. "Here, I say, give her a kick off my premises, will you, Barnes?" said he, coarsely: "I aint goin' to be pestered with police and sich like comin' in here a botherin'."

Barnes, the younger of the two men who had followed him from the tap-room, staggered forward to have a nearer view of the poor thin hand and arm, that lay so helplessly on the ground. What makes him start back and tremble so? Why does he look so terrified? Why does his heated face grow so cold and ghastly, just for that look!

The landlord glances contemptuously at him, and says sneeringly, "Well, Barnes, you be a chicken after all, I knows how to deal wi' such. Look here," and he raised his heavy foot to kick the prostrate form off the narrow pathway at his door. "Hold! you dare," cried Barnes, as he clutched the landlord's arm and drew him back.

"Hi! hands off, Barnes, summat upset you, man: have a drop of brandy." "The mischief take you and your brandy," muttered Barnes, as he pushed the landlord from him, and stopped to raise the poor soaked body that had fallen at their feet.

Poor Barnes! drunk as he was, his eyes had recognised on that hand the wedding ring he had placed there five years ago. Yes, it was his wife. Worn out and chilled through waiting, she had at length sunk down exhausted.

Useless were all the invitations of the owner of the "Pride of Ulster" to have "summat to set him up." Thoroughly sobered now with fear and shame, Barnes clasped his wife in his arms and hurried home. Home! a few rooms all but devoid of furniture, and without fire or light of any description. This was all drink had given him in return for a snug cottage, nicely furnished, some acres of land, a few cows, and a pretty garden; besides all this a good reputation, and a steady employment. Just weigh them in the scales, drink on one side, home, happiness, and a hopeful hereafter on the other. See drink with its deadly weight sinks them all down, and yet there are many who prefer this deadly weight.