

The Silent Sabbath.

BY REV. S. C. KRELLER.

A SPELL of silence fell on all the town,
As gently hour by hour the snow came down
And filled the village street;
One only sign of human life was given—
The curling columns rose from earth to heaven,
The falling cloud to meet.

On all that long and silent day of God,
The streets by man or beast remained untrod,
And grew so clean and wide,
As sifting snows obscured the narrow grade,
And roadway lines were deeply overlaid
And lost on either side.

The sleeping winds breathed not a moan or sigh
O'er hill or vale or through the frosted sky,
To mar the scene so rare;
The smoky shaft shot up with lines un bent,
The downy flock scarce curved in its descent,
So pulseless was the air.

And strangely mute the hillside forest stood,
While widely over field and stream and wood,
Noiseless and calm and white,
The snow-cloud fell and crowned the forest's head,
And deftly round its form a mantle spread
With crystal beauty bright.

The streamlet's babbling tongue was also hushed,
And its voice was muffled as on it rushed
'Neath its burden of snow;
The bending willows bowed low at its side,
Wondering if the frozen stream had died,
And listened for its flow.

The holy hours foretold no Sabbath bell,
On it the charm of silence also fell,
While passed the time of prayer.
Still idly in its snowy tower it hung,
And from morn to eve its silvery tongue
Was silent as despair.

The village church no people came to fill,
Its altar and its aisles were lone and still,
For no one came to pray;
No joyful songs their praiseful echoes woke,
No preacher's voice the reigning silence broke
Throughout the sacred day.

When the long Sabbath of the grave shall lay
Its spell on all the living of to-day,
And silently the rest,
'Neath summer sunshine and the winter snows,
In Christ, the Sabbath's Lord, may they repose,
In hopeful silence blest!

"ALWAYS STAND BY YOUR COLOURS!"

BY EDWARD A. RAND.

"WHAT is going on inside?" asked Squire David Hurlburt, who stood in the vestibule of the old church, and listened to some one earnestly addressing an enthusiastic audience of boys. "Oh, it is that temperance fanatic! And there is my grandson, Mark. What does he know about intemperance? He is not much higher than a beer-bottle."

Mark Hurlburt was not so very tall, it is true, and, indeed, a great stature could not be expected for a boy of ten; but you seldom find more resoluteness packed away to the cubic foot than could be found in Mark Hurlburt. He was determined he would be resolute now in the doing of any temperance duty. It would have interested him if he could have heard this opinion of his grandfather out there in the church vestibule.

"Now I will see what this man has to say," thought the squire.

It was a strange minister, but the man knew how to capture and hold young hearts, and he now said: "It may be asked of you, what good you expect to do in the temperance society we have formed?"

"The very question!" declared the listening grandpa in the entry: "the very question I would like to have answered! There is my Mark—what can he do?"

As if answering this very question, the speaker here pulled out of his breast-pocket a small flag. He waved it, and shouted: "You can always show your colours, boys! You can do that much—letting everybody know you are temperance boys—that you touch not, taste not, handle not. And then, always stand by your colours, boys! You can do that much, can't you?"

"Yes! Yes!" enthusiastically replied the boys, pulling out their handkerchiefs and waving them in response to the speaker's little flag.

"Feenaticism! Feenaticism!" declared a disgusted grandpa out in the entry. "I won't stay here and listen to any more such talk." Off he went, growling.

The next day Mark Hurlburt was over at his grandfather's, and he was helping the hired-man, Sampson Drew, who was busily ploughing.

"There!" said Sampson, "I wish, Mark, you would just give me a lift. If you'll ride Alexander for me, I'll come right arter, and stiddy the plough."

"I'm just the boy for you!" said Mark, always ready to do a favour. Furrow after furrow did the plough turn over, Zach, the dog, enthusiastically accompanying the party, and barking boisterously at any snake wriggling out of its damp hole into the warm, sunny air. It was an old corn-field that Sampson was marking with the long, brown furrows, and, though it was rather late in the season, Squire Hurlburt had told Sampson there was yet time to turn the ground over and get a crop in.

"Yes," declared Sampson, repeating this opinion to Mark, as they halted in one corner of the field, "it is a grain late for ploughin', Mark; but better late than never."

"Sampson," said Mark, "why don't you have a farm of your own? You know all about farming. Grandpa says you are a capital hand at doing anything about a farm. Why don't you run a farm for yourself?"

This was rather a plain question; but Mark and Sampson were very good friends, and talked very frankly to one another.

Sampson grinned; then he blushed to hear of the squire's compliment.

"He say that?" asked Sampson.

"Of course he did," replied Mark.

"Well, now, Mark, I'll tell you. You and I are good friends, and I can speak my mind to you. I will tell you why Sampson Drew don't own a farm."

Here Sampson looked steadily at Mark, and then continued: "Yes, I will tell you the long and the short of it, Mark. You know I have a family. Yes, Mark, I've got a boy as big as you, and I buried a boy—"

Here there were tears that glistened in Sampson Drew's dark eyes.

"Buried a boy even bigger than you. Just think of that, Mark!—a man that knows how to run a farm, that has a family of children old as that, and yet to day I am workin' for other folks! Now, I'll tell you why Sampson Drew hasn't a home of his own."

His earnestness, his tearfulness, moved Mark strongly.

"The reason why Sampson Drew hasn't a home of his own is because he likes a glass too well—because when Squire Hurlburt says, 'Sampson, take a glass of my old cider' Sampson Drew is jest fool enough to do it."

Mark looked pityingly on the man, and wondered what could be done.

"Say, Sampson," asked Mark, finally, "why, why don't you sign the pledge? We—we—will help you keep it."

"Who's 'we'?"

"We boys—all that belong to my society. G. a new one, you know."

"Ain't that funny—that boys should seem care so much about these things?"

"'Funny!' Don't see the fun."

"I mean 'strange.' That takes hold of me that fetches me in a deep place."

"See here, Sampson! Will you sign the pledge, I'll put my name down too, just—just to help you out."

"I never did that. I've heard of it's being done."

"It might help you a lot."

"That's what they say. I—I've—a great deal to. Where will we go?"

"Oh, come up to grandpa's."

It had not occurred to Sampson or Mark that there was anything singular in going to Squire Hurlburt's for pen and ink and paper, that Sampson might sign the temperance pledge. When, though, the squire's door was reached, Sampson said, in a low voice, "Don't know what the squire will say."

"Oh, he won't care. That's all right. Come on."

Mark pushed boldly forward; but when they reached the room that the squire called his "office" what did Mark see on a table at the squire's elbow? A pitcher of the strong old cider that the squire loved! Mark hesitated. Was he going to desert the colours he had promised to follow? Had he shown them before Sampson, would he be able to stand by them?

"Grandpa—would—would—you let me have pen and ink and a piece of paper?" asked Mark.

"Oh, yes!" said the squire. "Sartin! Sartin! You and Sampson want to make a contract?"

"He—he is—he is going to sign the temperance pledge. Don't you think he will do well at it?"

"I—I hope so," replied the squire, rather coldly—glancing at his cider-pitcher. "However, he has his paper; you'll find pen and ink on the table."

Mark continued to fly his colours, and said: "I'll write what we use in our society. We'll sign in, 'By the grace of God,' you know."

With a trembling hand, Sampson added his name to the total-abstinence pledge. Mark added his. Then they both left the room quietly.

The squire rose and went to the table. "What he said, 'they forgot to take their pledge!'"

Then he went to his chair. Somehow, he did not afterward touch the old pitcher that day, and before night, he went to the pledge, and lingered while before it.

"I'll send that to Sampson Drew," he said.

Sampson received it the next day.

"The Squire's handwriting!" exclaimed Sampson, opening the envelope directed to him. "By my discharge, I s'pect. No: another name here."

He slowly read, as a third signature, "David Hurlburt."

MAKING MINCE-PIES.

"THEY all put brandy in them!" said one.

"They all don't! My mother has never put a drop of brandy into her mince-pies since the day Bob said he could taste the brandy, and it tasted good. Mother said then it was wrong, and she would never be guilty of it again; and if my mother says a thing is wrong, you may be sure it is wrong—for what my mother knows she knows."

"How about mince-pies! Are you sure she knows how to make a mince-pie good?" another laugh went up from a group of girls gathered around the register of the recitation-room, eating their lunch. But some of them winced a little when back were tossed the words:

"If she don't, she knows how to make a mince-pie good, and isn't a boy worth more than a mince-pie?"