

lover; and don't trust to promises; try them, prove them all before you marry."

"Ellen, that's enough," interrupted Larry. "I have heard enough—the two proofs are enough without words. Now, hear me. What length of punishment am I to have. I won't say that, for, Nelly, there's a tear in the eye that says more than words. Look—I'll make no promises—but you shall see; I'll wait yer time; name it; I'll stand the trial."

Ellen named the period, and Lawrence, of course, declared it was the next thing to murder—it was murder itself to keep him so long—but he'd "put up with it"—he'd "brave it!"—he'd "walk straight into a sea of boiling hot whiskey punch until it touched his lips—flowed over his lips. And see! look there now! he'd never let it pass them—never, barring the one tumbler. She wouldn't say against one tumbler, would she?"

Ellen shook her head. Though this occurred before Father Mathew regenerated his country, she knew that the only safeguard, where there is a tendency to habits of intoxication, or even to take "only a drop"—where "the drop" is more than the head will bear—is TOTAL ABSTINENCE. She knew the liquid fire was as dangerous to sport with as the fire which destroyed the sleeping child; and she told him so; and he, love-like, vowed that, though it would be "mighty hard," and very unneighbourly, to drink "could wather"—fornint a "hot tumbler" of the "mountain-dew," still, if it was her wish, he'd do it—he'd do anything for a "short day." But Ellen had more forethought than belongs to her countrywoman in general, and she remained firm.

"You've wonderful holding out in you, sister dear," said Michael: "I'm sure he'll never touch another drop."

"I wish I felt assured of it, Michael," replied Ellen. "Even while the story I told him was beating about his heart, he wouldn't give me the promise. Sure it's woful to see how hard the habit is—he would not give the promise only for a short day—though, before I told him of Lady Stacy, he said he would. The grip it takes, the *houl* it gets after a while, is wonderful; and sure it's so with other habits that people can't get shut of. Why, there's yourself, Mickey, has a wonderful fidgety way with you—notching the table with a knife, or churning the salt, or twisting the buttons off yer shirt sleeves—anything on earth to fiddle with—never can keep yer fingers aisy one single minute: its Saint Vitus's dance you have in them; oh! then dear, that saint must have been mighty unaisy in himself, to be so shaking ever and always."

"There," said her brother, throwing down the knife and pushing away the salt, "anything" for peace and quietness. I wonder will Larry be as aisy with you as I am. I often take pride in myself for being such an angel. Ellen, I wonder how Larry will behave at the fair of Birr—will he *hould* out there?"

"He will," answered Ellen; "I'm not fearful of Larry in a great temptation, but I doubt him in little ones. I wish masters would pay their men at twelve o'clock on Saturdays instead of in the evening, and let them take their money where they work, instead of paying them in public-houses: that's the ruin of many a fine boy; for it's counted mean to go into the public and not take something; and the boys hate meanness as bad as murder."

"Oh! save us!" ejaculated Michael.

"Some of them do, anyhow," said Ellen.

"Set a case," commenced Michael with a very wise look—"that Larry really did break out once or twice—only now and then—would you give him up?"

Ellen became pale, then red; but after a pause, she replied, "I think I would—I think I could not make a drunkard happy—no woman could—it would be impossible; whatever love he has for me would wear out, and soon; for though I hope I should never forget the duty I owed as a wife, one of her duties is to seek a husband's good in all things, and the highest step towards a man's earthly good is—sobriety."

"Bedad!" replied her brother, "you did not go to school for nothing, I see that."

"It was you, dear, that sent me there," she said; "and I owe to you what I can never repay."

The fair of Birr came and went, and Larry behaved like a hero. His "big-coat" was thrown back with an air of determined self-confidence (the most dangerous confidence in the world—certain in the long-run to get a man into trouble); his hat put on with a jaunty air; his crimson-silk "Barcelona" tied with a knot and floating ends; his scarlet-cloth waistcoat peeped from beneath the body-coat of blue, whose brass buttons glittered like gold. "Brogues!" Larry disdained them!—his "naot" feet were encased in black shining leather, so that he was ready for a jig—if he could only get Ellen to dance one, but she would not: she did not like dancing in "a tent," nor was she foolishly jealous or angry when her betrothed attended to the curtsy of a "little cousin of her own," and danced him down, amid the vigorous applause of the company. On that occasion Lawrence certainly behaved like a very hero! not a drop would he touch "beyant" the one tumbler; and when he walked home with Ellen in the evening, he felt almost inclined to quarrel with her, because she remained firm to the time she had originally named for their union.

(To be continued.)

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