

# Temperance

## McCann's License.

(William Bittenhouse, in 'Wellspring.')

(Concluded.)

But, alas for poor Fred! when he found himself in the pretty, homelike Carson parlor, with Clara's charming face before him, that charming face was anything but serene.

'Oh, I'm so glad to see you, Mr. Brent,' she cried. 'Father has been laughing at me, because I said I would consult a lawyer, and find out what the law was about it. It is just too dreadful. I never knew about such things before, and it seems as if they could be stopped! You're a lawyer, and I'm sure you can tell me how to stop them!'

'Stop what, Miss Clara?' said Fred, quite overcome by this torrent of words.

'Why, saloons!' said Miss Carson. The word rang in Brent's ears like a teasing fate. Was he to be worried all day about saloons, and then meet them here to spoil his evening? His brow clouded in spite of himself, and Clara saw it.

'I did think you'd help,' she cried, in a thoroughly disappointed tone. 'I know you never touch wine yourself, and I thought!'

Fred roused himself at her disappointment. 'I will help if I can,' he said, 'only I—I've been bothered about the same subject to-day, and'

'Oh, then you can sympathise with me all the better,' said Miss Carson, looking relieved. 'Perhaps I'd better tell you all about it from the beginning.'

'Do,' said Fred. 'You see, as a lawyer, I have to know the whole case before I can make a brief.' It was pleasant to be appealed to thus, he felt, no matter what the subject.

'Well,' said Clara, looking straight at him with frank, brown eyes, 'you know I don't touch wine, either. At least, I used to, not longer ago than six weeks, but I'm never, never, going to do it again. I'm going to follow your example—though, really, that didn't have anything to do with it,' laughing.

'I'm sorry,' said Fred, with mock gravity, 'that I was not the one to convert you.'

'You couldn't,' she said, reflectively, 'because—because you hadn't any real feeling about it. You don't take wine because it would interfere with what you choose for yourself to be. But you don't care whether anyone else in the world takes it or not. It's convenience, not conscience.'

Fred winced at her girlish insight—an insight which was unsparingly correct, as he recognized. 'I suppose yours is conscience, then,' he replied, rather sarcastically.

'Oh,' said Clara, flushing deeper, 'I oughtn't to have said that to you. It sounded rude, and I'm sorry. I'm so upset, anyway, that you will excuse me, I know. The reason why I'm upset is—you know I have a class of boys in Sunday-school?' she broke off into a question, and Fred nodded. 'Well, the oldest one lost his work the other day, and his mother is a widow, and they are poor, so I tried to get him some more work. He looks very young, because he's so small for his age but he's seventeen, and, do you know, I found out that the reason he lost his work was that he—drank! That boy! I couldn't believe it. But it seems he used to drive a milk waggon, when he was only fourteen, and on cold winter mornings at the saloons where he served milk, the saloon-keepers used to give him a hot drink, and he hadn't sense enough to refuse it, for they meant it kindly, of course, and so he got into the habit of taking it, and now he's getting worse and worse. The hardest thing about it is that he wants to

stop now, but he just can't. You see, there are so many saloons that they all can't make profits unless they sell to everybody—boys, and drunkards, and all. So Bob—that's my boy's name—is tempted every day. When he goes by a saloon, the man will call out after him, or hold out a glassful of liquor to him. When I first talked to him, Bob said: "Miss Clara, you take it yourself, don't you? What harm is there in it?" That was a question that had to be answered. I came home, and thought about it—and I haven't needed to think twice, Mr. Brent. I'll never touch it again, and I told Bob so. Then he said he would give it up, and oh! he has tried—tried hard. He has tried hard to get work, too; but he loses it from drinking as fast as he gets it. This week he found a job down at those big works at the foot of Main street. But he says he knows he can't keep it, because there isn't one single way he can get to those works, even if he should go half a mile round, without passing at least three saloons. The shortest way home, through Wilson street,' Fred Brent stiffened and turned red, 'has four saloons in one block, and another man, McGann, applying for a license. Now what I want to know, Mr. Brent, is whether there isn't some legal way by which the saloons can be reached, and made to let a lad like that alone? Isn't there any other legal way by which some street can be kept clear—and, above all, isn't there some way in which five saloons in one block can be made impossible in a decent city? Aren't we, who are educated and sober and Christian, responsible at least that far for our weaker brethren? Can't we do something? I don't know what to do—I know I can give up ever touching wine again myself; and that I have done, but I want to do more, if I can. Can't you tell me something that can be done?'

Her eyes were full of tears; her earnestness was intense. Fred Brent got up, feeling more embarrassed than ever before in his life. 'Miss Carson,' he said, stiffly, 'I am the last person for you to appeal to. I am McGann's lawyer, and am in charge of the license application for the fifth saloon on that block.'

Clara sprang up, her tears gone, her face pale. For a moment Fred thought she was going to turn upon him in an indignation which he felt that he deserved; but, instead, her quick insight pierced through his words to his real thoughts.

'Ah, but you wish you were not McGann's lawyer! You are not the last person to appeal to, Mr. Brent; you are just the right one. I'm so glad I happened to ask you!'

Fred caught his breath. 'Don't ask me anything more, please, Miss Carson. I must think it out. When I have thought it out—'

'You can help me all the better,' said Clara, softly. 'I shall expect you to think as hard as you can—and help as much as you can.' And Fred carried away with him the memory of a warm hand clasp, and brown eyes that shone like stars.

But McGann could not understand the situation as well as Miss Carson did, when, next week, Brent returned him his retainer, and refused to carry his application further. 'Tis a hard thing to have it thrown back on an honest, decent man's hands as if he were a thafe,' he said, wonderingly, to his barkeeper. 'I've got another lawyer, but he says things is that stirred up that the license'll never go through. They kape sayin' that five saloons in a block is too many. Times is changin', Michael. They'll be sayin' that two in a block is too many, soon. I hear they do be after t'achin' temperance in the public schools—and me payin' taxes all these years! 'Tis not the land of liberty it used to be,' and McGann sadly shook his respectable head.

The effect of cigarette smoking on the young and undeveloped system is certainly most injurious, not only affecting the mucous membranes of the nose, throat and lungs, but also having its most injurious effect on the nerve centres.—Dr. Lambly of Cookshire.

## A Good Pledge.

Whoever wrote it called it, 'My little boy's pledge'; but it is equally good for big folks, and we wish you would take it and keep it, relying on divine aid. Will you?

'Three things there are I'll never do:  
I'll never drink, nor smoke, nor chew;  
I ne'er shall form an appetite  
For whiskey, beer, cigar or pipe:  
No alcohol or nicotine  
Around my person shall be seen.

'Of three things more I will beware:  
I'll never lie, nor steal, nor swear,  
I'll speak the truth to every one;  
What is not mine I'll let alone.  
My lips I pledge shall ever be  
From naughty oaths and bywords free.  
From these six things I will forbear:  
I'll never drink,

Nor smoke,  
Nor chew,  
Nor lie,  
Nor steal,  
Nor swear.'

'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'—Phil. iv., 13.

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