

Mr. Hutchings, fortunately, had a young friend in Athelston who, although a sincere Christian and a fellow-member of the Connection, was experienced in the liquor traffic. By his recommendation the young friend was appointed on probation. He was not nice to look at any more than his companion, but good looks go for nothing. The two young men lived together, and when the shop and bar were shut it was pretty to see them innocently making up their double ledgers. On Saturday evenings they put money in their pockets and went off to Athelston together.

"You see, Miranda," Alan explained, when he was offering her a glass of pure beer in the Good Liquor Bar itself, "you see that if we offer them a room with table and chairs, we only perpetuate the waste of time which goes on at the public-house over the way. As they will not do without beer altogether, which we could wish, perhaps they will learn to use the Bar as a house of call, not as a village club. We must wait, however, I suppose, until we have got our reading-room before we shall succeed in getting them to spend the evenings rationally. Already, I think, there are symptoms of a revival; do you not, Miranda? I saw one of them reading my last tract this morning."

"It is the young man they call Will—I—am," said Miranda; "I saw him too. It was he who ordered in the cask of beer at the first Parliament. No doubt he is thinking how to get some advantage to himself out of the new Bar."

"William has not, to be sure, enlarged views," said Alan. "In the lower levels the instinct of self-preservation assumes offensively prominent forms."

"You are looking fagged, Alan," she said in her kindly sympathetic way; "are you taxing your strength too much?"

"We had some heavy work this morning. Nothing more. I am a little disheartened sometimes, that is all. Any little thing like the sight of our friend with the tract, gives me a little encouragement. And then one gets despondent again."

Already he was beginning to feel that culture was not to be suddenly and swiftly made admirable in the eyes of Old England's peasantry.

The Work was, however, as yet far from complete. Alan's designs embraced a great deal more than a Co-operative Shop and a

Good Liquor Bar. His next step was to build a Bath House with a Public Laundry attached. There were hot and cold baths, a swimming bath for men, and another for women. This was an expensive business, and one which he never expected to pay the preliminary outlay. But it was part of his scheme, and in a really eloquent tract he explained that those who regard bathing as a luxury for the rich forget that it is one of the accompaniments of godly living. The institution was to be on the same co-operative principles as the shop and the bar, the profits being divided among the bathers and the washerwomen. He began by setting an example of an early morning tub to the whole parish. No one followed him. He might as well, indeed, have invited the villagers to sit up to the neck in a clear fire for half an hour as ask them to take a cold bath. Bathing, however, he recognised to be a thing which requires gradual training.

"The history of bathing," he said to Miranda, "is a curious chapter in that of civilisation. I do not think either Lecky or Buckle has treated it. Once, indeed, Dr. Playfair made the egregious blunder of stating in the House that for a thousand years nobody ever washed himself. Nothing could be more untrue; what really happened was that the public bath of the whole Roman people became a private luxury reserved for the rich among the Westerns. In England and France the nobles never ceased to enjoy the luxury of a bath, and there are plenty of evidences to show that the poor took it when they could get it. But in England the custom fell out, and it is true that for something like a thousand years poor people have ceased to wash themselves. Heaven only knows what ideas may not come in with the return to personal cleanliness."

When the Bath-rooms were completed, or even before, he began to convert what had been a Dissenting Chapel into a Free Library and Reading Room. This did not cost much. He fitted bookshelves round the walls, filled them with a selection of a couple of thousand volumes, which he partly chose from the Weyland Court Library, and partly bought from catalogues, put in a few chairs and a couple of tables, laid out pens and paper, gave orders for certain papers and magazines, and installed a Librarian.

The Librarian was a pale-faced pupil-teacher, a girl whose delicate constitution