



Temperance Department.

[For the MESSENGER.]

JIM ANDERSON'S LEGACY.

(Continued.)

"I never saw men look more horrified than the neighbors in the next room. Even William was appalled at the sight of his old uncle in his death agonies."

"Can nothing be done, doctor?" he said. "No, William," replied the doctor, "no far beyond my reach, now. It will be all over soon."

The struggles of the old man became frightful. No matter if he put his head under the bedclothes where he, at times, vainly sought darkness, the spectres were there still whether his eyes were closed or open it was all the same.

"At one time, after a brief pause, he looked wildly at the foot of the bed, and said,

"Art thou come, lass? I kept my promise. Fly 'fly' fly' or they will catch thee. Don't look at me so, lass. I've left him the rocks, the cursed rocks. I'll leave him all—everything. Go 'go' go!" A moment after and uncle Jim, with one convulsive effort to spring up in the bed, fell back dead. I think it must have been my father's vision that he imagined he saw standing at the foot of his bed.

"Well, after the funeral, Lawyer Scribe of Tippleton, read uncle Jim's will, and sure enough, there was the hundred acres in the south-east corner of the farm left to me, while the other two hundred acres were left to the other boys.

"It was not long before William sold his hundred acres and went to Tippleton, where he at first carried on horse-dealing, and having ill luck, went at last into service as a man of all-work at a tavern. The habits of intemperance that had been fostered in him, when he used to frequent the Four Corners tavern, grew upon him as it had grown upon uncle Jim. He became useless at length and lost his place at the tavern, and he was missing all one winter, but in the spring, they found his body in the woods at the outskirts of the town, where, it is supposed, he wandered in a drunken fit and was frozen to death.

"Brother John did not sell his farm, but it was so heavily mortgaged that he will never again call it his own, I am afraid. But I have great hopes of John. When he was left alone, I struggled hard to get him to turn over a new leaf. I prayed, and prayed and prayed, but for years I seemed to have no answer. I used to talk to him until he became vexed, when I would drop the subject. It was a long time before I could get him to go to meeting, but I did at last, but still it seemed to do no good. He still drank, and I never omitted to pray daily for him.

One day he came to my house and we got talking about mother, and I reminded him of what a good Christian woman she was, and what a blessed thing it was to die a death like hers, so full of hope and peace, and we took a walk over to the burying ground and looked at the graves of our dead. It was summer, almost a year ago now, and I remember as I talked to John about eternity, right there in front of mother's grave, which was covered with daisies, he stood cutting the fence with a knife, looking very thoughtful. I told him what a chance he had yet to lay hold on eternal life if he would only there and then commence a new life. I told him I would help to pay off the mortgage on his farm if he would only try to do better. At last he said,

"Well, Miles, I'll try. I'll swear off drinking for one year from now. I promise you here in front of mother's grave."

"I hope he kept his promise," said Rawlings. "He has so far," said Miles Anderson, "and you don't know what a different man he is but at times I am afraid of him for his prospects on the farm are so blank. It is all uphill work with him. But I have faith that for all my labor I shall win him to the Saviour. I have faith—yes, I have faith. My good mother said God would bless my efforts. And now, gentlemen, you know my story, and as it is getting late, I must get home."

"Well, friend," said Rawlings, "I have been much interested in the sad story you have related. I cannot help feeling that God will certainly bless your efforts, if you be worldly-wise as you are. His followers to the greatest afflictions on earth. Some of us need this divine discipline not only to keep us humble but to keep us from being swallowed up by the things of this world. Continual prosperity to this world often brings the soul to perdition."

"God has already blessed me even in this world," said Anderson, "for however disadvantageous my hundred acres may appear to you, I assure you that I raise a great lot of stuff on it; but it is scattered about, and therefore you cannot see it all at once, and then I have done splendidly with my stock. It is the very place for sheep. Yes, I shall be happy enough and contented when I can pay off John's mortgage on the farm. Then the work will be clear for us both to go on smoothly together. If I can get John's mind at ease, I can reclaim him,—I know I can."

"Are you going to be busy to-morrow, Mr. Anderson," asked Rawlings, as the farmer arose to take his departure.

"Not particularly," replied he. "I should like to engage your services as guide to-morrow, and perhaps for a day or two. Three dollars a day I am accustomed to pay for such work," said Rawlings.

"That's more than I should expect for any help I can give you, and I shall be glad to serve you in any way I can," said the farmer.

"Then, suppose you come here eight o'clock to-morrow morning," said Rawlings. When the farmer had departed, my friend lighted a candle in the tent and took out of a tin box a county map and pored over it very intently.

"Let me see," said he, ruminating and pointing with his finger on the map, "Here is the lake. We are camped about here. But the farm lots on this map are not all numbered,—at least not in this particular section."

A sudden thought flashed through my brain as I sat watching Rawlings examining the map.

"Rawlings!" shouted I, springing to my feet, "what if the iron we found happens to be on Miles Anderson's farm? I never once thought of it until this moment!"

"Did you not?" said Rawlings, "but I did." "Then why did you not say something about it to poor Anderson when he was here? What a happy man you might have made him!" said I.

"And what an unhappy man I might have made him if after all the iron happens to be just upon the next lot to his and not upon his at all, and I very much fear that it is not on Anderson's farm, but very near to it,—and you know 'a miss is as good as a mile.'"

"True," I said, "it would be a sad disappointment to raise a man's hopes and then dash them to the ground again. I suppose we shall know to-morrow?" said I.

"Yes, but say nothing to Anderson regarding our discovery when he comes in the morning," said Rawlings.

I was so impressed with the idea, or rather with the hope, that there was iron on Anderson's farm that it was a long time before I slept. Since hearing his life-story, I felt a great admiration for the man's character, and the more I thought of it the more I beheld the wisdom and infinite fitness of God's dealings with His creatures, and as I heard the low, steady, peaceful, breathing of my friend who was enjoying the repose of dream-land by my side, I could not but feel convinced that another noble achievement was about to grace and sanctify the noble impulses of his hand and heart. Thus ruminating, I too fell asleep.

We did not awake in the morning until the sun was in the heavens, and before we finished breakfast Anderson arrived at our camp a little before the appointed hour. He said he always liked to be too early rather than too late. We put our implements in the boat not forgetting the lunch. We took the same direction we had done the previous day. The shore of the lake, as I have already remarked, was extremely tortuous. There were so many small bays and jutting points that it was difficult to bear in mind the places before visited, and the character of the shores was so wild with confused masses of dead and living timber as to render landing very unpleasant. It would be almost impossible, from the view obtained from the lake, to conjecture the nature of the country beyond the dense woods that skirted the water's edge.

As we neared the point where, the day before, Rawlings and I had landed and taken our lunch, a feeling of nervousness came over me. I was afraid of my friend asking whose lot it was and of hearing Anderson say it belonged to some one whose name I had never heard before. We landed at the same place we had done before, and made fast our boat. Rawlings took a pocket compass from his satchel, and after taking the bearings, said,—

"I want to take that direction," pointing with his hand towards the same part of the woods we had penetrated the day before.

"All right, sir," said Anderson, "I know those woods pretty well."

We passed the open space where we had discovered the iron, but it was a little to the left of our route. However, I cast my eyes upon it in passing and did not notice any marks of our digging. We fought our way perseveringly through the tangle for some time without exchanging a word, and at length came to a blank wall of rock which seemed to impede our further progress. We

managed to scramble up to the top of it, when we beheld a labyrinth of rocks over which we climbed with difficulty. The last rock we came to had an almost perpendicular descent, down which we had to slide as best we could, and which brought us into a potato patch having a somewhat familiar look. We proceeded on, however, in the direction at first indicated by Rawlings. We came to more rocks, and a patch. Again more rocks, when suddenly, Anderson's farmhouse stood in full view, right in our path. We called at the house, drank some cold well-water and rested a while, Mrs. Anderson brought us fresh milk, and seemed bright and happy with her young children around her. We started again on our route and crossed the highroad. We came in sight of the old homestead where Miles Anderson was born, and where the rocky nature of the soil seemed to denote. Rawlings gazed around with a searching glance, and finally altered our course. We went over more rocks down a steep descent into a small valley, and as we neared the woods Rawlings stood and chipped out a piece of the rock with his hammer. It was the same colored rock we had discovered the day before. He took out his magnetic dip needle and held it over the spot, but it did not drop quite perpendicular though, it pointed downwards, but at length he came to a spot where it suddenly dropped. Rawlings put up his compass and sitting down on a rock, asked Anderson where his lot line ran.

"Over yonder," replied he, pointing with his hand.

"Let us go and see," said Rawlings. We went past the farmhouse about three hundred yards, where there was a snake-fence that ran to the rocks, but stopped there.

"Have you a surveyor's stake hereabouts?" asked Rawlings.

"Yes, here it is, marked M. A.," replied Anderson.

"And where does the line run?" asked Rawlings.

"There, in that direction," said the farmer, pointing with his hand towards the lake.

"Then this is the north-west corner of your hundred acres?" enquired Rawlings.

"Yes, this is the north-west corner," said Anderson.

"Have you a deed of your farm?" asked Rawlings.

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"In the house," said Anderson.

"Will you let me look at it?" asked Rawlings.

"Certainly; come down to the house." Rawlings examined the deed and found it perfectly legal in every respect. Handing it back to him, my friend said,—

"You must not be surprised at my inquisitiveness. I am a Provincial Land Surveyor, and somewhat interested in regard to the lay of these farm lots."

We returned to our boat and took luncheon, after which, Rawlings said he was going to run a line. We had a surveyor's chain in the boat. So after cutting two straight poles, we returned to the Surveyors stake we had seen in the morning. I saw now the object of my friend's enquiries, and why he was going to run a line. It took us some time to find the Government boundary line monument. We did so at last, however. By the position of the stake, as compared with the position of the spot where we had discovered the iron, I was afraid the latter would be found on the adjoining farm. But the country was so peculiar in its character that it was impossible to form a correct opinion except by actual measurement. I need not describe the anxiety of my mind as we gradually approached the lake with our chain, and my great joy when we ascertained beyond doubt, that the great iron deposit we had discovered was on the identical farm of rocks that had been bequeathed with a curse to Miles Anderson, by his unfortunate uncle Jim.

As it was getting towards evening by the time we had finished running the line, we invited Anderson to come and spend the evening in camp with us. I was surprised that Rawlings did not make known to Anderson his great good fortune. He said nothing to him, however, and the farmer suspected not that such a vast change was about to take place in his worldly circumstances.

We sat talking a long time after supper upon different topics, and I began to be quite vexed with my friend for not telling Anderson how rich he was. But at length Rawlings said,—

"Mr. Anderson, I was much impressed with your sad story last night, and I have thought about it a good deal. Yes, I have pondered over the whole of the circumstances, and I see very plainly the hand of the almighty. I see His judgments on the one hand, and His infinite mercy on the other. You have inherited with your farm a bad man's curse. Like a Christian, you have striven to outlive that curse by an honorable and as far as in you lay a blameless course, but I warn you that I have this day, or rather yesterday, been face to face

with the curse, which has lain hidden from sight within a short distance of your threshold, and if you will meet me at nine o'clock to-morrow morning at the point where your boundary line runs into the lake, I will show it to you."

I must say I never felt so disappointed in a speech in all my life. I felt almost angry with my friend for what he had said to poor Anderson, who seemed somewhat taken aback by what Rawlings had said to him.

"Do not be alarmed at what I have said," continued my friend. "Remember what the good Book says; 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' A good man need fears nothing. But there is a fearful danger that lies in your earthly path that will require more Christian fortitude to guard against than any that you have yet displayed. You are surprised that for years—I may say all your life—you have wandered around one of the deepest pit-falls that an evil agency can create, and indeed it may turn out to be a fearful curse. My advice is now to watch and pray lest you fall into temptation."

Anderson had risen to take his departure, and in a bewildered sort of way bade us good night, and promised to be at the appointed rendezvous in the morning.

In all my experience of my friend's character, his oddities and vagaries, the question of his sanity never entered as a doubt into my mind; but to-night, as I watched him get into bed, I certainly thought of the numerous instances of very learned men going mad. However, his subsequent conversation, which did no, in the least touch upon Anderson, reassured me, and I fell asleep and did not wake until early morning.

We arrived at the appointed spot by the time agreed upon, where we found Anderson awaiting us. He looked anxious, and I felt anxious myself as to what Rawlings contemplated doing. At last he said,

"We shall need the picks and shovels." (He had put two picks and shovels into the boat this morning.)

We carried the implements to the spot where we had discovered the iron ore.

"Now," said Rawlings, "we will unearth a demon,—a real, tangible, insidious demon of the blackest and most dangerous type. All hands to work! Here, Mr. Anderson, you begin there and pick away, and you (addressing me) begin there!"

Poor Anderson looked at me as though he would say, "Surely this man is mad," and Rawlings divining his thoughts, exclaimed, "I am not mad, most noble Anderson," whereupon we fell to work vigorously, and after two hours' labor a bed of iron ore, some thirty feet wide, lay exposed to view.

"Now," said Rawlings, at length looking at Anderson, who stood bewildered at the apparently useless work we had been doing. "Now I will introduce you to this demon. You see his black back there,—that is he—the Prince of Darkness, there you see him in the body, but his spirit you see not, there he lies, and his evil agency lies buried deep down in the bowels of the earth. Shall I tell you the name of this devil, Miles Anderson?" asked Rawlings, solemnly.

"Yes, tell me his name," said Anderson.

"His name is WYALTH," replied my friend. At that word, Anderson let fall his pick and seemed suddenly to divine the whole mysterious conduct of my friend. Yes, he saw it all now why he had examined his deed of the farm, why he had measured the land, and why he had warned him of danger.

"And how, Miles Anderson," cried Rawlings impressively, "what will you do with this curse—this vast wealth? Here are twenty, forty—yes, perhaps a hundred thousand dollars—all yours to do what you like with. Will you let it drag your soul down with the dust? Will you let it break asunder that precious tie that binds your soul to things divine? Will you cast off the humble mantle of righteousness and deserting its paths of loveliness and peace, lose yourself in the giddy world of selfishness and frivolity to which this demon will endeavor to lure you? Is this new-found treasure to prove a blessing to you, Miles Anderson, or is it to prove a curse? Say, what will you do with all this wealth?"

Poor Miles Anderson fell upon his knees, and with a tremulous voice, exclaimed,

"I will pay off Johnny's mortgage and build a brand new meeting-house!"

"God be praised!" cried Herbert Rawlings, "God be praised! It will not prove a curse."

THE END.

—Rochester, N. Y., has been struck with the Reform movement, and over 5,000 have recently signed the pledge. Non-day prayer-meetings are sustained, and the neighboring towns and villages are feeling its influence.

—Birmingham, Eng., has decided to buy up all the liquor-saloons within its boundaries at a cost of nearly \$1,000,000, close up a portion of them and run the rest under carefully digested regulations.