



The Water Club.

(By Mrs. J. McNair Wright.)

Among the men of this century who have left a mark on time was Lord Alfred Tennyson, probably the most popular poet of our time. Among the reminiscences of his youth which he confided to his friends was one of 'The Water Club.' When Tennyson was a young man he and some of his friends organized a club for literary discussion. One of its first rules was that no wine could be used at any of the club meetings. From this rule the club had its name, given them half scornfully by some acquaintances, The Water Club.

Such a club rule was at least very unusual fifty years ago, when wine was freely used at meals, and at all club meetings, even by very worthy people—by those who struck the keynote for other people. The reasons for which the Water Club banished wine were few and simple:—

1. For economy's sake. The lads were none of them rich, just graduated from their university, and with their way to make in the world.

2. The club was for intellectual improvement, and they felt assured that wine dulled and clouded the brain, after, perhaps, a brief stimulation. Their master, Shakespeare, had written:

'O thou invisible spirit of wine! If thou
Hast no name to be known by, let us call
thee—Devil.'

3. Wine often leads to anger and hot words. The members of this club were friends, holding their friendship dear. They dared not put it at the mercy of that 'enemy which steals away men's brains.'

'I drank, I liked it not; 'twas rage, 'twas
noise,

An airy scene of transitory joys.
In vain I trusted that the flowing bowl
Would banish sorrow and enlarge the soul.'

At the meetings of the Water Club questions of importance were discussed, speeches made, and articles read by their authors for the criticism of their friends. 'The rest of them made speeches,' said Tennyson, dryly, after he was old, 'I never did. I was not a talking man.'

Among the members of this club were Lord Alfred Tennyson, Poet Laureate of England, one of the most notable men of the century, mourned by a world when he died, in full age, full of honors. Hallam, the brilliant young genius, for whose memorial 'In Memoriam' was written by Tennyson—no doubt the most magnificent monument ever erected to man. The two brothers of Tennyson, both poets and men of mark. Other choice spirits gathered about them, scarcely one who did not in some way distinguish himself, while all lived their lives nobly and helpfully.

The poet recalls the band in the verse:—

'Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art
And labor and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land.'

Here is a sketch of worthy work, well to be remembered as the work of famous men of the famous WATER CLUB.—'Temperance Banner.'

Strong Language.

'Zion's Herald,' a Methodist paper of high character, speaks of liquor-saloons as 'gates opening to the bottomless pit.' We do not doubt the fitness of the designation. It is not useful to indulge in strong language,—language stronger than the subject justifies. But this language is not too strong. Were we to describe the work of the 'saloon' for one week in one family, in one human heart, we could justify the use of very strong and perhaps harsh words. It seems to us certain that the man who devotes his time to the selling of alcoholic drinks to the young people of the city, and affording facilities for gambling and drinking, knowing all the while that he is ruining character, breaking hearts, and damning souls, is a criminal of an odious character, deserving the cell of the felon, and the halter of the murderer. His hands are stained with blood. His soul is possessed with a most foul and cruel fiend. This is a harsh way of speaking. Is it?—A. went home drunken enough to be furious. He beat his wife, but she told no one. This has been his programme with variations, for three years. Those who sell him liquor know his doings. He is a poor weak brute: he was a brilliant young man. B. drinks the money he ought to spend for food for his little children; but he has no mercy on them. Those who supply him with drink know he neglects his wife and children. C. was a Sunday-school scholar, steady and diligent. He was brought up by kind friends. He is a professional man, once with good prospects. He is now a forlorn, and helpless driveller, verging on hopeless idiocy. D. died in his early prime from drink; the rumseller had no mercy on him or on his broken-hearted mother. One could run through a long list of lives made most miserable, and made the cause of boundless misery to others, all because of their addiction to this drug. If we could stop this alcoholic folly and wickedness we would save many a character, many a life, many a broken heart.—'Presbyterian Witness.'

Two Kegs of Rum.

Late one autumn a whaler, on her return voyage, brought up in front of a populous village on an island in the northern part of the Behring Sea. A lively trade ensued with the natives, who were anxious to make their bargains quickly and go in pursuit of the walrus which were now passing, and which every year provided the winter's food supply. But in addition to the legitimate articles of trade a couple of kegs of strong rum were put ashore, and the schooner sailed away for San Francisco with all the wealth of the village.

By the time the natives had finished the rum, and got over its effects the walrus had all passed, there was no supply of food put up for the winter, the ice was beginning to drift in the sea. The result was inevitable. The next whaler that called at the island was able to take home an interesting collection of bones and skulls of the Eskimo type to an ethnological institution, but there was no man, woman, or child left alive on the rum-stricken island to tell the story of starvation and death. — From 'Through the Subarctic Forest,' by Washburn Pike.

'My People Do Not Consider.'

Plain speaking was formerly considered a duty by the Quakers. It is a pity they do not practice it oftener on smokers, taking the following as a specimen:

Recently a Quaker was travelling in a railway carriage. After a time, observing

certain movements on the part of a fellow passenger, he accosted him as follows:

'Sir, thee seems well dressed, and I dare say thee considers thyself well bred, and would not demean thyself by an ungentlemanly action, wouldst thou?'

The person addressed promptly replied, with considerable spirit:

'Certainly not if I knew it.'

The Quaker continued:

'And suppose thee invited me to thy house, thee would not think of offering me thy glass to drink out of after thee had drank out of it thyself, wouldst thou?'

The interrogated replied:

'Abominable! No! Such an offer would be most insulting.'

The Quaker continued:

'Still less would thee think of offering me thy knife and fork to eat with after putting them into thy mouth, wouldst thou?'

'To do that would be an outrage on all decency, and would show that such a wretch was out of the pale of civilized society.'

'Then,' said the Quaker, 'with those impressions on thee, why should thee wish me to take into my mouth and nostrils the smoke from that cigar which thou art preparing to smoke out of thine own mouth?'

Believing and Receiving.

A notable instance of praying to God, and resolving to take no denial, and prevailing when hope seemed gone, was that of the pious wife of a hard-drinking man named Martin, in West Riding, Yorkshire, who prayed twenty-one years for his reformation and conversion.

When that long time had passed, and no answer had come to her prayers, she went one night, at midnight, to the 'public,' where her husband spent much of his time, and found him sitting in the bar-room with several other men and the landlady.

'You go home,' said Martin, roughly, when he saw his wife enter.

'Wait a little, and your husband will go with you,' said the landlady.

'Mrs. Tolman,' replied the poor wife, advancing to the table where they were sitting, 'I have waited twenty-one years for my husband to "go with me"—and all that time I have prayed for him.' She steadied her voice and answered:

'I am certain, too, that God will answer my prayers. As sure as he is sitting in your bar, I shall live to see him pass your house and have no inclination to go in.'

She turned to go out, and Martin rose and followed her, saying not a word.

That night was the turning-point in his life. The long-felt promise to the heart of the pious wife, that her husband should "go with her," began to be fulfilled to her patient waiting.

He went to meeting with her, and was melted by a sermon on the words, 'Whither thou goest, I will go; . . . thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God'; he went with her to the family altar; he went with her on the road to heaven, and helped her to lead their children in the narrow way. —English Paper.

One very sensible point in the excise laws of Illinois is the provision that the holder of a license for selling liquor who causes the intoxication of another person, is liable for the support of that person while he is intoxicated; and during the time he has to be kept, as a consequence of such intoxication, he must in addition pay \$2 a day. Like all other laws, however, this is of value only in proportion as it is carried out. —'Golden Rule.'