



Temperance Department.

WHY CHARLIE SELWYN SIGNED THE PLEDGE.

BY MRS. M. PARKER WOOD.

"And so, Charlie, you ask me, do you," said Uncle Robert, pausing in his walk up and down the room, "why I am so anxious to have you sign the temperance pledge?"

"I do."

"When I have told you fifty times that I consider it a young man's only safety?"

"Yes, Uncle Robert; but what are your reasons for believing that? You never saw me in the least degree under the influence of liquor; you know that I don't particularly care for it; but it does look mean, when a young man is out with his friends, never to treat, and it also renders him very awkward and noticeable at an evening party to refuse a social glass of light wine."

Charlie Selwyn was the only son of a deceased friend of Uncle Robert's, and Uncle Robert, a kindly bachelor, had been his guardian and almost father since the age of ten. Now he was nearing manhood, and on this the eve before his twenty-first birthday Uncle Robert again approached him on the subject of temperance, anxious that he should start aright in manhood's path.

"If you sign the pledge, Charlie, you are surely safe." And Uncle Robert patted the young man's head as affectionately and caressingly as he would have done ten years previous.

"Yes, Uncle Robert, I grant that; but where is my manhood if I cannot depend upon it to carry me through the world aright? Where are my principles if I cannot restrain myself when I am in danger?"

"But, Charlie, my boy, the descent is so gradual that you may not realize your danger until the habit has a strong hold upon you, until, may be, your prospects for life are blighted."

"I am never wilfully blind, uncle."

Slowly Uncle Robert crossed the room, and, turning the key in his private secretary, also unlocked an inner drawer, from which he took out a small box, and, drawing a chair in front of the table, sat down by Charlie's side. With trembling fingers he loosed the cord that bound the box, saying: "These are sorrowful mementoes;" then taking from it a daguerreotype, said, as he handed it to Charlie Selwyn, "It is old and faded, but tell me what characteristics you see in the face."

"Intellect first," was the reply; after a careful examination, "Sensitiveness and pride."

"Yes. He was a dear college mate of mine, a young man of uncommon mental endowments. He acquired the habit, when lessons pressed too heavily, of taking a glass of champagne, 'just to liven him up,' as he said. He wrote several brilliant articles for one of our leading weekly papers, and found a glass of wine just exhilarating enough to enable him to express his ideas in glowing language. But the habit grew upon him, and before the end of our college life his customary preparation for evening study was a glass of wine, supplemented, not unfrequently, by another in the course of the evening. He left college to take a leading place on the paper for which he had regularly contributed. Anxious to discharge his duties to the best of his ability as the political campaign came on, he depended more and more upon stimulants, and, before he was aware of the fact, the habit had become so fixed that he could not break loose from it. He lost his situation, for he could no longer be depended upon. Friends greeted him coldly and reproachfully, and, in a fit of despair following a deep indulgence, suicide ended his life. Look at that forehead, Charlie; well might one envy the man's intellect."

Replacing the picture in the box, Uncle Robert brought forth a soiled slip of paper, and, unfolding it, said: "This was brought to me one evening some fifteen years ago by a shivering, tattered lad. It reads thus:

"For the sake of boyhood days, Robert Weldon, will you follow this child to the miserable hovel where lies a poor, besotted wretch?"

"EDWARD KNEELAN."

"I followed the lad, and during the long hours of that ever-to-be-remembered night I watched by the sick man's bed, and he related to me his painful history. In the wan, haggard face of the death-stricken man before me I never should have recognized the playmate and friend of my childhood and youth. He, Charlie, was like you—thought his principle

would check him if he should ever be in any danger of excess; he thought signing the pledge was confessing his inability to rule himself; and he lacked the moral courage to render himself noticeable by refusing the social glass. He married quite early in life, and the first winter was but a succession of gay festivities. At the wedding feast wine flowed freely, and before the winter was ended once, twice, and even thrice was he brought to his home in a helpless condition; and yet he would not yield his manhood by signing the pledge, though his fair young wife and other friends besought him to. In course of time a daughter was given to him, and for a time the helpless charge led him in the path of rectitude. But he did not like to look mean; so friends were treated, and, alas! the appetite got the better of him. It is a long and sad tale, Charlie. Neglect, lack of food, and abuse caused the death of the child and also that of the wife, but not until after she had brought into the world two sons, one of whom was the wretched messenger that summoned me. At last death released Edward Kneelan, and I opened a correspondence with the friends who had cast him off, on behalf of the two orphan boys, whose only heritage from their father was a diseased appetite and the shame that attaches to a drunkard's child. The years have passed, but already the eldest is hastening with rapid steps towards his father's doom; while the youngest, knowing total abstinence alone can save him, is making strenuous exertions to uproot the seeds implanted at birth.

"This, Charlie," continued Uncle Robert, unfolding a slip of paper, from which he reverentially took a long lock of hair, "is gray enough to have been cut from the head of a woman of seventy; but she was only thirty. Ellen, my only sister's hair." And tremulous fingers tenderly stroked the white lock. "She married at twenty a young man of fair prospects, a rising lawyer, of no bad habits. To be sure he occasionally indulged in a glass of wine, but so did nearly every one else. Ellen's husband had no inherited tendencies that way, and there were no special causes that led to his ruin. Gradually he fell—so gradually that we noticed the dejected, worn look on Ellen's face months before we knew the cause. Friends begged her to leave him, but she resolutely refused, saying that the marriage vow was 'for better or for worse.' The worst had come, but, God helping her, she should keep the wife's place by his side while life lasted. In ten years' time he died of *delirium tremens*, and in one short week the faithful wife who had borne so much yielded her life. One more, Charlie, and I am done.

This time Uncle Robert handed Charlie an exquisite painting on ivory, the face of a young girl, rarely beautiful in feature, but with an expression of the saddest. A curl of ruddy brown hair lay beside it.

"This is the portrait of Alice Fane, at whose feet I laid my boyish heart. She was some five years my junior. I finished my college career when but twenty-one, and then pleaded for an engagement; but to that her father—her mother was not living—refused to consent for at least two years. Seeing the propriety of his objections, and with all the hopefulness natural to youth, expecting that period soon to draw to a close, I spent the time travelling. When, at the expiration of the two years, I returned to my home, it was to find a sad change. It was now Alice who refused my suit. Mr. Fane had always been a moderate drinker, but some embarrassments in business, superinduced by an unfortunate speculation, occurred almost immediately after I left home, and he then began to take a little more and more to drown sorrow—as this reverse was followed by another—until the daily potations had become so deep that he was recognized as a common drunkard; that is a hard word, Charlie. Alice's little sister, a child of only eight years, was condemned to suffer, as the price of one of his drunken orgies, from a spinal complaint the result of heavy blows he had inflicted. To these two Alice devoted her life, refusing my love. At my earnest request she had this picture painted. For five years longer the father lived, until he had drunk up every cent of his large property, and had not a small sum been left the children at their mother's death, they would have been penniless. Then again I sought Alice's side, urging her to become my wife; but, with love looking from her eyes and trembling in her voice, she refused, saying she could not properly perform the double duties of nurse and wife. Both Bessie and myself would be neglected. Though her heart was linked to mine, her life could not be. Bessie is still a patient sufferer and Alice an unwearied nurse. If unseen coronets ever gleam on woman's brow, Alice's must be resplendent."

Uncle Robert's husky voice failed, and he bowed his head on his hands, while great tears trickled through his interlaced fingers. Charlie Selwyn's voice broke the silence, saying, "Uncle Robert, give me the pledge. I will sign, and, with God's help, keep it." "Bless you, my boy, bless you!" And dropping on his knees, from Uncle Robert's lips

welled up to the great white throne a heartfelt prayer of thankfulness.—*National Temperance Advocate.*

THE BROKEN LAMP.

"What a fearful night!" said Mrs. Howard to her husband, as they sat reading in their comfortable, handsome drawing-room one bleak, stormy night in November, the rain beating and rattling against the windows, and the wind howling and whistling through the trees of the square where Mr. Howard's handsome house was situated. Suddenly a crash of glass made him start from his chair, and drawing back the curtain from one of the windows, he saw that the glass of the street-lamp opposite the hall-door had been broken and a policeman was taking the wretched being, who was wicked enough to do it, to the station-house. The occurrence was mentioned in the morning paper, and was forgotten by the readers.

"Ah! Mrs. Bardin, how glad I am to see you," was Mrs. Howard's greeting, as her friend entered, "I was wishing for you so much. We are to have a temperance meeting this evening; some of our high men are to speak, and our dear old friend, Mrs. C——, has just returned from Bangor, and is here with us, and one of her *protégés* is to speak."

At the hour appointed they went, Mrs. C—— with them. The hall was full, Judge Theall in the chair. The Rev. P. White opened with prayer, after which some good speeches were made, when the chairman, rising, said:— "Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce you to one for whom I solicit your prayerful attention: he has willingly consented to tell us how he became a member and advocate of the total abstinence cause—Thomas Pratt." A thin, sallow-looking man stood up on hearing his name, and, with a bow, said: "Two years ago, one dark, wintry night, I left my wife and two children sitting in the hovel we called home, cold, no fire, no food, poorly clad, no furniture except an old rickety table, one chair, straw for a bed, with little to cover it. I had been a good workman, and we were comfortable until I fell in with bad companions. I neglected my poor wife and children, went to the tavern, carrying my earnings with me, drinking, and enjoying the songs and stories of other frequenters of those wicked places. Of course I became irregular in my work, and though my poor wife implored my employer to try me a little longer, and being a good workman, he kindly did so, yet at last I was dismissed." Here the poor man's voice quivered. After a few moments he proceeded: "On that dark night, as I said, I left my poor wife, no food, no money—and if there had been I would have spent it on whiskey—that cursed thing that makes man a devil. Well, sir, I saw a policeman at the corner of the square, and I broke the glass of the lamp, knowing he would take me up, and I would be committed; that would feed and shelter me. I was sent to Newgate; and I bless God for it now. There it was that the honored lady now present was God's instrument in making me a teetotaler. Three times a week she visits that gloomy place, reads the Holy Book to and prays with and for us, exhorting us to join the temperance society, as the best means of escaping evil company: 'for,' said she, 'if you don't drink, they won't seek your company.' Many a hard heart has melted as she spoke, and many, many a man has now a happy wife and comfortable home by having taken her advice and signing the temperance pledge. It is the only safe one; for if we get a little taste of it, we wish for more, and then there is no knowing where we may stop. Now I am in good business, have a small house, my wife and daughter comfortable. The honored lady, with some of her friends, kindly took the house and obtained employment for me. I see many workmen here. Brothers, be advised; sign the pledge—total abstinence—and may God bless you, the temperance cause, and the dear lady who labors in the cause."

At the close of the meeting many did go to the table where lay the "pledge" for signature, affix their names, and receive their certificate of membership. Let us follow Thomas Pratt! Mrs. C—— used her influence (and it was great) with those who would serve Pratt. He moved to a fashionable leading street. His customers were pleased with the way their orders were fulfilled. His business so increased that he had to employ assistants; he advocated the cause that had so raised him, induced many to join it; his daughter was at school—had a handsome piano. All seemed bright and prosperous. Mrs. C—— never lost sight of him whilst within reach, advising and encouraging; she was a true apostle, going about doing good. But sickness came to him whilst she was in Wales—severe, tedious, dangerous—two doctors attending him; they (doctors) ordered him wine (ah! was there none to whisper beware?), then brandy, and he got it. There was no one to attend to his business while ill—it fell off. At last he was able to come to the sitting-room; from brandy he came to whiskey, the fatal step was taken, the fire kindled, the taste unquenchable; the shop

no longer the elegantly neat orderly place it had been, and the poor wife's face wore a look of care again. On Mrs. C——'s return she went to him. On the sideboard stood a wine-glass and decanter; she started back as her eyes fell on the objects. "What do I see? What is all this, Pratt?" She listened patiently as he told her how ill he had been, that the doctors had ordered it for him, winding up by saying: "I wish they had let me die." Oh! the withering scorn, the reproach that mingled in her tones as she said: "Ay, Pratt, you could trust your immortal, your never-dying soul to the care and keeping of God, but not your poor, frail body, made of clay, the food of worms!" She implored him to stop in his downward race, to think of all the happiness and respectability he was casting from him. She prayed with and for him; but alas! it was of no use. By the greatest exertion she persuaded him to settle the scanty remnant of his property on his wife. She got her own solicitor to arrange it so that it could not be taken from her (Mrs. Pratt). The store was closed, rented to others. Mrs. C—— got the son, a fine, upright lad, into the warehouse of a friend, a merchant, and the daughter otherwise provided for. Often have the tears trickled down Mrs. C——'s cheeks as she spoke of the unfortunate creature.

Ah! doctors, you little know the amount of misery you are dealing out to whole families when you say to your patient, "You require stimulants." Men are so exposed to temptation. Did you but know the half of the sad results of ordering wine or brandy, unless absolutely necessary, and nothing else will suffice, you would be horrified. It is some years since the above occurred; some of those mentioned have passed away from earth, leaving a bright track behind them; Mrs. C—— has gone to receive the reward and hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—*Hull and East Riding Good Templar.*

ENGLISH CHILD DRUNKARDS.—Too often the very young drink themselves: some, because they inherit an appetite for strong drink; others, because they have been early taught to overcome their natural repugnance to it. It is an awful fact that there are children born every year into this country with so strong a craving for alcohol that if they take it at all they will drink it to excess; a still more awful fact that there are amongst us a large number of child drunkards. Quite recently, little children of three and five years of age, have killed themselves with drinking. "I have never," said a little boy of seven to a friend of mine, who asked him to join a Band of Hope, "I have never been drunk but twice in my life!" "Hold up your hands," I said some months ago, when addressing a large audience in a back alley in one of our Black Country towns, "all boys" (there were about a hundred there between the ages of eight and twelve) "who have never tasted strong drink." Two hands were held up. They were held up, I afterwards discovered, by mistake. "And now, hold up yours," I cried, "all boys who have been drunk." A great many were immediately raised. The crowd was convulsed with laughter. Need I say that I was shocked and pained? For it is the spirit of which this laughter was the expression, it is the levity with which it showed that an abominable sin is regarded, the utter want of self-respect which it betokened, not merely in the individual, but in the community, which baffles all our efforts to suppress intemperance in England. Drunkenness is an inconvenience, an expense, a blot upon civilization, the source of many evils, but a necessity, thoroughly English, and a very proper subject for amusement. My friends, we have not so learned Christ. Drunkenness must be to us, if we in any sense are His, a sin, a terrible offence both against God and man. It must be agony to us to know that the monster is being gorged in this country with the blood of the lambs of Christ.—*Rev. R. McGrier, in Alliance News.*

OPIMUM.—A couple of weeks ago we mentioned the fact that the number of opium-eaters was on the increase in China. Now we would call attention to a few facts showing that the consumption of the same drug is with us, also, largely on the increase. It is estimated from official statistics that the importation of opium for the last ten years reaches the aggregate of four hundred thousand pounds, while the opium-eaters, according to a moderate estimate, number one hundred thousand. Its use is by no means confined to cities, but village drug-shops and country groceries deal out this poisonous drug. The profits on the sale of opium are so large as to greatly stimulate the cultivation of the poppy in Tennessee, Florida, New Mexico and even in Vermont and New Hampshire. As is very generally known, the habit of opium-eating is one from which it is practically impossible to abstain, when once formed, being in this respect worse than common drunkenness, while its effects on the system are deplorable to the last degree.—*Morning Star.*