

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

A MOTHER'S STORY.

By Notrevo, Author of "Allan Malby, the Organist."

"Yes, sir, that's my boy Willie; he is eight years old to-day. He has had a longing for some time to join the Church Temperance Society, but our Rector won't take them in till they are eight, and quite right too, I think, for they ought well to understand what they put their name to. However, we are going to have a meeting to-morrow evening, and then he will join. I have promised him that when he was eight years old I would tell him all about his father's death, which happened two months before he was born, and he is getting eager for me to begin. Did you say that you would like to hear it too, sir? Then take a seat by the window, for it's warm to-day, and I'll tell you about it.

"It's rather more than eight years ago that it happened. We were then living in Downshire, and in such a pretty little country village. My husband and I were so happy together, and Minnie, who is now such a big girl, was only 6, a pet with us both. William (that was my husband's name) was a policeman, and a good, God-fearing man he was too. No one had a word to say against him, and his place in church was never empty whenever he could possibly be there. Sometimes I would say to him, 'Stay at home this morning and rest a bit, Will,' but he always said, 'No, when sickness or old age comes, and I am obliged to stop at home, I shall always be glad then to think that I went when I could. However, sickness and old age never came to him.

"One evening—and I shall never forget all that passed that day—it had been a hot summer's day—Minnie ran into me, who was seated at work by the window.

"I have just seen Old Dickie, mother,' she said; 'he spoke to me, and said I was growing a likely lass; and would soon be as tall as my mother. He went up the street, and into the Three Horse-shoes.'

"He was an old man who lived in the village, sir. His name was Richard Fever, but the children mostly called him Dickie.'

"I wish Richard was not so fond of the 'Horse-shoes,' I answered, more to myself than to the child. As quiet and civil a man as ever lived when sober, but when a little beer has got into his head there is no one more violent. I soon put the child to bed and sat up to wait for my husband.

"What happened next I can hardly describe. Some one came and tried to break to me the bad news, but I hardly understood him till by and by they brought my Will home quite dead. At ten o'clock, when the public houses were shut, Richard Fever had been more boisterous and violent than usual, and when my husband tried to persuade him to go quietly home he had threatened to kill him. The bystanders thought it was only a

threat, but the old man went home for a knife, and meeting Will alone afterwards, had stabbed him. Of course, Richard was now in custody, and would now be taken before the magistrates the next day.

"I seemed stunned for days afterwards and went calm and pale about my work without shedding many tears or speaking many words. But all the time my chief feelings were those of bitter hatred towards the man who had killed my husband, and a longing for revenge. 'I hope he will be hanged! I hope he will be hanged!' I kept on saying to myself. At the funeral every mark of respect was shown to my dear husband, and the Rector and many kind friends did all they could to help and comfort me, but all the time I was miserable, and for several weeks after I shut myself up a deal at home alone, nourishing my thoughts of hatred and revenge.

(To be continued.)

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