



### Temperance Department.

#### "TURN THE KEY."

In one of the narrow courts lying to the westward of Ludgate Hill, and under the shadow of St. Paul's at sunrise, there lives a man who goes by the somewhat singular cognomen of "Turn the Key." His real name is Matthew Gray; but he only hears it from the lips of his nearest friends and such neighbors as have learned to respect him. I am pleased to say that neither are few nor far between.

By trade he is a wood-engraver. Not one of those delicate-fingered men who so skillfully interpret the artist's work on the wood, and give us those magnificent pieces of modern art which adorn the best works of the day; but a ruder craftsman, employed to engrave advertisement blocks, posters, and the rougher class of this form of labor generally.

He was quick at his work, and having a good connection with some of the larger advertising agents, did remarkably well for several years prior to his marriage and after it. Then the leprosy of drink got hold of him.

He began in his youth, as others do, with his "regular glass" at meals. As time advanced he took one to "moisten his pipe before going to bed." Next he had an occasional glass between, and finally he took so many that food with him became occasional, and drink fearfully and destructively regular.

So old is the story and so generally known, that I feel I am trespassing upon the patience of my readers by telling it. We all know how common are such fallings off. There is no living man in this great country who has not seen a score of cases like it. Enough, then, of the preliminary part of

Matthew had fallen—in spite of the tears, pleadings, and remonstrances of an affectionate wife—in spite of the gift of two children, and in defiance of the palpable evil the fatal habit was working in his mind and body. The unnatural thirst, the miserable craving, was ever upon him; work and home-ties were alike neglected for the dirty, brawling public-house.

And yet as he fell he struggled against his fall—feebly, no doubt, but still he struggled. In the morning he would rise with fresh resolves to have no more of it, and go sturdily to the attic where he worked, and sitting down upon his stool, put out his pad and arrange his tools. Then came the fatal whisper, "Have one glass—only one; it will freshen you up and carry you through your work of the morning."

He knew the fallacy of that whisper, but he went; and all the morning the light through the window fell upon an empty room and idle tools. Late in the day he would return, despairing, and in a slipshod way do part of the work that ought to have been well done hours before.

As usual in such cases, his employers soon learned to distrust him. Unpunctuality, bad work, and the evidence of his failing drove the best of them away, and the rest offered him—what he was obliged to take—less for his labor.

Bound in the fatal chains, moody and despairing, he lived on, with his sorrowful wife and children around him. Mrs. Gray was a good woman, and regularly attended a place of worship with her little ones. Her husband, however, had never done so; example and affectionate urgings had been thrown away upon him.

"Do give the dreadful drink up, Mat," said his wife one morning. "Pray to God to give you strength, and He will not fail you."

"There's no good in prayer," replied Matthew, moodily. "I've tried my best; but as soon as I get to the bench I'm called away by a voice that is too strong for me."

"It's too strong for many around us," returned his wife. "What good does it do you?"

"None," he said. "I'm not the man I was since I took to it; in fact, I sometimes feel I'm no man at all—I'm a brute."

He sat back in his chair with folded arms, gazing gloomily at his two children, who stood in a corner of the room, whispering to each other fearfully, and wondering why their father frowned so at them. He was not frowning at his children, however. Matthew Gray had fallen, but he had not yet acquired the ferocity which drink gives to some men. He had no desire to maltreat the offspring God had given him.

They were pretty children—a girl and a boy, respectively four and five years of age. The boy was the elder, and a most intelligent little fellow. His wistful blue eyes unconsciously shot keen arrows of reproach at his unhappy father as he looked at him that day.

"Jane, I can't stand it!" said Matthew Gray, rising hurriedly. "If things go on as they are, I shall kill myself."

"Don't talk so wickedly, Mat," said Jane, laying her hands upon his shoulders. "Your life was given for you to use to the glory of God. It is not your own to take away."

"And of what use is my life to me, or to any one?" he asked.

"It would be of use and a blessing to many," replied his wife, "if you gave up drink."

"Ay! there it is," rejoined Matthew. "I wish I could give it up. And if I could only feel always as I do now it could be done; but I know as soon as I try to settle to my bench I shall have a thirst upon me, and out I shall go."

"If I sat with you, Mat," she said, "do you think you could overcome it?"

"I'll try, Jane; but I've doubts of it."

They went upstairs together, and Matthew began his preparations for his day's work. Business had not entirely fallen away from him, and he had enough to do for that day at least. At first he seemed resolute, and drew up his stool and sat down. He took a tool in his hand and paused. Jane saw what was coming, and put herself between him and the door.

"It's a-coming on me," he said, hoarsely; "I must have one glass."

"No, no," she cried; "keep, here, Mat. It may break the chains, and with God's help they shall never be round you again." "I can't begin with that," he said, rising. "I'm all to pieces. Let me go; I'll come back surely when I've had one glass."

"No, Mat, it can't be," cried Jane.

"I shall break past you," he said, advancing, "and begone, unless—" he paused, as if some great thought had been suddenly given him—"unless you turn the key."

In a moment it was done. Jane, inspired with a new hope, closed the door, turned the key, and put it into her pocket.

"Now, Mat," she said, "I'll not let you have it. You must take it by force."

He sat down again trembling. The temptation to do so was upon him. For an instant the horrible idea trembled in the balance. His wife understood all. "O merciful Father!" she murmured, "spare him, for our blessed Redeemer's sake." The prayer was breathed, and the answer came. Matthew Gray turned, and resting his elbows upon the bench, buried his face in his hands. Great drops of perspiration fell from his brow.

Jane said nothing to him then. Nor when he suddenly began his labors did she speak. A good half-hour had elapsed before a word passed between them.

"Jane," he said, suddenly, "I nearly did it."

He did not specify what "it" was, there was no need to do so. Jane, in reply, quietly said—"It was a merciful God who spared you."

No reproach, no suggestion as to what her own sufferings would have been, no threat as to what she would have done had he so far forgotten his manhood. He drew his hand across his eyes and came over and kissed her.

"Jane," he said, "the thirst is leaving me. You shall come up every morning and turn the key."

"So I will, Mat," she replied, "until you can turn it yourself."

"I fear that it will be many a day before I do that," he answered, sadly.

"If you will listen to me," Jane replied, "you shall do it to-morrow."

He looked at her incredulously; but she met his look with a hopeful smile. "Mat," she said, "it was prayer that saved you from striking me. Indeed, it was that, and nothing else. If you doubt me, kneel down

now, and see what strength will come of it."

"But I can't pray," he said; "I haven't done such a thing since I was a boy. I don't know a prayer. I've near forgot even that which I learnt at my mother's knee."

"Kneel," she said—"be earnest; give yourself up to thoughts of your Saviour, and power to pray will come."

Husband and wife were in that room for two hours together. God heard their prayers. The little children were called up to play in the "shop," as Matthew called his attic. They came wonderingly, and the boy on entering put a question which was unconsciously another arrow.

"Isn't father going out to-day?"

"Oh no," replied his mother; "father is going to work, and you must play quietly."

"I am so glad," said the boy; "ain't you, Jenny?"

Jenny lisped her gladness, and they both promised not to disturb their father at work, and Jane went down to her household duties. When she was gone the children experienced yet another surprise. Their father called them over and fondled them. He had never been unkind, but since he had taken to drink, he had not been very demonstrative of affection. The boy, looking up, saw tears in his father's eyes.

"Father," he said, "why are you crying?"

"Don't be afraid, darling," was the reply; "I am crying because I am so happy."

It was new to the boy to learn that there were tears of joy, and he looked somewhat doubtfully; but he was soon convinced of the truth of what his father said by seeing smiles upon a face which for a long time had only worn gloomy frowns.

"Oh! I'm so glad," he said and clapped his little hands.

A great victory had been won; but the strife was not yet over. The cravings for drink are not easily stifled. Matthew Gray felt the direful sinking which follows the sudden abandonment of alcohol, and thought he was dying.

"Jane," he said to his wife, when she brought his dinner upstairs, "I'm dreadfully low. I think I ought to leave it off gradually."

"No, no," she said—"no more drink. Eat your dinner; it will do you more good."

"Turn the key," he said, with a resolution hitherto foreign to him. Jane did so, and he sat down to his meal.

At first he felt as if he could not touch it; but his wife pressed him to eat a little against his will. He did so. Appetite came, and he ate a good meal, although not a very hearty one.

He went out for a walk that evening with his wife and children, and whenever they approached a public-house his face told of the struggle within; but Jane whispered in his ear, "Turn the key," and they went on. He returned home without having fallen before his old enemy.

The next morning Jane, ever watchful, was awake and up early, and having put the house to rights, so as to be ready to aid him in what she knew would be another great struggle, aroused Matthew, who awoke and wondered at first why his tongue was not so parched as usual, and why his head was not like a block of stone.

The reason for the change was soon made clear. Husband and wife knelt down and prayed together, at first aloud and then in silence. Next came breakfast, plain but wholesome, and of this Matthew was able to partake with a zest he had not known for two or three years.

"It is a new life," he said, as he arose.

"Now go up to work," said Jane, "and turn the key yourself. You know where to ask for strength to do so. Our Redeemer will not fail you."

He went, and in a few minutes she softly followed, and listened outside the closed door. He was pacing to and fro, and she knew the key was not yet turned. The second struggle was going on. There was a pause, and a soft sound, as of one sinking on his knees. The anxious, loving wife sank down too; and with clasped hands asked in her heart for aid.

A movement within arrested her outpouring; a hasty footstep approached the door, and the key was turned.

The dim, narrow staircase was full of light as she stole softly down. The fight was now over and the victory won. An answer to the

prayer of herself and husband had been vouchsafed.

Matthew Gray kept the door locked until his wife came up with his midday meal. He was rather pale and quiet, but he was very happy.

"Jane," he said, "God has given me strength. I have turned the key, and, by God's help, I will never touch a drop of the poison again."

"May our merciful Father support you in your resolution," said Jane, to which Matthew responded "Amen."

He was supported, and is supported still. The key was turned upon his banes, and alcohol has never been admitted since. Sober and wiser and happier, Matthew Gray lives in his new home—the same house, but a new home—with a different wife and children, but differing only in their happiness, which came with the resolve of the husband and father.

Matthew turned the key, and was not ashamed of it. He spoke of it among his neighbors—not in any boastful spirit, but as an humble acknowledgment of the mercy vouchsafed to him, and points to the change in his abode as a proof of the blessing of that turning.

They may call him "Turn the key," and laugh at him, and he will on his own behalf laugh back again; but he looks sad, too, for their sake. And yet he has cause for rejoicing on the behalf of a few who have, by God's help, wisely followed his example, and "turned the key" upon the fatal habit of drinking.—*British Workman.*

#### CAUSE OF DRUNKENNESS.

At a public meeting in Penrith Sir Wilfrid Lawson remarked. If we are to get rid of drunkenness we are to get to the cause of drunkenness. A generation ago this subject of intemperance was mooted in the House of Commons. Mr. Silk Buckingham moved for a committee to enquire into the cause of the intemperance. It was pooh-poohed by the Ministry of the day, which was a Liberal Ministry, and Lord Alborne got up and said, "What is the use of a committee to go into the cause of drunkenness? Everybody knows that the cause is drinking." The House of Commons laughed, but it was perfectly true. You said, Mr. Chairman, perhaps bad water, and bad light, and bad dwellings had something to do with it. Perhaps they have, but nobody ever got drunk on bad water; nobody ever got drunk on bad light; nobody ever got drunk by sitting in a bad dwelling. It is only by drinking that drunkenness is caused. You meant that people in such circumstances were pre-disposed to consume drink, and it is the greater shame to put it in their way. Some drink because it is the custom, others because it gives you good health and makes you strong. All sorts of reasons of that kind are given. I will tell you a story to illustrate it. Once on a cold frosty day there came into a public-house a man who had been running fast. He said "Landlord, bring me a glass of whiskey, I am so hot!" By and by a man who had been driving a cart came in shivering, "He said 'Bring me a glass of whiskey, I am so cold.'" Then a shrewd old Quaker who had been sitting beside the fire said, "Landlord, bring me a glass of whiskey because I like it." That is the reason you all drink, and you know it in your hearts as well as I can tell you. It is because of this tendency to drink when the appetite is excited that I say it is not good policy on the part of our Government to scatter temptation on all hands in the way of all those people.

THE CURSE OF LITTLE CIGARS.—The youth of America are cursed by no one thing as much as by little cigars. These miniature cigars are in their mouths all over the land. They see their elders smoking the larger, longer, more costly kind. They say, "Father smokes, so do I smoke." O sadness! O sorrow! O pain! Banish them from your lips, O men and fathers! The children are your copies, your imitators, your echoes. Save them by abstinence yourselves from the weed as from the cup. Note the evil of cigarettes; discountenance and banish it if possible. Put them away, boys. Touch them not. Let no one of them defile your lips. All your mothers and sisters, I know, say, Amen. Your brothers and fathers would say Amen also, but for the appetite for lusts that enslave.—*Watchman.*