

THE MESSENGER.

temples were swelling up. This was a sign of danger. So without further remark he took his leave. Then, with scant politeness, Mr. Finch broke out again to his wife and three of his five daughters who were in the room—

'There's Joe Flacey, and Matt. King, and Toby Sharp; let him go and preach his teetotalism to them. They all want it, or anything else, goodness knows, that'll keep them decent and a bit of bread in their mouths. Let him prate to the publican and the parson.'

'He has no need to "prate" to himself on the subject, my dear,' said Mrs. Finch.

'Oh, he! He's only a sort of Methody—I mean the church parson; I know who wants talking to, but it's not me. Why, look at half the chaps on our own farm.'

'Yes, my dear; but don't you think if you set the example of going without beer altogether, they might follow? And don't you think it might help them if, as Mr. Stanley said, you would provide oatmeal or lemonade in harvest time?'

'No, I don't, or else I should do it. When I'm sure of a thing I am sure. The men have always had their beer; and what's more, I'm not going to have my own wife "Mr. Stanleying" it over me. I've got a mind of my own, and know how to use it. I hate teetotalism. Let the men do as I do—stop when they've had enough, and not want chains on their wrists and padlocks on their mouths.'

Mrs. Finch sighed. She could have told of many a miserable home, entirely through the men being encouraged to drink by their strictly moderate master. She knew, too, of the real 'bracelets' often imposed on them by the law, and the padlock of the prison gate.

Did not Mr. Finch know these facts as well? Certainly; and it was the knowledge of them that so often made him crusty. But to straighten matters he must have straightened himself, relinquished his own will and his own glass of beer, fallen in with the opinions of people wiser than himself, and sat down at the feet of Somebody he knew very little, if anything, about, who once said of certain people living in his own time—'They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.'

Mr. Finch would not allow his wife or children to become teetotalers. That would have been a reflection on himself. But he said nothing when they all chose to take nothing but water with their dinner.

Mr. Stanley called as usual about once a fortnight, endeavoring to steer clear of the objectionable topic in his conversation, for he wished to retain the farmer's friendship.

Several months passed, when one day a farm servant, Toby Sharp, was killing turnips for the cattle when his hand got caught, and, before he could pull it away, it was sliced up, bones and all. The poor fellow dropped on the ground, fainting with the agony, and his mates ran for the master. Toby was forthwith conveyed to the infirmary. His wife was well-nigh frantic, and well she might be, with eight children to feed, and only the eldest boy big enough to earn a trifle.

She knew, too, that Toby had not been sober that afternoon when he returned to his work. He had idled half his dinner-hour at the 'Green Goose,' and was, she said, 'half seas over, and terribly cross to the little uns when he did come in to his dinner.'

Mr. Stanley called at the farm a week or so after the occurrence, and Mr. Finch brought up the subject.

'What's this fuss on at your schoolroom

to-night?' he inquired. 'My Tom was saying something about it; and I saw one of the great placards as well.'

'Oh,' replied Mr. Stanley, with a smile, 'I am going to give a lecture upon the wicked thing that has evidently cost poor Toby Sharp his arm, and might have deprived him of his life.'

Mr. Finch was silent, and Mr. Stanley proceeded apologetically—I should not have mentioned it, but, as you brought it up, I was bound to reply.'

'Oh, it's all right!' snapped the farmer. 'You can lecture on any subject you like, I suppose. I am not obliged to come and hear it.'

'I should be very glad if you would,' said Mr. Stanley, 'for more reasons than one.'

'What's the one to begin with?'

'Well, you see, this terrible accident has caused much trouble to Toby's family. I am aware of your great kindness to them in consequence, but you cannot be burdened always; therefore, while the sympathy of the public is at boiling point, I resolved to give a lecture and take a collection for them. I have every reason to believe that Toby himself will never touch another drop of what has been such an unmitigated curse to him.'

'He was a fool. Why need he go fuddling at an alehouse instead of home to eat his dinner?'

'Ah, why indeed? But, Mr. Finch, you, I believe, knew poor Toby's mother?'

'Rather! the wicked old fish!'

'Poor thing! Deluded by her moderate-drinking husband into breaking her pledge she developed what had hitherto been unsuspected to exist within her system—the drink crave. As you are aware, the fire once lighted, was only extinguished by death.'

Farmer Finch snorted and frowned, and the veins in his forehead beginning to look ominous, Mr. Stanley quietly farewelled.

That afternoon over the tea-table Mr. Finch thus delivered himself to his wife:—

'I have made up my mind to go to that lecture to-night. Of course you will come, too, and the girls and Tom. I hate teetotalism, but as the master of Toby, I don't wish it to be thought I wouldn't do all as a good master should to help in such an emergency. So we will put something handsome in the plate.'

Quite an attraction was the Finch family parading through the village at an early hour, and many in consequence turned out to the lecture who would not otherwise have thought of it.

Coming upon the scene soon after the opening of the doors, the Finches were shown to the seat immediately under the platform, which they just filled. The hall was speedily full to overflowing.

When Mr. Stanley came upon the platform, and saw the farmer and his family, he, like Nehemiah, raised a momentary prayer for special help.

The lecture was rendered forcible by colored diagrams and attractive pictures, and God put into the lecturer's mouth words of love and fire.

Several times Farmer Finch's veins swelled up a bit, and he cast a hurried glance in the direction of the door, but there was no escape and he had to sit it out.

The collection was taken before the closing hymn, and the meeting ended with prayer. When the little bustle of going out began, the farmer was not to be seen. His wife wondered for an instant, but she had plenty of company, and they all returned home leisurely, where they found Mr. Finch.

'Oh, father,' exclaimed his eldest daughter, as she entered the sitting room, 'there is such a horrible smell outside the house!'

'Disgusting!' added another of the girls. 'Bad smell, eh?' said the farmer. 'What's it like?'

'It's like nothing we can think of,' cried Tom. 'We've never smelt anything so nasty. Ugh!'

Along the edge of the road ran a grassy ditch, which in front of Farmer Finch's, was crossed by a brick arch that formed the approach to the garden gate. It was here that the olfactories of the family had been assailed.

'Ah—yes, I can tell you what it is,' said Mr. Finch, after a pause. 'To tell you the truth, I never saw the Devil and the Drink so near together as I saw them to-night. What I see, I see, and I resolved, no more Devil in that shape for me. I ran home as fast as I could, hauled down the eighteen-gallon cask off the stand, and rolled him out to the gate, stove in his head, and let the contents into the ditch. That's the secret of the horrid smell!'

Mr. Finch and the whole of his family signed the teetotal pledge in Mr. Stanley's book the next day, and, what is better, they all became thorough Christians.

They worked hard and heartily in the cause of Christ and teetotalism for years, when the farmer and then his wife were called up higher.

Those of his family remaining are carrying on the good work to this day.—Scottish Temperance League Monthly Pictorial Tract.

It is Toward Evening.

Abide with me, O Christ, thou must not go,
For life's brief day is now far down the west;

In dark'ning clouds my sun is sinking low,
Lord, stay and soothe thy fretted child to rest.

Abide with me ere I can fall on sleep,
My throbbing head must on thy breast recline,

That I may hear anew thy voice, and feel
The thrill of thy pierced hands in touch with mine.

Abide with me; so then shall I have peace
The world can never give nor take from me;

Nor life nor death can that calm peace disturb,
Since life and death alike are gain through thee.

In life 'tis well; for though in paths of pain

In desert place afar I'm led aside,
Yet here 'tis joy my Master's cup to share,
And so I pray, O Christ, with me abide.

'Tis gain if death; for in that far-off land—

No longer far—no veil of flesh will dim
For me the wondrous beauty of the King
As he abides with me and I with him.

Abide with me; I've toiled gladly on,
A little while, in stir of care and strife;
The task is laid aside at thy command,
Make thou it perfect with thy perfect life.

—'Friendly Greetings.'

A Prayer.

(By Mary G. Woodhull.)

Love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,
Peace of God, so restful, sweet!
Presence of the Holy Spirit,
Blessed, tender Paraclete,
May thy joy, thy peace attend us,
Till life's pilgrimage be o'er;
And the feet that oft have wandered,
From thy love shall roam no more.
—'Forward.'