



## Temperance Department.

### THE DRAG OF THE UNDERTOW.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Frank Medairy had a dull headache. He had received a case of "Roederer's Imperial" from the city the day before, and he and his friends had made a night of it. Hence the headache and general out-of-sorts feeling in which he comes before the reader.

A young lawyer of more than ordinary promise, Medairy had already made a name in consequence of his successful management of two or three cases, which, from their peculiar nature, attracted considerable public attention; and was looked upon as one of the rising men at the bar.

"I don't like this," he said to himself, on seeing his hand shake a little as he raised a cup of coffee to his lips, and tasted the unpalatable beverage. It was nearly ten o'clock, and the "hotel coffee" had not improved much since the eight o'clock breakfast. "These champagne suppers play the mischief with a fellow's nerves."

He tried to eat, but his palate found no pleasure in the food that was set before him. He must get toned up before he was fit for anything. So he left the table and went to the bar. A nip of brandy did the work.

"That's your sort," he said, with inward satisfaction, as he felt the fine exhilaration creeping over his nerves, and the dull aching in his left temple begin to subside. "Nothing like a little good brandy. 'Richard is himself again!'"

At the billiard room he met one or two friends. After a few games they went to the bar for drinks, drawn thither by the gravitation of an appetite which was beginning to act with a steady but unregarded force.

"Have you seen anything of Bradford this morning?" asked Medairy, addressing one of his companions, whose name was Henderson.

"No; I called at Congress Hall, but he hadn't put in an appearance yet."

"His head isn't as strong as it might be."

The other did not reply.

"I'm a little afraid of Bradford," remarked Medairy, in a serious tone of voice.

"On what account?" Henderson lifted his eyebrows slightly.

"A man should know himself—just how much he can bear."

"Yes, that's so." But there was no heartiness in the response.

"What's the matter Dick?" Medairy grasped his friend's arm and shook him playfully. "You look as serious as old Judge Garland in a murder case."

"Do I?" The young man forced a laugh; but it died in a quick silence.

"I'm afraid champagne suppers don't agree with you."

"Why not?" Henderson betrayed a little annoyance.

"You're so dull and moody next morning."

"Am I?" He smiled and made an effort to rally himself.

"Speaking of Bradford," said Medairy, "do you know, I feel concerned about him. He's a splendid fellow and full of promise; but he has no head for champagne."

"As you remarked, a man should know himself just what he can bear," said the third member of the party, a young man named Milwood, who had not before spoken. "This is Bradford's trouble, I'm afraid. And if he doesn't take care, the undertow will catch him."

At this speech, a dead silence fell upon the group. Henderson and Medairy looked at each other, and then dropped their eyes to the ground. Each saw a startled expression in the other's face. The "undertow!" Its application was too apparent not to be understood. They both felt it more than once.

"The tide is coming up, and there's going to be a splendid surf," said one of the young men, as they were strolling down to the beach, that was now gay with promenade and bathing costumes.

"Who's going in?" asked Henderson.

"I am," replied Medairy, as he removed his hat and let the cool sea-breeze that was coming in stiffly strike on his heated forehead. "A dip in the ocean gives me new life. It refreshes me like wine."

"And like wine it has an undertow," said Milwood; "and both are treacherous."

To this remark neither Medairy or Henderson made any reply; the former separating a few moments afterwards from his companions and going to one of the bathing-houses.

The day was brilliant, the water warm, the

sea-breeze fresh, and the tide came rolling in with its great waves that broke and seethed along the shore. Hundreds of bathers were gaily sporting themselves. The scene was full of excitement and exhilaration. Medairy, in his bathing-dress walked slowly across the beach, his manner that of one thoughtful or depressed.

The fact was, the remark of Milwood about the undertow had, for some reason, taken an unpleasant hold of him. Twice during his visit to the seaside this season he had, while bathing, been nearly dragged from his feet by the under current, and the danger was magnifying itself in his thoughts. A resolution to be on guard would have proved sufficient to remove the concern that was troubling him, if it had not been that the fear of another and more dangerous undertow had found a lodgment in his mind—a fear that he was trying to shake off; but the more he tried the more closely it clung, and the more it magnified itself. He paused as his feet touched the water, and an inflowing wave lifted itself halfway up to his knees. But the returning drift was scarcely perceived, and he moved forward until he reached the line where the surf combed and broke.

As wave after wave struck and went over him, Medairy felt the old life and exhilaration coming back, and he abandoned himself to the excitement of the hour. It was not long before he found himself a little beyond the breakers; but being a good swimmer, a few strokes brought him nearer shore, and within the line of safety. He felt such a vigor in his arms—such physical power and force—such pride in his strength and manhood. Fear! a sense of danger! These were for weaker men! So, sporting now amid the breakers, and now venturing beyond them, Medairy spent nearly half-an-hour, sustained more by the stimulation of excitement than by normal strength.

Suddenly, as he was struggling in a surf that broke unexpectedly over him, while further from the shore than any of the prudent bathers had ventured, he felt his strength depart, and at the same moment the reflex movement of the undertow struck him with unusual force, and bore him out from the land. By the time he was able to recover a little self-possession, to get the water out of his eyes and mouth, and to bring into action his skill as a swimmer, he found himself drifting steadily from the shore, and unable to make any head against the outmoving current. He threw up his hands in sign of distress, and called loudly for help; but so long a time passed before his danger became apparent, or the life-boat could reach him, that he lost consciousness, and sank twice below the surface. As his white face came gleaming up through the dark water a second time, a strong hand grasped him. But life was apparently extinct.

"It was that cursed, treacherous undertow?"

Medairy's three young friends, Henderson, Bradford, and Milwood, were seated around his bed, discussing the accident and its well-nigh fatal termination. It was Milwood who made the remark.

"Cursed and treacherous! You may well say so," answered Medairy, whose memory held a vivid impression of that brief struggle in the surf when the breakers threw him from his feet, and he found himself helpless in the grasp of the undertow, which seemed to spring upon him treacherously in the moment of his weakness. "You see," he added, "I stayed in too long. I ought to have known that it was only the excitement and exhilaration of the bathing, and not my reserve of strength, that was keeping me up, and that they could not last for ever."

"There is," said Milwood, speaking with great sobriety of manner, "an undertow more fatal and treacherous than the one which came so near dragging our friend Medairy to a watery grave. Some of us have felt it; I for one; and it has come near tripping me on more than one occasion. To-day I have strength to stand against it. But is there not danger, if I remain too long amid the rush and excitement of the breakers, that it may fall in some stronger sweep of the undertow, and that I may float out seaward, helpless, and drown? Such things happen every day; and we know it. There is in every glass of champagne, or brandy, or beer that we take an undertow as surely as in the wave that strikes the shore and draws itself back into the sea. Yes, we know it, friends—all of us; for we have indulged in too many champagne-suppers, and been to too many wine-parties in the last year or two, not to have had good opportunities for discovering the fact. And besides, we see almost daily one and another drifting out from the shore and drowning, while we stand looking on unable to rescue. A thousand are lost every year in the drag of this undertow to one in that from which Medairy has just escaped. There, I've said my say, and you must make the most of it. If the other side wants to speak, the floor is vacant. I'll listen and weigh the arguments."

But no one answered him. Each felt the

force of his utterance; and with each was a solemn sense of danger.

"I think," said Medairy, turning to Henderson, and speaking in a lighter tone, yet still seriously, "that I shall have to beg off from your champagne supper to-morrow night. I want to study up this undertow business. It hasn't a good look."

"All right; I'll excuse you. And what's more, if the rest don't care, I'll telegraph Steele not to send the pipe of Heideiseck I wrote for yesterday. I don't like the idea of that cursed undertow of Milwood's. Never thought of it before. And, to tell the truth, it has given me several warning pulls in the last few months."

There was present the young man Bradford, referred to in the beginning. He had not spoken during this conversation. Of all who had enjoyed Medairy's supper on the night before, he had indulged in the largest excess, and did not really know when or how he reached his room at the hotel. It was not the first time that wine had been his mocker; nor the first time a morning's shame and repentance followed a night's debauch.

"Telegraph!" he ejaculated, as Henderson ceased speaking, and with an emphasis that drew all eyes upon him. There was no mistaking the signs in his face. He had been in the grip of the undertow as surely as his friend who lay weak and exhausted upon the bed, and was in almost as much danger of drifting out to sea and drowning as this friend had been a few hours before. His sense of peril was so great that he felt a shiver run along his nerves.

"Then we're all agreed," said Henderson, rising. "I'll go at once and telegraph Steele not to send the champagne. In the meantime you can study up the undertow question, and let me know the result when I come back."

What the conclusion was we are not informed; but it will do the reader no harm to study up the question for himself; and so in closing we submit it for his careful consideration—only remarking that the undertow of an indulged appetite sets harder against a man than anything else, and comes, sooner or later, to act with an almost resistless force.—Selected.

### TWO PICTURES; OR, LICENSE AND NO LICENSE.

BY B. L.

In Trimble County, Kentucky, Judge Bartlett, some time ago, refused to license any one to sell intoxicating drinks in the county, and though there was a loud cry of opposition and remonstrance, he stood firm to the decision, resolved that through his agency no more whiskey-dealers should be allowed to work ruin to themselves, to their families, and to the people of the county; and what was the consequence? To-day, says the *National Prohibitionist*, there is not a criminal case on the docket of the county, not a criminal in the jail, not a pauper in the county to be supported, and not a licensed bar-room; and at the last county court, though the county town was crowded with people, not a drunken man was seen in the place; good order and good-will prevailed, and no husband or father went home to his family intoxicated, to abuse his wife and children.

And now look at the other picture. Anderson County, says the same authority, continues to grant licenses to the whiskey-shops and taverns. And what is the consequence there? In one week two murders were reported, and numerous arrests for violence and disorder. Jefferson County licenses; and it has over twenty murders, or attempts to murder, in a year; and five hundred and thirty-seven arrests in one city in a single month. Pulaski County licenses; and it has ten whiskey murders in a few months. Scott County licenses; and its docket is crowded with offences and crimes. And so in every county of the State where licenses are granted: murders, and quarrels, and violence, and abuse of wives and children, are reported abundantly; and the greater part of all the county expenses is found to come from the courts and jails and prisons and officers rendered necessary by the offences and crimes committed by men under the influence of intoxicating drinks!

And now, which of the two pictures is the fairest? Which of the two systems is the best? It would seem as if every one must draw but one and the same conclusion, that to license the grogshop, is to cause expense; incite to outrages and crimes; waste property; lead to cruelty to wives and children; build jails and fill them; and spread sorrow, and poverty, and disorder, and distress on every side.

In the city of Philadelphia, the city treasurer lately published in the various papers the names of all the whiskey-dealers in the city who were licensed, calling on them, by this public advertisement, to come to his office and take out and pay for their licenses for the coming year. And, on carefully counting them, the writer found there were five thousand and ninety-three (5093) licensed grogshops in the city; and the police say, that in addition to these there are some three thousand (3,000) more selling without license, making, in all,

some eight thousand (8,000) whiskey-shops in the city—a number which, allowing fifteen feet front to each shop, would stretch in a single unbroken line nearly twenty-four miles!

Some time ago, Barnum, the great showman, was in Philadelphia, and being a strong temperance man, he made an address on the subject to a large meeting of citizens. And in the course of it, speaking of the immense waste caused by intoxicating drinks, he is reported to have said, "If they would give him the money spent in Philadelphia in intoxicating drinks, he would engage to pay all the city taxes, all the expenses of the police and courts and prisons, all the cost of keeping the streets in repair and of lighting the city lamps, all the expense of sustaining the schools and churches of the city, and would give to every man, woman and child in the city two new suits of clothes every year, and that he would make money by doing it!" To which an intelligent city official said, "There is no question but that he would not only make money, but he would grow rich by doing it!"

Let thinking men ponder these facts and statements; let them see what one upright, intelligent, inflexible judge can do, and what vast good prohibition can do when fairly tried; and let them ask whether the "hard times" do not come, to a large extent, from the waste and evils of intoxicating drinks, and whether the traffic should not be utterly suppressed by law!—*Illustrated Christian Weekly*.

### BOY SMOKERS.

It is no secret that many of the most eminent physicians at home and abroad have come to look with very serious apprehension upon the tobacco habit, in the form it now so often takes, of excessive not to say constant, smoking. One need not be a medical practitioner in order to know that generally a habit which, held properly in check, might be a comparatively harmless luxury, may, through excess, become a danger and a curse. Dr. Benjamin W. Richardson, of London, well known as a medical specialist of high rank, in the course of a recent paper on "Nervous diseases from Tobacco," sums up his estimate of the sanitary effect of tobacco, as used by his own countrymen, as follows: "Put down the smokers of Great Britain at a million in numbers—there are more than that, but let it pass. Why should there exist, perpetually, a million of Englishmen, not one of whom can at any moment be writ down as in perfect health from day to day? Why should a million of men beliving with stomachs that only partially digest, hearts that labor unnaturally and blood that is not fully oxidized? \* \* \* The question admits of but one answer—the existence of such a million of imperfectly working living organisms is a national absurdity."

But whatever may be the ultimate verdict of the physiologists as to the effect of the tobacco habit on the average adult man, there is absolutely no room for debate, and probably no difference of opinion, in respect to its evil results when indulged by growing boys. Without an exception every medical writer of any eminence, who expresses himself at all on the subject, gives warning against the use of tobacco in any form by those of immature years; and common observation sufficiently confirms what the faculty proclaim. Dr. Richardson, in the paper already quoted from, remarks that the effects of tobacco "are especially injurious to the young who are still in the stage of adolescence. In these the habit of smoking causes impairment of growth, premature manhood and physical prostration. \* \* \* If a community of youths of both sexes, whose progenitors were finely formed, and powerful, were to be trained to the early practice of smoking, and if marriage were to be confined to the smokers, an apparently new and a physically inferior race of men and women would be bred." Investigations carried on, under Government supervision, among boys attending the polytechnic schools of Paris, have discovered a clearly defined line between the smokers and the non-smokers—the latter being decidedly superior to the former in general scholarship, in quickness of apprehension and in mental force. The poisonous nicotine which constitutes the active principle of common tobacco, and which in a confirmed adult smoker is met and to some extent neutralized by the natural resisting forces of the matured human system, lays hold of the forming nerve tissues of the young and does its mischievous work unimpeded. Stunted growth, flabby flesh, pasty complexion, shambling gait, fickle appetite, dull comprehension, lack of interest in things and premature ripeness, like that of a diseased apple, are among the signs of injury carried about by thousands of American boy-smokers who are striving to show themselves men by proving themselves—very foolish children. That the practice of smoking is fast increasing among the boys of towns and cities, and that the age at which the habit is taken up is rapidly approaching the nursery, if not the cradle, cannot be doubtful to one who walks the streets—and especially the alleys—with his eyes open.—*Philadelphia Times*.