

onward to the better home. Charles Story had grown more portly and dignified in person, more prosperous in his business, in which he had been only a clerk in the days of his wooing; more social and convivial outside, and more an oracle than ever in his home. What Charlie said had settled for Annie most questions of her married life, and had held her steadily aloof from the Temperance work, in which Mary Baird never faltered nor flagged. But, somehow Annie had ceased to hold Charlie up as an example of how well a man could take care of himself. There was even a half-frightened look in her eyes when Mary talked of the subject at her house, and a nervous glancing at the gate if it was near his hour, lest Charlie should come in. For more than once of late he had come with a flushed face and thickened speech and an angry light in his eye. More than once, a harsh voice and harsher hand had fallen upon her precious boys, if they chanced to cross their father's will. She had always deferred to Charlie, and it was no wonder if, in his moods, he grew exacting and dictatorial to her. It became impossible to please him, when he had been drinking, try as hard as she would, and she tried to endure it with patience, and not only to endure but to hide. She had been so proud of her husband, and she was so sure he would overcome it in time; for had he not assured her again and again that any man could do it if he would. Meantime, if she could only keep other people from finding it out, and if she could keep him from knowing that she understood the cause of his depressions and headaches and irritations, she fancied she would spare him a wound to his pride. And meantime he was moving on rapidly to the place where everybody knew it, and where he did not care himself who knew. Least of all did he care that she whose judgments and opinions had so long been formed upon his own, should see his degradation, "Don't talk to me!" he said in answer to her faint remonstrance. "It's too late now. If you hadn't been as weak as water you would have seen this coming and stopped it ages ago. No woman with any spirit would endure a man who nightly comes home drunk. If you had had the courage of a mouse you would have taken yourself and the boys away, and I should have known I must act like a man. Now it's too late. I must have the drink or die," and she had to lay this up to remember with the other things that Charlie said; and all this time not a word had been said to Mary Baird. But one day Mary met Annie in the street, and walking together as they had done years ago, Mary said:

"Annie, don't you feel like joining the women of the Temperance Society in the festival that is to take place next week in the old Town Hall? We women are to provide refreshments and the children of the Bands of Hope are to sing. I wish you would let little Charlie and Will join my hand, and come to the meetings with them. I am sure the speakers would interest you. Mr. Merton is to be there and will, I hope, tell us something of his work among the intemperate in England."

"I did think of going, Mary, and of taking the boys, but Charlie said I must not. That he should be ashamed to see there any woman of his acquaintance, and especially his wife."

"Is Charlie going then?"

"No, indeed." And then with a timid glance at her friend, she added, "I only wish he would."

"Do you, Annie?" said Mary, eagerly accepting the permission to speak which Annie's look implied. "Then come yourself. Believe me, it will be the surest way to make him follow. Come yourself, and let the children come."

"But Mary, Charlie said,—"

"No matter just for once in long years what Charlie said. Your heart is with this work. Open your lips and let your heart speak out. Show your husband that you see the full extent of his danger and that at last you mean your children shall be reared to see the curse as it is!"

They walked long and talked earnestly, and before they separated Annie had promised to come.

And when the day of the festival arrived, they were there in the gallery, Annie and her beautiful boys, and Mr. Merton moved all hearts by his accounts of how the help of God had reached the struggling souls of thousands of drink-smitten men. The people hung upon his words, many of them gazing upward with an eager glance that recalled to Annie, as she gazed down from the gallery, a picture of the throng that watched the prophet as he raised his rod to smite the desert rock. She was so fascinated by the sight that she hardly noticed when the sound of the speaker's words ceased, till aroused by the sweet voices of the children lifted in song.

Before the notes died away, from all parts of the hall men began to press forward who were ready to sign the pledge, and she clasped both hands together and watched with strained eyes one head that towered above the rest, in the slowly moving crowd. Surely it could not be,—yes, it was,—Charlie himself, and her first thought was to hide her boys from the anger that she knew would await them all, when he found that they were there.

In an agony of fear and dread she watched him, and just as he reached the platform his little son Willie saw him too.

"O manima; there's papa! Charlie! Charlie! throw a kiss to papa."

It was only a murmur, but the man must have heard it, for the pale face he had turned toward the audience was lifted, and he saw them, his disobedient wife and sons, and his wife, pale with excited feeling, smiled, and his little children from their dimpled hands were scattering kisses down; and

smile and kisses were for him, and for him also the pledge, and the cordial grasp of Mr. Merton's outstretched hand. Then there went up a little buzz of excitement and a cheer from his townspeople, who rejoiced to see Charlie Story, of all men, making a break in his downward course. For a moment he stood there before them, downcast and confused, and then he raised his hand, and they were still and waiting for his words.

"You have heard the testimony and experience of these strangers, and I have no right to take your time," he said, beginning brokenly and low; "but you, my friends who have known me from my boyhood, have all seen me slipping surely down the drunkard's road. You see me, now, with my new purpose to climb back again to my own respect and yours. But it is what you have never seen of which I wish to speak, the struggle of days, of nights, of years, to break this ever strengthening chain, that seemed only to tighten with my every effort to escape. I could not break it, my friends, because at every corner the liquor stared me in the face. Turn whichever way I would, it was always there. And it is always there. And it is going to be there to-day when I go out, and to-night and to-morrow, and every day. I have always said it must be there, because all men must be free. I beg you now, citizens, townspeople; I beg of you to put it out of our sight. By common consent, if we can, by force if we must; we must get it out of the sight of those to whom even a look at it is the beginning of madness and death. Prohibition, the very sound of which I have scorned, is the thing for which we drunkards plead. Look at me! I was so angry when I found my wife had disobeyed me, and brought my little boys to a place like this, that I came after, resolved to shame her and drive them home, even before the face of a throng like this. I see her patient face smiling on me through her tears, as it always has done and always will though I make her life a very desert of shame. I see my loving little boys tossing down kisses upon me, and to night and every night their arms will be about my neck. I have nothing to gain by drink and everything to lose; I hate it as I hate nothing else. My name is on that pledge, my vow is in your ears and recorded in Heaven above, and yet, and yet I see liquor in spite of wife, or children, or love, or honor, or promise, or pledge. If I see it, I shall drink."

The dry eyes in the old town hall were few when Charlie Story went away. There was many a fall, alas, and many a fight in the years that followed, for him, but the salvation begun that day went on in spite of these to victory at the end. How much easier that victory might have been for him, and many others might have been saved, had his pleading been heeded and the liquor removed from their sight, only the recording angels can tell. One thing we all know, who follow the strugglers in their fight, that they, the ensnared and tempted and lost, are often the ones most earnest in echoing this prayer,—a prayer that shall yet be answered by the decree of the land.

Literary Record.

A PROHIBITION CAMPAIGN PAPER.—Messrs. Funk & Wagnalls, of New York, issue the following Prospectus of a Campaign Prohibition paper to be called "THE VOICE."

We propose to publish, until after the election, a Campaign Paper devoted to Prohibition. We believe the time has come, when, without serious detriment to other causes of vital importance, the Prohibitionists can "stand up and be counted."

The Brewers' Association has resolved to vote solidly against any party that will not engage to protect the interests of brewers and other manufacturers of drink. These opponents of prohibition can be counted upon to act as a unit—the wording of their resolution is, that, in this matter, "we will act together as a unit, no matter how strong our individual party affiliations may be." Politicians have been served notice, they must heed these men or feel the weight of their votes in opposition.

The time has surely come for the advocates of temperance to make politicians of both parties understand that they too are a numerous body of men who have also the courage of their convictions—a class of voters politicians dare not any longer ignore when they set about framing platforms and nominating candidates.

The object of the paper is, to show why it is of great importance that the vote for St. John should be a large one. It will be filled with strong, short, compact arguments in favor of prohibition, and its price for the eight issues will be 25 cents.

All friends of the cause are urged (1.) to forward their names as subscribers and to help to form clubs. (2.) To forward reports on the following points: (a) The name and size of the local Prohibition organizations. (b) What is the prospect of an increased prohibition vote in each locality. (c) What are local hindrances to a successful campaign. Address, Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 10 and 12 Dey Street, New York City.