

# Temperance

## The Deciding Vote.

There lives in a Western state a humble old lady whose interest in politics is confined to the single fact that her son was elected a number of years ago a member of the legislature, and has several times since been re-elected. What he has actually done in the legislature she does not know. She has no doubt that he has done all that a good boy, grown to be a great man, ought to have done or could do; and one good thing, at least, he did to justify her confidence.

When the legislature assembled in the autumn of 1906, the son visited his mother, and chided her good-naturedly for not reading the speeches he had sent her. She had saved them all, and knew just where they were; but she confessed that she had not been able to read them all, nor to understand very well what she had read.

'But you're going to make a speech this year that I shall read, every word,' she said. 'Tell me which one that is, and I'll be sure to make it,' said he.

'It's the one on the anti-saloon bill,' said she.

'Oh, that one!' he said, somewhat confusedly.

'Yes. I know it will be a good one. My boy, you know what liquor did for our home years ago. I have prayed all the years that my son might grow up to save other boys from his father's fate. And this is your opportunity. I know you will be true to it.'

'Well, mother,' replied the son, 'I don't know that I have much confidence in these efforts to make men good by legislation. You can't very well do more than regulate the liquor traffic. The attempt to prohibit it altogether always fails. I don't know that I can make a speech in favor of that bill.'

But these arguments fell unheeded on her ears. She did not take them seriously. She thought her son joking, as was his wont.

'Oh, I know you like to tease me,' she said, 'but I know you'll vote for that bill, and speak for it. And I shall read every word of your speech, and I shall pray for you every day, that God will bless that speech and make it win the fight.'

The son had, indeed, expected to speak on the bill, but on the other side; and he never had doubted, nor had his political friends, which way he would vote. But the weeks went by, and the fate of the bill hung in the balance, and he kept his own counsel. It was assumed, however, that he would vote against the bill in the end, and so his silence caused no uneasiness to the liquor men.

'I know why you are waiting,' wrote his mother. 'You are waiting to make your great speech when the great fight comes. God bless you, my boy! I am praying for you. How proud I am of you!'

It was that letter that put all doubt aside. When the lines began to tighten and a deadlock was threatening, he first voted on an amendment which forecasted his final action. That vote brought surprise to the friends of temperance and discouragement to the friends of the liquor cause.

And when the bill came up on its third reading, he spoke. He did not see the members of the House, but he saw an old woman, reading his speech through spectacles that required frequent wiping, and it was a speech that carried conviction.

The vote was so close that any one of a dozen things might have turned the scale; but among the stories told in the committee-rooms, after the bill became a law under which several hundred saloons were obliged to close, is that here related. It is the true story of the way a mother's prayers and confidence had their decisive influence in the making of a law.—'Youth's Companion.'

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