

TEMPTATION.

What tempting sweet persuasion lies
In woman's eyes!
Were men saints dwelling in the skies
They'd breathe some secret yearning sighs
For woman's eyes!

What maddening honeyed nectar drips
From woman's lips!
Were men secure in Zion's ships
They'd covetously dream of sips
From woman's lips!

What soft luxurious pleasure's nest
In woman's breast!
Were men with heaven's divineness blest
They'd droop and pine with wish to rest
On woman's breast!

What wild entrancing raptures rush
At woman's blush!
Were men touched by the deathman's hush
Their hearts with fierce delight would gush
At woman's blush!

What warm inspiring visions throng
At woman's song!
Were men as old as time is long
Their flagging fires would wax them strong
At woman's song!

The Pledge Purse.

BY EMMA GARRISON JONES.

"George, dear," said Mrs. Prescott, looking up from her basket of mending, as she and her husband sat by their fire-side one winter night, "has it ever occurred to you that it is time our boys were signing the pledge?"

Mr. Prescott tossed aside his paper with a laugh.

"There you go, my dear, and really I expected it. The wonder is you have not caught the fever sooner."

"What fever, George?"

"Why, this temperance fever that seems to be crazing everybody just now. The town's full of it; every second man I meet wears a gray rosette in his button-hole, and every church is converted into a temperance hall; but the thing won't last—such spasmodic movements never do."

His wife's bright eyes grew wistful and a cloud crossed her pretty, fresh face. She was a happy little woman, the mother of three promising boys, and always busy and full of plans for the comfort of her family.

"It is a good movement, George," she continued. "I trust it will be more lasting than you think, and it would," she added, with spirit, "if the known men of the town, the strong, reliable men like yourself, George, would take hold of it."

"Much obliged for the compliment, my love," laughed her husband, "but I don't think I'm in any danger of becoming a drunkard."

"Nor do I, George, but you are not a temperance man, and there's always danger in having ought to do with sin."

"Why, Lizzie, how much in earnest you seem. You've caught the fever without doubt. You always had a weakness for running fashions. But, really, child, I'm in no danger. I'm not a total abstinence man, I'll admit; ever since I can remember I've had my drink or two a day, but I never was intoxicated in my life, and I never expect to be."

"I trust not, George, but you have sons, and there's no telling into what errors your example may lead them."

"Why, Lizzie, do you mean to say I set my boys a bad example?"

"No, George, there never was a better husband and father than you are, but you teach your boys to drink intoxicating liquors. We have wine on the table occasionally, and almost every morning the boys have their toddy."

"And you have always mixed the beverage, my dear, and shared it round to us."

"That's not much, Lizzie."

"No; but it counts up. And how much does your private drinking amount to, do you suppose?"

"Bless my soul, Lizzie, what has come over you? Ten cents sometimes, never more than a quarter."

"Each day?"

"Yes. You don't grudge me that trifling amount, do you?"

"I grudge you nothing, George, that will make you and your boys happy," cried his wife, her eyes filling with tears; "but I wish you could see this matter as I do. The Ashford boys were here an evening or so ago, and they wore their blue temperance badges on their jackets."

"Larry, why don't you fellows sign the pledge? It is so awfully jolly," said one of them.

"Our Lawrence laughed, just as you laughed at me a minute ago, George. He is his father's own son, my handsome Larry, and it would break my heart to see him do wrong."

"It's jollier to drink your social glass, and have your bot toddy when you feel dull," he replied, "My father thinks the pledge a humbug, and so do I."

"Did Larry say that?" asked Mr. Prescott.

"Those were the words, George, and they cut me to the heart. Now husband you have never denied me anything since the day you made me your happy wife—don't deny me this. Let us banish all sorts of intoxicating drinks from our house, and to take your boys by the hand and make them sign the pledge. As their father does they will do willingly."

And the little woman put by her sewing and crossing to her husband's chair took his head in both her hands and laid her cheek against his face. "Now, George, dear, surely you'll not say no to me for the first time, will you?"

There was silence for a minute, and then the husband drew the pretty face down and kissed it.

"I couldn't say no, Lizzie, if I wanted," he said. "No man could withstand such a witch as you are."

On the following day Mr. Prescott and his three sons signed the pledge, and the boys took great pride in their gray badges.

Intoxicating drinks were banished from their home, and no one seemed to be one whit the worse for it. If the boys had a cold their mother would administer hot mullein tea, and she found the remedy even more efficient than the toddies used to be. The boys seemed more speedily relieved and had fewer attacks.

Three years went by. Times were hard and money scarce, and Mr. Prescott's business was dull. To make matters worse he had a long spell of sickness, and a heavy doctor's bill.

"I can't see my way out of it," he remarked, sitting in his arm chair one evening, his pale face seamed with lines of care, "the building association stock will have to go, and I do hate that tremendously."

"What is it, George, dear? Maybe I can help you."

The sick man smiled at the little wife ever so ready with her help.

"No, dear, you can't help me in this; I wish you could," he said. "It is a note which must be paid before the tenth."

"And to-day is the eighth. What is the amount, George?"

"Three hundred and fifty dollars, and I have not fifty to spare. If it hadn't been for this confounded fever—"

"Hush, my love. Wait till I bring my pledge-purse," and his wife darted from the room.

In two minutes she was back, a heavy purse in her hand.

"This is my pledge purse, George."

"Your pledge purse? What do you mean?"

"Why, you see," and the little woman's face fairly glowed as her boys left their lessons and crowded around her, eager to hear; "the day you and the boys signed the pledge, George, I made this purse, and I called it my pledge-purse. Every day I have put in ten cents, and every week a dollar, because that much used to go for intoxicating drink, that did my boys and their father more harm than good. Sometimes, when I had a little spare change, I threw that in too. Larry, my boy, sit down by your father and count over the contents. I hope there may be enough to pay that troublesome note."

Larry obeyed with alacrity, his father looking on with eager eyes as he assorted the dollar notes and piled up the quarters and dimes. When all was told the amount was four hundred and sixty-five dollars.

Mr. Prescott looked at his wife, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Why, Lizzie—why, little wife, what can I say?" he began.

She caught his head to her bosom.

"Say, nothing, George. I kept my pledge purse for an hour of need, and that hour has come. Pay the note that troubles you, dear, and get well and strong at your leisure."

Her husband was silent, but the three boys leaped to their feet, and shouted, "Hurrah for the pledge!" until the room rang.—New York Weekly.

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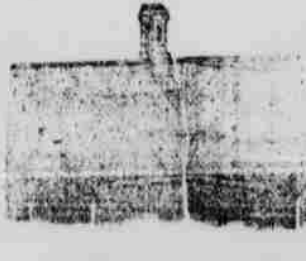
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