

Selected Poetry.

From the Fountain & Journal.

A TEMPERANCE SONG.

AIR—SUSANNAH.

I dreamed a dream the other night,
When all around was still;
I dreamed I saw a remnyite
A going down the hill.

I saw the house where once he lived,
The homestead old and grey;
The brandy-seller's agent came
And took the whole away.

He had a wife in years ago—
The grave is now her bed;
He had a child bright as the morn—
She's sleeping with the dead;

He roamed the world a wretched man,
To appetite a slave;
And off for those he had destroyed
Did wildly, wildly rave.

Then clothed in most debasing rags
I saw him pass away;
Unspoken sorrow in his soul
Forbade his longer stay.

A Temperance Story.

From the Sons of Temperance Offering for 1853.

The Cold Water Fanatic.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"Come, Parker," said a young man named Franklin, "there's to be a temperance meeting over at Marion Hall. Don't you want to hear the speaking?"

"No, I believe not," was answered indifferently. "I have little fancy for such things."

"Sturgess is in town, and, I am told, will make an address."

"I heard him once, and that was enough for me," replied Parker. "He's a cold water fanatic."

This was said in a group of half a dozen men, most of whom were strangers to Parker. Some of these looked at each other with knowing glances. Here a separation took place and the different parties moved away.

"I think you had better go with me," said Parker's friend, who still kept in his company. "If Sturgess is a little enthusiastic in the cause, he is yet a very interesting speaker. Perhaps he may say something that will set even you to thinking."

"I'm not a drunkard," returned Parker. "No; still, you are not beyond the reach of danger. No man is who daily gratifies a desire for a glass of brandy."

"Don't you think I could do without it?"

"Certainly; you could do without it now."

"Why do you say now so emphatically?"

"Now, means at the present time."

"Well!"

"I cannot speak for the future. You are not ignorant of the power of habit."

"Upon my word! you are complimentary. Then you really think me in danger of becoming a drunkard?"

"Every young man, who takes daily a glass of brandy, is in that danger."

"You really think so?"

"Most assuredly! How are drunkards made? You know the process as well as I do. Every mighty river has its beginning in a scarcely noticed stream. Ask the most besotted inebriate for the history of his fall, and you will find a part of that history running parallel with your own at the present time."

"You are serious, as I live," said Parker, forcing a smile.

"It is hardly a matter of jest. But, come! Go with me to hear this cold water fanatic, as you call him. You have no other engagement for the evening. Now, that your thoughts have been turned upon the subject of a daily glass of brandy, it may be as well for you to hear something further as to consequences of such a habit. A wise man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself."

"But the fool—why don't you finish the quotation, Franklin?"

"That is needless. Its application you

fully understand. You will go with me?" "I will, as you seem so earnest about the matter."

And so Parker went to Marion Hall, which he found crowded. After some difficulty in procuring a seat, he made out to get one very near to the platform, upon which was seated the president and secretary of one of the temperance associations in the place, with two or three others, who were to act as speakers. One of these latter was a man past the prime of life. His hair was thin and gray, and his face lean and withered; but his dark, restless eyes showed that within was an active mind and quick feelings. This was Sturgess, the individual before referred to. After the usual preliminaries, necessary on such occasions, he arose to address the meeting. For some time, he stood with his eyes moving through the audience. All was hushed to profound silence; and there was a breathless expectation throughout the room. The speaker's usual style was impulsive. He was more given to declamation than argument; generally carrying his hearers with him by the force of strong enthusiasm.

"My friends," he at length said, in a low subdued, yet thrillingly distinct voice. His manner, to those who had before listened to him, was so different from what was expected, that they felt a double interest in the speaker, and bent forward, eager to catch every word.

"My friends," he repeated, "a little over half an hour ago, an incident occurred which has so checked the current of my thoughts and feelings, that I find myself in a state more fitted for the seclusion of my chamber, than for public speaking. It is a weakness I know; but even the best of us are not all times able to rise above our weaknesses. I was conversing with a friend in the midst of a group of men, some of whom were unknown to me, when one of the latter proposed to an acquaintance, whom he called by name, an attendance upon this meeting. 'I have no fancy for such things,' was answered. 'Sturgess is to speak,' was advanced as an argument. 'He's a cold water fanatic,' said the young man, with a sneer."

There was the most perfect stillness throughout the room. All eyes were fixed upon Sturgess, whose low, subdued tone of voice, so unusual for him, made a marked impression on the audience. He stood for some moments again silent, his eye searching everywhere.

"If," he resumed in the same low, half-sad, impressive voice, "that young man were here to-night, I would feel it a duty, as well as a privilege, to tell him why I have become what he calls a cold water fanatic, why I let forth my whole soul in this cause, why I am at times over-enthusiastic, and why I am, probably, a little intemperate in my crusade against the monster vice that has desolated our homes and robbed us of the sweet promise God once gave us in our childhood."

The speaker's voice trembled—but now it was lost in a sob. In a moment he recovered himself and went on, still in the same low, searching tones:

"In the sweet promise of our children. Where are they? I look all around this large audience. There sits an old friend; and there, and there. Like mine, their heads are blossoming for eternity. Long years ago, we started side by side on the journey of life. We had our wives and our little ones around us then. Where are they now?"

Another long pause and deep silence followed. The dropping of a pin could have been heard in that crowded assembly.

"When my thoughts go wandering back to that olden time," resumed the speaker, "and I see, in imagination, the bright fire, now extinguished, and hear, in imagination, the glad voices of children, now hushed forever; and when I think of what caused this sad change, I do not wonder that I have been all on fire, as it were; that I have appeared to some a mere cold water fanatic."

"I wish that young man were here to-night; and, perhaps, he is here. I will, at any rate, take his presence for granted, and make briefly my address to him."

"You have called me, my young friend, a cold water fanatic. If you had said, enthusiastic, I would have liked the term better. But, no matter, a fanatic let it be. And what has made me so? I will draw for you a picture."

"There is a small, meagerly furnished room in the third story of an old building. The time is winter; and on the hearth burns a few pieces of pine wood, that afford but little warmth. Three persons are in that

room—a mother and her two children. The mother is still young; but her thin, sad, suffering face, tells a story of poverty, sickness, and that heart-sorrow which dries up the very fountain of life. A few years previously, she had gone forth from her father's house, a happy bride, looking down the open vista of the future, and seeing naught but joy and sunshine. She clung to her husband as confidently as the vine clings to the oak; and she loved him with all the fervor and devotion of a pure, young heart. Alas! that a shadow so soon fell upon her path; that love's clinging tendrils were so soon torn away!

"She is still young. Look upon her as she moves with feeble steps about her room. Ah! Where is her husband—he who so solemnly swore to love, cherish, and keep her in sickness and health? The door has opened! He enters—gaze upon him! No wonder an expression of pain and disgust is on your countenance: for a miserable drunkard is before you. No wonder the poor wife's pale cheek grows paler, nor that the sadness of her face changes into a look of anguish. Hark! He has greeted her with an angry word. He staggers across the room, and, in doing so, throws over that little toddling thing on her way to meet him. The mother, with an exclamation, springs forward to save her child from harm. See! The drunken wretch has thrust her angrily aside with his strong arm; and she has fallen—fallen with her head across a chair!"

"The fall, my friends, proved fatal. A week after that unhappy day, I stood by the grave of one who had been to me the best and most loving of children!"

The speaker's voice faltered. But he recovered himself, and went on:

"A few years before, I gave my child, dear to me as the apple of an eye, into the keeping of one I believed to be kind, noble hearted and faithful. He was so then—yes, I will still say this. But the demon of intemperance threw upon him her baleful glances, and he became changed. And such a change! The scene I have pictured took place in a far city, whither my child had been taken. Alas! the poor child did not die in my own arms. I was summoned too late. The sad pleasure of gazing upon her wasted cheeks, white as marble, and icy cold, remained to me."

The old man could no longer suppress his emotions. Tears gushed over his face, and he wept aloud. Few dry eyes were in that assemblage.

"Is it any wonder," resumed Sturgess, after he had again recovered the mastery of his feelings, "that I am a cold water fanatic? Me-thinks, if the young man to whom I have referred, had passed through a sorrow like this, he, too, would have been an enthusiast—a fanatic, if he will, in the cause of temperance. He, too, would have proclaimed from the streets and the house-tops, in highways and by-ways, his mission of reform and regeneration. But let me say to him, and all like him, that prevention is better than cure, that it is easier to keep sober than to get sober, easier to give up the daily glass at twenty-two or twenty-five, than at thirty or forty. These drinking habits gain strength more rapidly than others, from the fact that they vitiate the whole system, and produce a diseased vital action."

"A cold water fanatic! perhaps I am. But have I not had cause? Ten years ago, a youth of the brightest promise stepped confidently upwards, and set his foot on the firm earth of manhood. He had education, talents, industry, and good principles. But he lacked one element of safety—he had not a deeply fixed antagonism towards all forms of intemperance; indeed, like the young man to whom I have before referred, he rather regarded the advocates of temperance as fanatics. And he was not so much to blame on this account, for his own father, in whom he confided, kept liquors in his side board, used them himself, and set them out in mistaken hospitality before his friends. Well, this young man went on well for a time; but, sad to relate, a change was apparent in a few years. His frequent visits to taverns brought him into contact with dangerous companions. Drinking was followed by its usual consequence, idleness; and the two united in speedily working his ruin."

"My friends"—the speaker was again visibly excited—"one night, two years ago, I was returning home from a visit to a neighbor. It was dark, for heavy clouds obscured the sky, and there were all the indications of a rapidly approaching storm. Presently lightning began to gleam out, and thunder to roll in the distance. I was, perhaps, a quarter of a mile from home, when the rain came down in a fierce gust of wind. The darkness was now so in-

tense, that I could not see five paces ahead but, aided by the lightning, I obtained shelter beneath a large tree. I had been there only a few moments, when a human groan came upon my ears, chilled the blood back to my heart. The next flash enabled me to see, for an instant, the prostrate form of a man, he lay close to my feet. I was, for the time, paralyzed. At length, as flash after flash rendered the figure momentarily visible, and groan after groan awoke human feelings, I spoke aloud. But the only answer was that continued moan, as one in mortal agony. I drew nearer, and bent over the prostrate body. Then, by the lightning's aid, I knew it but too well. It was alas! that of the unhappy man I have mentioned—MY OWN SON!

"I took him in my arms," continued the old man, in a faltering voice, after another pause, in which the audience bent forward with manifestations of intense interest, "and with a strength given at the time, carried him home. I was, from the moment of recognition, unconscious of storm or darkness. Alas! when I laid him upon his own bed, in his own room, and looked eagerly down into his face, that face was rigid in death. If I am a cold water fanatic, friends, here is my apology. Is it not all-sufficient?"

And he sat down amid low murmurs of feeling.

For a time the silence of expectation reigned throughout the room. Then one of the audience stood up in his seat, and every gaze was turned towards him. It was the young man, Parker. Fixing his eyes upon the still disturbed countenance of the speaker, he said slowly and distinctly:

"Yes, the apology is more than sufficient. I take back the words unwisely spoken. With such an experience, a man may well be pardoned for enthusiasm.—Thanks! my venerable friend, not only for your rebuke, but for your reminiscence. I never saw my danger as I see it now; but, like a wise man, forcing hide myself, rather than a fool, and be punished. I in your cold water army."

Parker sat down, when he went up that startled the faint echoes. Sturgess, yielded to his feelings, sprung from his seat, grasping the young man's hand, said in a voice not yet restored to calmness—

"My son—born of love for this high and holy cause; I bless you! Stand firm! Be a faithful soldier! Our enemies are named legion; but we shall yet prevail against them."

Here drop we the curtain of our narrative. Parker, when the hour of cool reflection came, saw no reason to repent of what he had done. He is now a faithful soldier in the cold water army.

If we knew all that some advocates of temperance have suffered, we might well pardon an enthusiasm that, at times, seems to verge on fanaticism. They have felt the cause—they have endured the pain—they know the monster vice in every phase of its hideous deformity. No, we need not wonder at their enthusiasm; the wonder should rather be, that it is not greater.

THE MOTHER.—Heaven has imprinted on the mother's face something which claims kindred with the skies. The waking, watchful eye which keeps its tireless vigils over the slumbering child—the tender look and angelic smile, are objects which neither the pencil or the chisel can reach, and which poetry fails in attempting to portray—upon the eulogies of the most eloquent tongue, we should find tekel written. It is in the sympathies of the heart alone where lives the lovely picture and the eye may look abroad in vain for the counterpart of the works of art.

A mother's love! O what a joy is in the sound—entwined around our very souls in our earliest years—we cling to it in manhood and worship at its shrine in old age. To use the language of a celebrated writer, we say that he who can approach the cradle of a sleeping innocent without thinking that such is the kingdom of heaven—or view the fond parent hanging over its beauties, and half retaining her breath, lest she break its slumber—without a veneration beyond all common feelings, is to be avoided in every intercourse in life, and is fit only for the shadow of darkness and the solitude of deserts.

Charity and pride have different aims, yet both feed the poor.

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