

# Spirit of the Age

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## AN OLD MAN'S WARNING

For the Spirit

BY ADA MOORE.

Ho! boys, there's danger just ahead,  
And if you're bound to go,  
Just wait and let me tell you what  
I'm sure I ought to know.  
I've been as high as Perdition's gate  
As any mortal man  
Has ever fished his precious soul,  
Or ever would again.

Along this very track, my boys,  
I rode with lightning speed,  
Though loved ones raised a warning hand,  
I would no warning heed.  
Once I was just as strong and brawny  
As most of you, young fellows;  
And God have mercy on the one  
That to my level tended.

Once, I possessed a happy home,  
A precious loving wife,  
And darling children lisp'd my name,  
And blessed my humble life.  
All hope of heaven, and happiness,  
And perfect peace were mine;  
I did not see the burning fiends  
That stir the sparkling wine.

The tempting demon lured me on,  
Rejoicing when I fell,  
And when I struggled with my fate,  
I could not break the spell.  
I prized the hard-earned laurel blooms  
That crown'd those halcyon days;  
But oh! the blighting fumes from hell  
Have withered all my bays!

I bartered all my purest joys,  
For passage on this route,  
And now an almost hopeless wreck  
I've turned my weary feet.

Look at my bony palsied hands,  
My shattered, tottering frame,  
And don't you go where I've been, my boys,  
I ask you in God's name.

The price we pay is far too dear  
For what is in the bowl,  
And all the Devil wishes is  
To get your priceless soul.  
O, may God give you strength, my boys,  
When strong temptations come,  
And save at last your precious souls,  
And ruin Satan's run.

## Selected Story.

### THE REDEEMED.

A Sad Tale from Real Life.

It was a quiet spot where the cottage stood, separated from the high road by a field, and only attainable through a long lane, which led to that habitation alone. Any stranger coming within sight of it for the first time would have been struck by the curious contrast between the appearance of the house itself and the rather large garden surrounding it. For the former, although outwardly bearing marks of the same care, yet evidently betraying signs of some sinister influence within doors. The blinds might have been cleaner and not pulled away, and the same thing could be said of the windows and their drapery generally.

On entering the cottage one could not but perceive an entire absence of the order and tidiness which are the chief charms of a happy home; and although no place was exactly dirty, yet it was on the whole, very dreary and uncomfortable looking, while the garden outside was beautiful in its neatness alone, without mentioning its wealth of roses, lilies, polyanthus, auriculas, and flowers, of all sorts and of every hue, its hedges of sweet-briar, and the noble beeches, which formed an avenue from the other side of the hot-house building to the stream which ran about a hundred yards off.

In the rear of the dwelling was a well-stocked kitchen garden, and in a corner of this last was a man who had apparently just finished work-

ing at a patch of ground. A man of middle age, whose handsome, sun-burned features work a look of quiet gravity, closely bordering upon sadness. After looking around him for a minute, he muttered in some wonder, "Nearly three o'clock"; and walking slowly towards the house entered the kitchen, but, finding only his youngest child, a boy of five years old there, he went on to the foot of the stairs, calling, "Jane, Jane."

No answer came, however, and the only effect of his words was to bring together the small troop of children, who had hitherto been amusing themselves as best they could in all parts of the house.

"Where is your mother, Alice?" he demanded of the eldest girl, a pretty child of eleven.

"Don't know," she replied. "I wish she was here, I'm so hungry."

The father asked no more questions, but striding up the untidy-looking stairs, entered his own chamber, and here, in a great old-fashioned armchair, he found his wife fast asleep. All attempts to awaken her, he knew, by experience, would be in vain, and with a world of bitter feeling in his heart he went down again, and called the same bread-and-cheese, dividing all that he found in the cupboard among them.

"Why don't you eat some yourself father?" asked John, his son.

"I want none, my boy," replied the man, sorrowfully. "When your mother wakes, Alice, tell her that I have been obliged to go without my dinner, and that I shall be home to-night, please God."

"Are you going to leave us?" inquired Alice, wondering.

"I am obliged to do so, my dear," he answered; "you must take care of yourselves for a little while until your mother wakes—it will not be long, for it is getting late, I ought to be off now," and quitting the children, he sought his room to prepare for his journey.

Returning in about twenty minutes, he set off, leaving many injunctions to his family not to go from the house, or get into any mischief. For some time after his departure the little ones amused themselves with speculations as to the place where their father had gone, and whether he would really be home again that night; but as the hours wore on they began to feel very lonely and desolate.

To their mother's absence they were alas! becoming somewhat accustomed, but that their father should be away from his work in the garden was quite an unusual thing, and although no longer hungry, there crept gradually into their minds the most doleful forebodings that their mother should never come to them, and that something would happen to prevent their father's return.

Alice, who was a sensible little girl, tried to soothe the others, but all her arguments failed to convince them and the younger ones at first cried dismally, until sleep overcame them in the midst of their grief.

It was not until seven o'clock, nearly four hours since her husband had gone, that Jane (Mrs. Harding) awoke from her heavy slumbers and came down stairs. Feeling ill and cross, and quite prepared to

do battle if he should assure her, perfectly forgetting his intended journey, and her promise that his dinner should be ready at one o'clock, but finding the children huddled together in the little parlor all asleep, and the house so silent, the recollection came to her making her more uncomfortable still. Had her husband been at home, she would probably have grieved no more than she usually did on these occasions, but in this unwonted absence, the thought of his untiring industry and patient endurance of her delinquency rose powerfully to her mind, sending such a pang of sorrow and self-reproach to her heart as she had never felt before.

Mrs. Harding let the children have their sleep, but while she prepared a comfortable tea, and then rousing Alice, told her to attend to the fire while she went into the village to buy food. When she returned she found them all awake and overjoyed to see her, and after tea was over she put all but John and Alice to bed, calculating that by the time she had cooked his supper James Harding would be at home. Gladly she busied herself with the duty, feeling it to be a partial relief from the tressure of a lined up the room, prepared his favorite dish, and set the table, and he was still absent.

It was now long past nine, and she began to be seriously alarmed, as she knew of no business likely to detain him, but she waited as patiently as she could, fearing to distress the children. The hours went slowly by until the church clock in the village below struck eleven, when almost wild with fear and anxiety she roused Alice and John from their half sleep, and telling them to put on their outer clothing, carefully moved everything from the vicinity of the fire, and left the house intending to go to the railway-station from which her husband had started.

They traversed the garden in silence, the children feeling too much frightened even to cry, and had passed the gate and reached the middle of the lane, when they heard the sound of many approaching footsteps, falling regularly as of those who carried a burden. In very terror they stopped until these came on, and then they understood all. There had been an accident on the railway, and James Harding was one of the victims.

Chilled to stone on that night did Mrs. Harding follow the bearers as they carried him back to the home which he had left in health a few hours before. She heard that he was alive, but that ribs and arms were broken, after the fear that had beset her that in life she should see him no more.

"But if I had not taken too much to-day, he would have gone by an earlier train and escaped all this," she said to herself in agony.

They brought him in and placed him on a bed prepared hastily for him in the parlor, then waited until dismissed by the doctor who accompanied them.

Jane could never tell how the rest of that night passed, except that it was the time of her first real prayer to God. She only recollected scrupulously obeying the doctor's orders, and in the intervals of attendance earnestly begging the

Almighty to restore her kind and patient husband, and to help her in her endeavors to overcome her grievous fault.

It was some weeks before James Harding was well enough to perceive the change in his wife, and the June roses had faded, and autumn's reign begun, before he was sufficiently recovered to leave the house. But his character had won for him many friends, and the gardens (the chief source of support for him and his family) were as effectually attended to as if he had been well. The railway company, too, had to pay him a round sum, so that his circumstances were even better than before the accident happened.

But the best of all to him, was the knowledge that his wife had conquered her failing and that with God's help the discomfort in the house which had arisen from that cause would now cease. Many words of penitence did Jane address to him, when at last he was able to hear them; and many times he had to assure her of his hearty forgiveness for the past.

He was sitting one morning in the pleasant sunlight at the cottage door, looking round upon the garden, when Jane leaving her household work, came softly to his side.

"What an earthly paradise our house is, even now," he said, "when the winter is so near."

"Aye," replied Jane, with a sigh; and the bad influence has, I hope, left it forever. Remembering what a source of misery and distress I have been to you, I sometimes wonder how you can forgive me."

"Hush, Jane, I wish you would not say such things; we are all sinful, and need mutual forbearance. You have never asked me for any account of the accident."

"No," she said, shuddering, "I have never had the courage to do so."

"There is not much to tell, dear. I remember that I was talking to a fellow-passenger, when suddenly there came a crash, and I knew no more until I found myself in a room at the station here, and the doctor setting my arm. I suppose the pain had roused me, but I must have fainted again, for the next time I opened my eyes, I was in bed."

"What was Mr. Hales telling you yesterday, James?" asked Jane, after a pause.

"About the fate of three or four other people who were unfortunately in that same train, dear," he replied.

"Were they killed?"

"Two of them were, I am sorry to say, but that is considered a moderate number now on such an occasion."

"Poor things," said Jane, earnestly, "did Mr. Hales say nothing more?"

"What makes you ask so particularly?"

"Because," hesitated Mrs. Harding with a deep blush "I partly overheard it."

"Well, Jane," said her husband, "perhaps it is right that I should tell you, although it will not be pleasant for you to hear, but if it strengthens you in your resolve to abstain from intoxicating liquors, and leads you to be more earnest still in prayer and supplication to

God to keep you from this sad and degrading vice, it will be useful.

"Mr. Hales told me that there was every reason to believe that the cause of this mischance and loss of life, was the intoxication of one or more of the men employed, but whether it was the stoker or anybody else, he did not say and I did not ask him.

"And so, Jane," he concluded, for he saw her tears were falling fast, think no more of it, except at any time when you may feel tempted again.

Be thankful to God that in His mercy He has stopped such a career, even by such means, and trust to Him to help you in your endeavors to sin no more."

Mr. Harding was spared to his family, though somewhat crippled for the remainder of his life. But his home was a most happy one, for his children had learned to attend to the plants; his wife had been redeemed from the dire curse that had made his house a place of sorrow—now a place of rejoicing—for in their home now was reared a family altar, where father, mother, and children all bowed in humble reverence to the God of their salvation. The church on the hill membership by the addition of Mr. and Mrs. Harding and their two eldest children, and the others are being led in the direction of the cross. What a blessing it is that Christ is willing to save to the uttermost even the drunkards, who by their drunkenness have been the cause of so much misery to others as well as to themselves. Truly God is merciful, and the saved should ever praise Him for His loving kindness and tender mercy, ever looking unto Him for grace to keep them. Thus shall they conquer all evil, and at last gain Heaven.

GOOD ADVICE.—"Now, boys," said Uncle John, "I want to give you a little advice. You must not be intimate with every boy you meet, but choose your friends, choose your friends, boys. Never go with those who speak bad words, or take God's name in vain, nor with those who lie or deceive. Avoid the boys who quarrel and fight, and break the Sabbath, and disobey their parents and teachers. And do not be found with those who mock the aged or afflicted, or who are cruel to any creature God has made. Go with the boys who read the Bible, and pray and love Sunday-school and church. Those who fear God and keep his commandments will be safe friends for you.

Better have one such friend than a dozen wicked companions.—Selected.

He who remembers the benefits of his parents, will be too much occupied with his recollections to remember their faults.

The blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odor, and no man can tell what becomes of his influence and example, that roll away from him and go beyond his ken or their mission.

Men of money lacking principle are far inferior to men of poverty possessing principle.