

Temperance and Prohibition.

A TERRIBLE CHARGE.

"Prisoner at the bar, have you anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon you?"

A solemn hush fell over the crowded courtroom, and every person waited in almost breathless expectation for an answer to the judge's question.

The judge still waited in dignified silence.

Not a whisper was heard anywhere, and the situation had become painfully oppressive, when the prisoner was seen to move; his head was raised, his hands were clenched, and the blood had rushed into his pale, careworn face. His teeth were firmly set, and into his eyes came a flash of light.

Suddenly he rose to his feet, and, in a low, firm voice, said:

"I have! Your honor, you have asked me a question, and I now ask the last favor on earth that you will not interrupt my answer until I am through.

"I stand here before this bar, convicted of the wilful murder of my wife. Truthful witnesses have testified to the fact that I was a loafer, a drunkard, and a wretch; that I returned from one of my prolonged debauches and fired the fatal shot that killed the wife I had sworn to love, cherish, and protect. While I have no remembrance of committing the fearful, cowardly, inhuman deed, I have no right to complain of, or condemn, the verdict of twelve good men, who have acted as a jury in this case, for their verdict is in accordance with the evidence.

"But, may it please the court, I wish to show that I am not alone responsible for the murder of my wife."

This startling statement created a tremendous sensation. The judge leaned over the desk. The lawyers wheeled around and faced the prisoner, the jurors looked at each other in amazement, while the spectators could hardly repress their intense excitement. The prisoner paused a few seconds, and then continued in the same firm, distinct voice:

"I repeat, your honor, that I am not the only one guilty of the murder of my wife. The judge on this bench, the jury in the box, the lawyers in this bar, and most of the witnesses, are also guilty before Almighty God, and will have to appear before his judgment throne, where we shall all be righteously judged.

If twenty men conspire together for the murder of one person, the law of this land will arrest the twenty, and each will be tried, convicted, and executed for a whole murder, and not for one-twentieth of a crime.

"I have been made a drunkard by law. If it had not been for the legalized saloons in my town, I would never have become a drunkard; I would not be here now, ready to be hurled into eternity. Had it not been for the human traps set out with the consent of the government, I would have been a sober man, an industrious workman, a tender father, and a loving husband; but today my home is destroyed, my wife murdered, my little children—God bless them—cast out upon the mercy of the cold world, while I am to be murdered by the strong arm of the State in which I live.

"God knows I tried to reform, but as long as the open saloon was in my open pathway, my weak, diseased will-power was no match against the fearful, consuming, agonizing appetite for liquor. At last I sought the protection, care, and sympathy of the church of Jesus Christ.

"For one year our town was without a saloon. For one year I was a sober man. For one year my wife and children were supremely happy, and our home was a perfect paradise.

"I was one of those who signed remonstrances against reopening the saloons in our town. The names of half of this jury can be found today on that petition, certifying to the good moral character of these rum-sellers, and falsely saying that the sale of liquor was necessary in our town. The prosecuting attorney in this case is one that so eloquently pleaded with the court for the license, and the judge who now sits on this bench, and who asks me if I have anything to say before the sentence of death is passed upon me, granted the license."

The impassioned words of the prisoner fell like coals of fire upon the hearts of those present, and many of the spectators, and some lawyers, were moved to tears.

The judge made a motion as if to stop any further speech on the part of the prisoner, when the speaker hastily said:

"No, no, your honor; do not close my lips. They are the last words I shall utter on earth.

"I began my downward career at a saloon bar—legalized and protected by the commonwealth, which has received annually a part of the blood money from the poor, deluded victims. After the State had made me a drunkard and a murderer, I am taken before another bar—the bar of justice—by the same power of law that legalized the first bar, and now the law power will conduct me to the place of execution, and hasten my soul into eternity. I shall appear before another bar—the judgment bar of God—and there you, who have legalized the traffic, will have to appear with me. I think you that the great Judge will hold me—the poor, weak victim of your traffic—alone responsible for the murder of my wife? Nay, I, in my drunken, frenzied, irresponsible condition, have murdered one, but you have willfully and deliberately murdered your thousands, and the murder mills are today in operation, with your consent.

"All of you know in your hearts that these words of mine are not ravings of an unsound mind, but God Almighty's truth. The liquor of this nation is responsible for nearly all the bloodshed, murders, riots, poverty, misery, wretchedness, and woe. It breaks up thousands of happy homes every year, sends the husbands and fathers to the prison and the gallows, and drives countless mothers and children out into the world to suffer and die. It furnishes nearly all the criminal business of this and every other court, and blasts every community it touches.

"This infernal traffic is legalized and protected by parties which you sustain by your ballots; and yet some of you have the audacity to say that you are in favor of prohibiting the traffic, while

your votes go in the ballot-box with those of the rum-sellers and worst elements of the land in favor of continuing the business! Every year you are given the opportunity of voting against this soul and body-destroying business, and wash your hands of all responsibility for the fearful results of the liquor traffic; but instead, you inform the government, by your votes, that you are perfectly satisfied with the present condition of things, and that they shall continue.

"You legalize the saloons that made me a drunkard and murderer, and you are guilty with me before God and man for the murder of my wife.

"Your honor, I am done. I am now ready to receive my sentence and be led forth to the place of execution, and murdered according to the laws of this State. You will close by asking the Lord to have mercy on my soul. I will close by solemnly asking God to open your blind eyes to the truth, to your own individual responsibility, so that you will cease to give your support to this hell-born traffic."—*Beebe Times.*

SAVED BY PRAYER.

"Good-by, Harry; remember that mamma will always pray for your safety."

These were the last words Harry heard as he went out of the gate toward the railway station to take the train for New York. The words kept ringing in his ears as the train passed rapidly out of the village and new scenes came to his view. At the station in New York city, his uncle was waiting for him.

In a few days Harry was at work in the new grand store of his uncle. There he became acquainted with young men of his own age who seemed friendly, invited him to join in their excursion parties in the evening, and visit them at their homes. Before the first week was ended he had visited three of the boys of the city and taken a trip over to Jersey City, where several other boys took a trip on their bicycles. Harry had brought his wheel with him and enjoyed the trip over the new country very much.

After they had gone a distance, they stopped for refreshments, and he soon found himself standing at a bar in a saloon.

"What will you have, Harry?" he heard one of his new friends inquiring. "I'll take a glass of lemonade, if you please," answered Harry.

"Pretty good joke, Harry; but you don't get such stuff here; we are all going to have beer; I'll order one for you, too." And before he could think of an answer, the bartender had placed it before him.

Harry felt a lump in his throat, but with a fixed determination, answered:

"No, I do not drink."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed one of the young men, "you are not temperance, are you?"

"A glass of beer cannot hurt you; it is healthful," said another.

"I promised mother," replied Harry, "that I would not drink anything that might make a drunkard of me, and if I never begin, I shall never have to stop; no one has ever become a drunkard who refused the first glass; but many drunkards who meant to stop after they had tasted beer or liquor 'just once'; no, I shall not drink."

It was a long speech for Harry to make, but he thought of his mother's prayer, and resolved that she should not pray in vain. He expected the boys to ridicule him for his remarks. When Tom Ankers, the young man

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who had worked next to him at the store, therefore took him by the hand, and with emotion said: "Thank you, Harry; my mother used to tell me the same thing; she thinks her boy has never brought the intoxicating cup to his lips; I promise you that from tonight on I shall try to keep it," it surprised Harry greatly.

But his surprise increased when one of the other young men came forward and said: "I promised my present employer that I would never again enter a saloon to drink, when he saw me in one the last time, and he told me he could not keep young men in his employ who were addicted to the drink habit. I wanted to keep my promise, but always was afraid to refuse when in the company of others."

"Boys," said Adam Wagner, "this is the first time I ever took a drink. My father died a drunkard and I have often hear him say that the first glass was the opening of a life of misery. He often asked me to leave all intoxicating drinks alone; I mean to do so after today, and you fellows must help me to keep my promise."

"We shall, we shall," replied his friends, immediately.

"But tell us, Harry," said the young man who had spoken after Tom; "how was it possible for you to refuse? Didn't you expect us all to laugh at your remarks? What gave you such courage in this hour of danger?"

Harry told them the story in his simple, truthful manner, concluding with the words:

"Boys, my mother's prayers saved me."

"Harry," said Adam, "when you write home again tell your mother about the occurrence this evening, and be sure and say that we were saved by her prayer."

—*New York Observer.*