

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Chamber's Edinburgh Journal.
THE DRUNKARD'S BIBLE.

BY MRS S. C. HALL.

'THERE is more money made in the public line than in any other, unless it be pawn-broking,' said Martha Hownley to her brother; 'and I do not see why you should feel uncomfortable; you are a sober man: since I have kept your house, I never remember seeing you beside yourself; indeed, I know that weeks pass without your touching beer, much less wine or spirits. If you did not sell them somebody else would. And were you to leave the Grapes to-morrow, it might be taken by those who would not have your scruples. All the gentry say your house is the best conducted in the parish.'

'I wish I really deserved the compliment,' interrupted Mathew, looking up from his day-book. 'I ought not to content myself with avoiding beer, wine, and spirits; if I believe, as I do, that they are injurious alike to the character and health of man, I should by every means in my power, lead others to avoid them.'

'But we must live, Mathew; and our good education would not keep you—we must live!'

'Yes, Martha, we must live! but not the lives of vampires,' and he turned rapidly over the accounts, noting and comparing, and seemingly absorbed in calculation.

Martha's eyes became enlarged by curiosity—the small low curiosity which has nothing in common with the noble spirit of inquiry. She believed her brother wise in most things; but in her heart of hearts she thought him foolish in worldly matters. Still, she was curious; and yielding to what is considered a feminine infirmity, she said: 'Mathew, what are vampires?'

Mathew made no reply; so Martha—who had been 'brought up to the bar' by her uncle, while her brother was dreaming over an unproductive farm—troubled as usual about 'much serving,' and troubling all within her sphere by worn out and shrivelled-up anxieties, as much as by the necessary duties of active life—looked at Mathew as if speculating on his sanity. Could he be thinking of giving up his business, because of that which did not concern him!—but she would 'manage him.' It is strange how low and cunning persons, do often manage higher and better natures than their own.

'Martha,' he called at last in a loud voice, 'I cannot afford to give longer credit to Peter Croft.'

'I thought he was one of your best customers: he is an excellent workman; his wife has much to do as a clear starcher; and I am sure he spends every penny he earns here'—such was Martha's answer.

'And more!' replied Mathew—'more! Why last week the score was eighteen shillings—besides what he paid for.'

'He's an honorable man, Mathew,' persisted Martha. 'It is not long since he brought me six tea-spoons and a sugar tongs, when I refused him brandy (he will have brandy). They must have belonged to his wife, for they had not P. C. on them, but E.—something; I forget what.'

Mathew waxed wroth. 'Have I not told you,' he said—'have I not told you, that we must be content with the flesh and blood, without the bones and marrow of these poor drunkards? Am I a pawn-broker to lend money upon a man's ruin. I sell, to be sure, what leads to it, but that is his fault not mine.'

'You said just now it was yours,' said his sister sulkily.

'It is a devil or an angel that prompts your words, Martha?' exclaimed Mathew impatiently; then leaning his pale, thoughtful brow on his clasped hands, he added: 'But, however much I sometimes try to get rid of them, it must be for my good to see facts as they are.'

Martha would talk: she looked upon a last word as a victory. 'He must have sold them whether or not, as he has done all his little household comforts, to pay for what he has honestly drunk; and I might as well have them as any one else. My money paid for them, and in the course of the evening went into your till. It's very hard if, with all my labor, I can't turn an honest penny in a bargain sometimes, without being chid, as if I was a baby.'

'I am sorely beset,' murmured Mathew, closing the book with hasty violence; 'the gain on one side, the sin on the other; and she goads me, and puts things in the worst light; never was man so beset; he repeated helplessly; and he said truly: he was 'beset'—by infirmity of purpose, that mean, feeble, pitiful frustrator of so many good and glorious intentions.

It is at once a blessed and most wonderful thing how the little grain of "good seed" will spring up and increase—if the soil be at all productive, how it will fructify! A great stone may be placed right over it, and yet the shoot will forth—sideways, perhaps, after a long, noiseless struggle, amid the weight of earth—a white, slender thing, like a bit of thread that falls from the clipping scissors of a little heedless maid, creeps up, twists itself round the

stone, a little pale meek thing, tending upwards—becoming a delicate green in the waning sunlight—strengthening in the morning, when birds are singing—at mid day, when men are toiling—at night, while men are sleeping, until it pushes away the stone, and overshadows its inauspicious birth place with strength and beauty!

Yes! where good seed has been sown, there is always hope that, one day or other, it will, despite snares and pitfalls, despite scorn and bitterness, despite evil report, despite temptations, despite those wearying backslidings which give the wicked and the idle scoffers ground for rejoicing—sooner or later it will fructify.

All homage to the good seed!—all homage to the good sower!

And who sowed the good seed in the hearth of Mathew Hownley? Truly, it would be hard to tell. Perhaps some sower, intent on doing his master's business—perhaps some hand unconscious of the wealth it dropped—perhaps a young child, brimful of love, and faith and trust in the bright world around—perhaps some gentle woman, whose knowledge was an inspiration rather than an acquirement—perhaps a bold, true preacher of THE WORD, stripping the sinner of the robe that covered his deformity, and holding up his cherished sins as warnings to the world; perhaps it was one of Watt's hymns learned at his nurse's knee, (for Mathew and Martha had endured the harsh neglect of motherless childhood,) a little line, never to be forgotten—a whisper, soft, low, enduring a comfort in trouble, a stronghold in danger, a refuge from despair. Oh, what a world's wealth is there in a simple line of childhood's poetry! Martha herself often quoted the Busy Bee; but her bee had no wings; it could muck in the wax, but not fly from the honey. As to Mathew, wherever the seed had come from, there, at all events, it was struggling but existing—biding its time to burst forth, to bud, and to blossom, and to bear fruit!

The exposure concerning the spoons and sugar-tongs made Mathew so angry, that Martha wished she had never had anything to do with them; but instead of avoiding the fault, she simply resolved in her own mind never again to let Mathew know any of her little transactions in the way of buying or barter, that was all!

Mathew, all that day, continued more thoughtful and silent than usual, which his sister considered a bad sign: he was reserved to his customers—nay, worse—he told a woman she should not give gin to her infant at his bar, and positively refused the following Sunday, to open his house at all. Martha asked him if he was mad: "No he was" "regaining his senses." Then Martha thought it best to let him alone—he had been "worse"—that is according to her reading of the word "worse" before taken the "dumps" in the same way, but recovered, and gone back to his business "like a man."

Peter Croft, unable to pay up his score, managed nevertheless, to pay for what he drank. For a whole week, Martha would not listen to his proposals for payment "in kind;" even his wife's last shawl could not tempt her, though Martha confessed it was a beauty, and what possible use could Mrs. Peter have for it now? It was so out of character with her destitution. She heard no more of it, so probably the wretched husband disposed of it elsewhere: this disappointed her. She might as well have had it; she would not be such a fool again; Mathew was so seldom in the bar that he could not know what she did! Time passed on. Martha thought she saw one or two symptoms of what she considered amendment in her brother. "Of course," she argued, "he will come to himself in due time."

In the twilight which followed that day, Peter Croft, pale, bent, and dirty, the drunkard's redness in his eyes, the drunkard's fever on his lips, tapped at the door of the room off the bar which was more particularly Martha's room—it was in fact her watch-tower—the door half-glazed, and the green curtain about an inch from the middle division; over this the sharp observant woman might see whatever occurred, and no one could go in or out without her knowledge.

She did not say "Come in" at once; she longed to know what new temptation he had brought her, for she felt assured he had neither money nor credit left.

And yet she feared—"Mathew made such a worry out of every little thing." The next time he tapped at the window of the door, her eyes met his over the curtain, and then she said, "Come in," in a penetrating sharp voice, which was anything but an invitation.

"I have brought you something now, Miss Hownley, that I know you won't refuse to lend me a trifle on," said the ruined tradesman; "I am sure you won't refuse Miss Hownley. Bad as I want the money, I could not take it to a pawnbroker; and if the woman asks for it, I can say I lent it, Miss Hownley; you know I can say that."

Peter Croft laid a BIBLE on the table, and folding back the pages with his trembling fingers, showed that it was abundantly illustrated by fine engravings. Martha loved pictures, she had taken to a piece *Pilgrim's Progress* and varying the devotional engravings it had contained with abundant cuttings out from illustrated newspapers, and a few colored caricatures had covered one side of a screen, which when

finished, she considered would be at once the comfort and amusement of her old age. After the drunkard had partially exhibited its contents, he stood by with stolid indifference, while she measured the engravings with her eye, looking ever and anon towards the screen. "Very well," she said, uttering a deliberate untruth with her lips, while her mind was made up what to do—"very well; what did you say you wanted for it?" He repeated the sum; she took out exactly half, and laid the shining temptation on the table before him.

'Have you the heart, Miss Hownley,' he said while fingering, rather than counting the money—'have you the heart to offer me such a little for such a great deal?'

'If you have the heart to sell it, I may have the heart to offer such a price,' she answered with a light laugh; 'and it is only a DRUNKARD'S BIBLE.'

Peter Croft dashed the money from him with a bitter oath.

'Oh, very well,' she said; 'take it—or leave it.'

She resumed her work. The only purpose to which a drunkard is firm, is to his own ruin. Peter went to the door, returned, took up the money—another shilling miss? it will be in the till again before morning.

Martha gave him the other shilling; and after he was fairly out of the room, grappled the book, commenced looking at the pictures in right earnest, and congratulated herself on her good bargain. In due time the house was cleared, and she went to bed, placing the bible on the top of her table, amongst a miscellaneous collection of worn-out dusters and tattered glass-cloths 'waiting to be mended.'

That night the master of 'the Grapes' could not sleep; more than once he fancied he smelt fire; and after going into the unoccupied rooms and peeping through the key holes and under the door of those that were occupied, he descended to the bar, and finally entering the little bar-parlor, took his day-book from a shelf, and placing the candle, sat down, listlessly, turning over its leaves, but the top of the table would not shut, and raising it to move the obstruction, Mathew saw a large family BIBLE; pushing away the day-book, he opened the sacred volume.

It opened at the 23d chapter of Proverbs, and as if, guided by a sacred light, his eyes fell upon the 29th verse, and he read:

'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?'

'They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.'

'Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.'

'At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder!'

He dashed over the leaves in fierce displeasure, and, as if of themselves, they folded back to the 5th of Galatians: 'Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.'

'New and Old, New and Old,' murmured Mathew to himself—'I am condemned alike by the Old and the New Testament.' He had regarded intoxication and its consequences heretofore as a great social evil; the fluttering rags and the fleshless bones of the drunkard and his family, the broils, the contentions, the ill-feeling, the violence, the murders wrought by the dread spirit of alcohol, had stood in array before him as social crimes, as social dangers; but he did not call to mind, if he really knew, that the Word of God exposed alike its destruction and its sinfulness. He was one of the many who, however good and moral themselves, shut their ears against the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely; and though he often found wisdom and consolation in a line of Watt's hymns, he rarely went to the Fountain of living waters for the strengthening and refreshing of his soul. He turned over the chapter, and found on the next page a collection of texts, written upon a strip of paper in the careful hand of one to whom writing was evidently not a frequent occupation.

Proverbs the 23d chap.—'For the drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.' 1 Corinthians, 6th chap. 10th verse—'Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revellers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.'

Again that awful threat! murmured Mathew; 'and have I been the means of bringing so many of my fellow-creatures under its ban?'

1 Samuel, the 1st chap.—'And Eli said unto her How long wilt thou be drunken? put away the wine from thee.' Luke 21—'And take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.'

'Ay THAT DAY,' repeated the landlord; that day, the day that must come.'

Ephesians 5th chap.—'And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.'

Proverbs, 20th chap.—'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.' 'Woe to thee who sell-

eth wine to thy neighbour, and mingleth strong drink to his destruction.'

He arose from the table, and paced up and down the little room; no eye but His who seeth all things looked upon the earnestness and agitation of that man; no ear but the All-hearing heard his sighs, his half-muttered prayers to be strengthened for good. He said within himself: 'Who will counsel me in this matter?—to whom shall I fly for sympathy?—who will tell me what I ought to do?—how remedy the evil I have brought on others while in this business, even when my heart was alive to its wickedness? He had no friend to advise with—none who would do aught but laugh at and ridicule the idea of giving up a good business for conscience sake; but it was that it occurred to him, "You have an Immortal Friend; take counsel of Him—pray to Him—learn of Him—trust Him;—make his Book your guide;" and opening the Bible, he read one other passage: "Keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last."

(To be continued.)

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THE PERSONNEL OF RUSSO-EUROPEAN QUESTION.

THE numerical disproportion between the troops sent by England to the scene of action, and the immense forces brought to bear by Russia on the campaign, has been already alluded to. When Wellesley was sent to Spain with an inadequate contingent, their destruction was prophesied, just as mal-content's now declare that the little army of English under Lord Raglan, the comparatively scarcely larger French force under St. Arnaud, are sent out to be massacred. Since 1808, the actors have changed, but the parts are nearly the same. The Russian seizure of the Principalities was scarcely less iniquitous than Napoleon's aggression on Spain; and the presence, as the English general, of an officer who played so glorious a part in the war of retribution, would seem to indicate that the British government feels confident in the potency of a cause and a few troops, with whom discipline is not a mere form, to put down a combination of fraud and force inferior to that which some forty five years ago was practised by Napoleon. Substitute the Russian invader of Wallachia for the French invader of Spain, the Turks for the Spaniards, and Lord Raglan with his compact little force for Wellesley and his handful of troops, and you see reenacted, in spirit, if not actually in form, the memorable drama of the Peninsular War. Every name for which the gallant Fitzroy Somerset received his earlier military honors recalls some event suggestive of the steady triumph of right over might, of conscientious bravery over fraud and force. So that Lord Raglan, too represents something more than the mere order of the Horse Guards which gave him the command. True, the choice was in a manner restricted to the heroes of the last European war; but even that fact suggests the reflection, how that war contributed to the forty years peace, which a new aggressor has now broken.

And we must not forget the further moral attested by the presence of the French contingent and their chiefs. It has been well observed, that if no other result had been attained through this war, but the arraying of English and French side by side in amity on the same battle-field, it would be enough to compensate Europe for all the peril and anxiety created by the crisis. Perhaps France might have desired, and England more heartily have accepted, some representative of the more modern military glory of the French army than the Marshal St. Arnaud. With the motives which led to his nomination we have nothing to do; it seems to have produced a kind of negative satisfaction in France; a something between approval of the Marshal's having quitted the Ministry of War, and regret that some irreproachable officer had not been at hand to represent the French army and the French nation on the scene of action. The Orleans princes, Cavaignac, and Lamoriciere, in exile or voluntary retirement, the Marshal St Arnaud acquired by the exhaustive progress, a kind of right to represent the French army. He had won his own grades in Algeria, where, too, the military glory of the contemporary French army had been acquired. There is at least the consolation of knowing that no European war has furnished an appropriate chief, but that the Emperor was necessitated to choose from the successful leaders of a colonial conquest.

Grouped around the principal chiefs are many officers, Turkish, French and English, from among whom doubtless Fortune will hereafter select her favorites; they do not as yet merit mention as representative men. But among them are two personages requiring a passing notice, on account of the associations they bring with them to the war. The English royal family sends its representative in the person of the Duke of Cambridge; a good cavalry officer, thirsting for the opportunity to distinguish himself. His frank and unaffected bearing, and dignified amiability of character, will go far finally to dispel the delusions prevalent among the French soldiery as to the pride and arrogance of the English character; while his mere presence with the army is a pledge of the earnestness with which the British nation has at last