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our day cannot surprise us, so long as the Church of Christ forgets, or keeps out of sight, one of her great foundation truths. Till we all realize our oneness together with Christ, and carry this out in daily life and practice, as well as symbolize it in our sacred rites, we shall never convince the world that the universal brotherhood it is yearning for is to be found with the true Brother of mankind, and that the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only religion wide enough for all men everywhere and in all ages.

CHARLES MARSON.

ART. VI.—CURIOSITIES OF CLERICAL EXPERIENCE. No. III.

THE subject of the present narrative was an accurate scholar, a brilliant writer, and a clear thinker. He contributed largely to the secular, and to the religious Press. He wrote leaders for the *Times* during and after the Crimean War, he enriched the monthly periodicals with many able articles. On one occasion, in the pages of a popular organ of the Press, he inserted a short leader criticizing, in a spirit of cutting irony and angry disappointment, and, I must say, most unjustly, a peer, who was also a Bishop. The said article was brought before the attention of the House of Lords, and some severe comments were made on the editor for admitting it. It is only fair to add that the writer of it was hardly responsible for its contents. He dashed it off, with his usual vein of satirical humour, when his health was seriously impaired, to which I shall take occasion to refer in the sequel; but when he came to himself, about a week or ten days afterwards, he bitterly regretted what he had done in a moment of petulance and pique. So true are the words of the poet:

> "One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving why they do it;
> And just as lamely can ye mark
> How far, perhaps, they rue it."

With the exception of myself, not a soul ever knew who wrote the article, nor does any one know it to this day. I knew nothing of its having been written until after the case was alluded to in Parliament. The writer then for the first time informed me that the letter he asked me to post as I was leaving the house where he was taken ill, contained the manuscript for the Press. I had known the writer, in far happier times, when he was an ornament to the profession of which

he was a more than ordinarily gifted member. He was a curate, but at the date I refer to he had given up clerical work, and devoted himself entirely to literature. He entered the ministry more to please his father than himself. His keen sense of the ludicrous, his fine tenor voice, his incisive wit, and the racy cleverness with which he used his pen, made him a universal favourite. Physically, he was a man of powerful build, tolerably good-looking, of considerable muscular activity, and with a surplus of electricity in his system always emitting sparks which illuminated the social circle in which he moved. He was one of the most agreeable companions at times that one could meet with, and, as the result of his high social qualities, he was in constant request. He was the life and soul of the society which he frequented, and, judging him by his unceasing flow of wit and humour, one could come to no other conclusion than that, so far as animal spirits went, life with him was one long summer's day. But this was not the case. These men generally have their reactions. If they have hours of exuberant excitement, they have also their hours of enervating depression. And such was the experience of the individual before us. His solitude was almost insupportable. Being of a mercurial disposition, he was never thoroughly happy unless when in society. By degrees his loneliness in the dull routine of his bachelor's quarters became more and more unbearable; and accordingly he made up his mind to get married, and settle down to a quiet and a cheerful mode of life. He found, however, that getting married is not the mechanical process which some persons are disposed to regard it. There are men bold enough, or vain enough, to think that they have only to ask, and that their proposal must, as a matter of course, be accepted. They never seem to reflect that women have their instinctive affinities and repulsions, which cause them to say either "Yes," or "No," or, what is perhaps equally common, the hesitancy involved in "I don't know." In the present instance, the young lady was very handsome, fairly well off, and of most agreeable manners; sensible, clever, and accomplished.

She was aware of the desultory life of her admirer when he proposed, and replied, in a kind but firm tone, telling him "that there was a time when she had hoped he might have given up his irregular ways, but that now she feared he could never reform while he was surrounded by his interested flatterers, who only made use of him to enable them to spend a pleasant evening at his expense—that, for her part, if she were to marry him, it would simply be utter ruin to her peace of mind."

Having satisfied himself of the hopelessness of entertaining

any further ideas on this subject, he tried to act upon the principle that gentle submission to the inevitable is good philosophy. The refusal of his offer, however, evidently affected him. He became changed in manner, was more alone than usual, and he exhibited signs of depression which previously were reserved for his solitary hours. His humour was more mechanical than formerly—his conversation had an artificial air about it, and even his literary compositions lacked their wonted terseness and vigour. After a few months, he suddenly disappeared from the provincial town where he had lived for three years. No one knew for certain whither he had betaken himself. Some said he had gone to the Continent, and others that he was "somewhere in London." I had not seen him for nearly four years. The last letter I received from him was dated so far back as a year and a half. He then wrote to inform me of the death of his favourite sister, and how deeply he felt her loss. From that time I had no further tidings of or from him, and I had no idea of what he was doing, or where he was living.

In the month of February, 1855, I was confined to my room from the effects of an acute attack of bronchitis. I had not left my bed for more than a week. The doctor's visits were daily. My voice was so much affected that I could speak only in a barely audible whisper, and that for only a minute or two without fatigue. It was under these circumstances I was informed that there was a gentleman in the drawing-room who wanted particularly to see me on very urgent business. He gave no name, but he mentioned a fact from which he said that I would be sure to know who he was. I had no difficulty in concluding that my visitor was none other than my old friend to whose letter I have just alluded. I asked to have him shown upstairs. When he entered my room, he seemed altered in appearance from what he had been when I last saw him. He was very excited in manner, and his conversation, I thought, seemed at times wild and eccentric. After explaining his history during the interval since we last met, he went on to say that his object in coming to London was to enter upon a curacy which he had obtained in the East-End, and that he arrived in town only that very morning; that, as he was in the railway carriage, it being about twelve o'clock the previous night, and no one but himself in the same compartment, his deceased sister appeared to him, and said: "I have come to warn you; return home as soon as you can. As you are now in the train, you must proceed to your journey's end; but do not linger a single day in town." He went on to say that, on his arrival in town, he was to come straight to me, ask me to pray with him, and, when he left my house, he

was to proceed forthwith to the railway station, and turn his back on London. "If not," he added, quoting the weird language of the alleged apparition, "you shall be with me exactly at this very time, twenty-four hours hence."

During this recital my visitor was seated on a chair, on my right hand, at the head of the bed, so that I could not see him without straining my eyes. On hearing this extraordinary story, so utterly devoid of all sense, I turned round, and looking fully into his face, I had no difficulty in perceiving that he was under the influence of drink, and, in fact, was even then in the incipient stage of *delirium tremens*. Seeing my fixed gaze on him, he stood up, and excitedly seizing me by the hand, he begged of me to do what his sister had suggested. As I had studied medicine for some years, this form of mental aberration was not unfamiliar to me, and, knowing therefore something of the eccentricities of persons so affected, I felt that in my helpless condition there was nothing to be done but to humour him to the top of his bent. Accordingly I said: "I cannot speak without much difficulty, and only in a whisper; if therefore you will kneel down I will pray, but you must promise not to disturb me by talking; kneel down." I then offered a short prayer, and as I had begun to do so, my visitor burst into tears, sobbing violently, and covering his face with his hands, called several times upon God "to help him, and to protect him from the vile conspiracy that was got up against him." I need hardly say the idea of a conspiracy was purely a phantom of a morbid imagination.

When he rose from his knees, he sat down by my bedside, and after a few minutes said: "I must now go, but I cannot leave London. I promised the Rector of —— that I should be with him to-day, and, at all hazards, I must keep my word."

"You really cannot go to the Rector; write and tell him you are ill, and unable to see him."

"I must go; I see you are one of the conspirators, although I understood from my sister that you were my friend."

I never felt myself in such a fix. Here I was closeted with a man in the initial stage of drink-madness, and unable to leave my room without aid, or in any way to check him in his wild freaks.

"When you leave me," I said, "where are you going?"

"Straight to the residence of the Rector of ——."

"Well, you must have some luncheon somewhere; ring the bell, and I will order it for you at once."

"There is no use," he said; "I can't eat anything. Let me have some brandy-and-soda, for I am tired after my night's travelling."

Having informed him that I had neither the one nor the other to give him, I proposed a glass of sherry, which he readily accepted. I knew very well that he would not leave the house without something in the way of stimulant. He took the sherry, and then shook hands with me, and left. My great difficulty was to get him out of the house without meeting any members of my family. Two ladies were staying with us at the time, and if any of them were to see my eccentric visitor in his wild excitement it would neither be edifying nor convenient. Having rung the bell for the servant to show him downstairs, I begged of him to go quietly out of the house, and not speak to anyone. I might just as well have whistled to a hurricane to induce it to blow calmly as to reduce to anything like reason the crack-brained antics of my friend. Within ten minutes from his leaving my room he was, deep in the mysteries of his midnight adventure, with the ladies in the drawing-room, and as I was informed of the fact, there was nothing left for me but, as best I could, at all hazards, to dress and go downstairs.

In the meanwhile, he and the two lady visitors, and another lady, were at luncheon together in the dining-room. They seemed utterly bewildered at the extraordinary narrative of my friend, and my unexpected appearance did not tend to make matters more intelligible. My presence, however, had the desired effect in exercising a certain restraining influence upon him, and he became less excited. As soon as possible the ladies left the room, and not long after he left the house.

As he had two uncles in London, I thought they ought to look after him, and therefore I sent for a friend, into whose safe keeping I handed him, until he saw him within the residence of one of his uncles. I hoped that the uncle to whom I wrote would see that he was properly cared for, and, if necessary, sent to a hospital. That would have been the proper course to have taken, and which I should have done had I been well enough. My friend saw him safely to the place indicated by me, and, having given up his charge, he returned to my house with that information.

I went back to my room, and felt much relieved at the satisfactory arrangement by which I was delivered from a very awkward dilemma. But my satisfaction was of a very transitory duration. At a quarter to twelve o'clock that same night, I was aroused from sleep by a violent knocking at the hall-door. I got up, and, opening the window, I saw a cab standing in the street, and on the doorstep a policeman and the cab-driver. The latter, hearing me opening the window, called out in a loud and insolent tone, asking, with an oath,

why we didn't open the door. "One would suppose you were all dead. Make haste down to see the man we've got here, for we can do nothing with him."

The truth instantly flashed upon my mind. My visitor was back again, and there was nothing to be done but to go down to him. In a few minutes I was in the hall, and, on opening the door, the policeman and the cab-driver carried in my friend, in a semi-conscious state, by the head and heels, and laid him at full length on the dining-room floor.

"There," said the cabman, "I have had a job with him all day, and no mistake!"

"How so?" I asked.

"Why, I drove him from Mile End, and he insisted on my pulling up at almost every public-house, and as he had no money, I had to pay. He told me you would stump up when I got here, and he owes me exactly seventeen shillings and sixpence, fare and all."

I paid the driver, and he went away. The policeman remained, and by his assistance I got my visitor up to the drawing-room floor, where there was a spare bedroom. Being unwilling, for obvious reasons, to disturb the servants, the policeman and I managed to get him into bed. By this time he became more conscious, and seeing me, he put out his hand, saying: "Feel my pulse; I know I am sinking fast. What's the time?"

"It is just twelve o'clock," I said.

"All right, that is the hour my sister mentioned to me in the train that I was to be with her. I know I am dying—my end has come—feel my pulse again."

All this was said with a low muttering and inarticulate tone of voice. He was very unmanageable, but after a time he became more tranquil. The policeman had to leave, after remaining about a quarter of an hour, and then I was obliged to watch all night by the bedside of my unwelcome visitor. I was afraid to leave him alone, and it was with extreme difficulty that I could sit up with him. Early next morning I sent for the doctor, who arrived about eight o'clock. He had no hesitation in pronouncing upon the nature of the attack, and after four or five days the patient was able to leave his room. The first time that the doctor saw him, he remarked to me, when we were alone: "It is a thousand pities to see a man of such magnificent brain-power breaking up a fine constitution by habits of intemperance. What a splendid head he has, capable of doing anything, if only he was commonly fair to himself."

After the doctor left, I returned to the patient's room, when the following conversation, substantially, took place between us:

"Well, you are getting on all right, but it is absolutely necessary, for every reason, that, from this day forward, you should become a total abstainer—nothing else will save you either as regards body or mind."

"Yes, I know it; but I have lost all self-control, I am as pliant as a willow, weak as water as to good resolutions, and utterly unable to keep from drinking much, if only I take the least drop of anything alcoholic. The pledge, I am sure, is my only chance, but I fear that I shall fail in moral courage to keep it."

"Never mind; let us try. What do you think of going to see J. B. Gough, who, I believe, is to be seen in the Strand, at the Temperance League Office."

He said he had no objection, but he added: "You can't conceive the state of a drunkard's mind. I know well enough the havoc which this vice makes on health and character. I know what the Bible says about it, what the doctors tell me about it, what I know myself about it. Still, I am unable to resist the horrible fascination of it."

"At all events, you cannot do better than sign the pledge. You have never done so, and perhaps, under the Divine blessing, you may this time succeed. It is the craving for some stimulant, which the stomach in its abnormal condition demands, which I believe is so troublesome; and I have known several drunkards derive much benefit at such a time from a cup of strong black coffee."

He said he would accompany me to Mr. Gough in a day or two, "but meanwhile let me have just one last farewell glass of brandy and soda. I feel at this moment such a sinking at my heart."

"Try the coffee."

"Oh, nonsense! I know I shall get ill again if I don't get, say, half a glass of brandy; that can do me no harm. Do let me have it!"

"Impossible till the doctor orders it. I appeal to your honour."

"Honour! my dear fellow, a man with every fibre of his body craving for alcohol is not able to appreciate your fine notions of honour. I must have it—I can't go on for the rest of the day without it. I tell you I can't."

After other words, I said I would send a note to the doctor and ask him about it. The note was sent, and within half-an-hour a reply was returned:—"On no account let him have a single drop of whisky or brandy, or anything in the way of strong drink. I send with this note a mixture, of which he is to take the eighth part three times a day; the first dose at once." I read this reply to the patient and administered the

first dose according to instructions. It was evident that the medicine had a good effect upon him, but it soon passed off.

In a few days he was able to leave his room and go down stairs. Unhappily, in a moment when my back was turned, he managed to get what he wanted; and, after a time, he became wild and ungovernable. While I was absent from the dining-room, he rushed into the hall, seized his hat, made for the door, which he opened, and was gone in a moment.

I couldn't follow him. When I went into the street, I looked up and down, but nowhere was he to be seen. I sent for a policeman, told him what had happened, and as the Regent's Canal was close by, I was afraid, in his delirium, he might be tempted to throw himself into it. It was now about half-past eight o'clock, and quite dark. Feeling uneasy as to the fate of my ex-guest, I sent once more to the friend who had accompanied him to the house of his relative before he was brought to me by the cabman.

When he came, I told him what had happened, and that it was just within the range of possibility that the runaway might have made for the York and Albany—a large, well-known public-house, about ten minutes from where I lived. I told him to go there first, and make inquiries. Off he started with a will, and came back within an hour with the information that the object of his search had been there—had some drink at the bar, and applied for a bed for the night, as he was anxious to catch an early train for the country from Euston Square. The proprietor, noticing a certain air of wildness about him, declined to receive him, but informed him that if he were to go to Euston Square Station, he would find accommodation in one of the many lodging-houses or hotels with which the street outside the station abounded. He could give no further information, and my friend returned, thinking it would be only a wild-goose-chase to go to Euston. And so the curtain fell upon the third act of this drama.

I lay awake half the night, going over in my mind all sorts of theories as to the fate of this unfortunate man. The imagination at such times seldom paints cheerful pictures. Night and unrefreshing sleep are not calculated to present the most favourable side of any doubtful question. So it was in my case. All sorts of harrowing scenes passed before my mind. Morning, to some extent, came to my relief; though it in no way removed my feeling of suspense. The day wore on without any tidings. At five o'clock two gentlemen called, father and son, both clergymen, and each bearing the name of the Rector of ———, to whose curacy my missing friend had been appointed. They were shown into my study, and, after a few preliminary common-places, the elder of the two gentlemen remarked that he presumed I could guess the cause of their

visit. I replied that I supposed it was connected with a gentleman who was about to become a curate to one of them.

"That is so," said the elderly gentleman. "A few days ago I received a visit from the proprietor of a public-house in my parish, about four o'clock in the afternoon. He said that at that moment, there was a gentleman in his house, who was the 'worse for drink;' that he was very wild and excited, said he came to enter on the curacy of my parish, and wanted to know where the Rectory was, that he was in the private parlour of the publican's house with his coat off, on the sofa asleep, when he left home. I went at once to see him, and I found things exactly as they were represented. We woke up Mr. M——, who was evidently unaware of his surroundings; he talked thickly and incoherently, said he wanted to know where the Rector lived, and such like. I saw he had a watch and chain, which I asked the publican to hand to me, and here they are" (producing them, and placing them before me on the table). "He also had a little money, amounting to twenty-four shillings, which I have also brought with me. In looking at some papers and letters in one of his pockets, I saw a letter addressed to you, and as he was a complete stranger to me, having no knowledge of him except through correspondence from the country, I thought the best thing to do was to call for a cab at once, and send him straight here, giving the cabman strict charge to keep his eye upon him."

"May I ask when Mr. M—— left you?"

"I should say about five o'clock."

"He certainly was a long while on the road, for he did not arrive here till a quarter to twelve at midnight; and, according to the cabman's statement, the journey was broken by constant stoppages at several public-houses on the way, for which and for the hire of the cab, I had to pay seventeen shillings and sixpence. May I ask if the London Hospital is not near you?"

"Yes; about a mile or so from my residence."

"Why did you not send Mr. M—— there? Surely, in his state, that would have been the proper thing. He ran a great risk. However, the thing is done, and there is no use in going over the details. I had not seen Mr. M—— for four years until that day, and when he left my house I had no power of controlling his movements."

"Oh, then you know where he is?"

"No; that is just what I do not know. He was here some days, under medical attendance, carefully looked after; he suddenly left the house the night before last, and I have had no tidings of him since."

"How sad!" said the Rector; "the whole affair has been most painful; but, at all events, I am glad to think that he has friends in London. Perhaps you will be so good as to let

me hear from you when he turns up;" and then my clerical visitor took his departure.

Some excuse, doubtless, might be found for the Rector for what he had done. He was as much taken by surprise as I was by Mr. M——'s visit. Still, to my mind, there was something very cold-blooded in sending a drunken man—and he a brother-clergyman—all that way, by himself, without a penny in his pocket, or anything given to the cab-driver for his use. Nor was it very considerate to send him to my house without the least notice of the expected arrival of a man in a state utterly unfit for travelling. The least reflection should have suggested to the Rector that the kindest and most practical thing to have done was to take care of him "in the inn" where he already was, and to have provided a bed and a doctor for him with the least possible delay; or, at least, to have sent him to the hospital. But it seemed as though, provided this amiable Rector could only manage to get rid of this troublesome character—this disreputable sinner, without friends, without money, homeless, helpless, and, in his drunken fit, brainless—he did not seem to care very much where he went: the further the better.

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!

Here was a grand opportunity for this upright and virtuous clergyman to extend to a brother in distress the generous hand and the feeling heart—to take care of him, if not in his own house, at least at "the inn," or at the hospital—to minister to a mind diseased, and, when "he came to himself," to exercise that influence upon him which, with the recollection of kindness and consideration for his misfortune still fresh in his memory, would have had the effect of softening his heart. But, no; rectorial dignity outweighed the common offices of humanity—a splendid opportunity was let go—and clerical propriety stood between the saint and the sinner.

To be (if we may digress for a moment) pitying and patient, kind, brotherly, earnest, and hopeful; to be more anxious to cure disease than fearful to catch it; nay, to have firm faith that with Christ's help we shall be, as He was, a minister of blessing to the possessed even of seven devils—this is the temper and this the faith that will prove to the unthinking world the practical reality of Christianity, better than all the external evidences which letter-learned professors of sacred theology have ever formulated. An earnest, holy, and unselfish life is a stronger proof of the power of God on the soul, than all the arguments drawn from the collective genius of theological disputants put together.

In the case before us, the curate, when fully recovered, retained a painful recollection of the unbrotherly treatment which he received from the Rector. It soured his disposition, and shook his faith for a time in the entire body of the clergy. His objection was no doubt irrational and inexcusable. You cannot argue from the particular to the universal. Still, there is a temptation, deeply seated in our nature, to associate the man with the matter, and to include, in a sweeping assertion, a whole tribe when a notable representative acts inconsistently with its principles. It is easy enough to draw fine fancy-pictures of virtue and charity while the man who paints them may himself be an utter stranger to their influence upon his soul.

The sequel of the curate's life presents one of those illuminated prospects which the grace of God, even in this state of existence, permits us frequently to behold. Men who have dived into the very *latibula* of vice, have been reclaimed, reformed, regenerated—plucked as brands from the burning—delivered from the power of darkness, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Such was the happy experience of the subject of this sketch.

After recovery from his acute indisposition, he accompanied me to Mr. J. B. Gough, whom we met by appointment at the Temperance League in the Strand. My friend was greatly agitated, but, after a few cheering words, he took up the pen in his quivering hand, and was about to sign his name, when he turned to me, and said: "Will you kneel down, and let us have a word of prayer for God's blessing and strength to help me to keep straight?" We did so, and then he signed his name, which, if the book exists, as I presume it does, bears the record of one among many thousands who have reason to rejoice in the grand cause of teetotalism. I am not a total abstainer myself, but I know its value in cases where the only choice lies between a course of rigid abstinence or death in more senses than one. Mr. M—— returned home with me, and that evening was one long to be remembered with thankfulness.

The question now arose, What was he to do in the way of regular employment? "He felt," he said, "so utterly unworthy before God that he could not think of entering upon parochial work until, at all events, he had given himself a fair trial as to his sincerity of purpose and stability of conduct." After being with me a week he said, "I think I should like to become a tutor in a school in the country. I know the classics well, and English literature is my strong point." After discussing the pros and cons, we at last decided to put an advertisement in the *Times*. Three applications were received in reply.

One of them from Wales was selected; and, in ten days from the date of the advertisement, Mr. M—— was on his way to enter upon a course of life altogether novel in his experience and surroundings. He worked well, and to the entire satisfaction of the Principal. An intimate acquaintance soon sprang up between them. At the end of a year, at a confirmation in the parish, Mr. M—— was introduced to the Bishop, and, by the urgent request of the Principal, my friend was induced to take occasional Sunday duty for the clergy in the neighbouring parishes. He also contributed to the local newspapers some of the ablest letters I have ever read upon "The Causes, the Course, and the Cure of Drunkenness."

At the end of a year and a half he obtained a curacy in one of the Midland counties. In that parish he was a diligent pastor, an able and practical preacher, and a most agreeable and welcome visitor among the poor. All this time he was true to his teetotal principles; he became in every sense an altered man. At the end of eleven months there was a village fair adjoining the parish, and, being a small place, many were going to and fro, and the village, so quiet in ordinary times, was more than usually gay and festive. In an evil moment, when Mr. M—— seemed very tired after a long day's exertion, a friend insisted on his taking a glass of sherry, as he seemed on the point of fainting. Alas! it was hardly taken when the sleeping fiend was aroused from his slumbers, and in louder tones than ever Mr. M.—— called for the old stimulant. That night he was found so intoxicated in the outskirts of the village that he had to be helped to his lodgings by two of the parishioners. I knew nothing of this at the time. The first intimation that I had of my friend's altered position was from the following note, whose words were both few and sad:

> For God's sake, come to me! Once more I am in the grasp of my old enemy—utterly undone. When we meet I will tell you all.

This letter was dated from a public-house in the lowest part of the Minories in London. Off I started at once, and on arrival I interviewed the landlord before seeing my friend.

"What do you know of Mr. M——?" I asked.

"Nothing whatever," he replied; "but that he came here a week ago, and I gave him a room on the third floor back."

"Does he drink?"

"Oh yes, somewhat!"

"Is he the worse for it?"

"I can't say; you see, in my experience, drunkenness is only a question of capacity. One man gets drunk if he takes a glass of whisky; another will take half a dozen and not show signs of distress."

"I am really anxious to befriend your lodger, and I am not asking these questions from idle curiosity; do tell me honestly all you know about him."

The landlord, on hearing this, quite changed his tone, and, inviting me into his private parlour, said: "Well, sir, as you are the gentleman's friend, I ought to tell you that he is all day and nearly all night at it—brandy and soda six or seven times, to say nothing of whisky and water, and he hardly eats anything. My wife, seeing that he was quite a gentleman, made up nice little dinners for him and sent him a comfortable breakfast, but he won't eat them; it is drink, sir, always drink. I told him yesterday that I could not serve him any more except two glasses a day, and all he said was 'Thank you.' I am very sorry for him, sir; and you are the first friend who has called."

Having ascertained that he was in his room, I went upstairs, and, on entering, I saw him lying on his bed asleep, breathing heavily, in a comatose state; his clothes were on him, but so scanty and so ragged that one could hardly call them clothes. His coat was once a light-grey alpaca, but use had greatly changed its colour, out at the elbows, only one button on it; and all he wore besides was in perfect keeping with it. His feet were bare and blistered; the soles of his stockings had been worn out, the upper part alone remained. There was one portmanteau in the room, which was all the luggage he apparently possessed. On opening it I found that its contents consisted of a bundle of sermons tied carefully up, and one slipper—nothing else.

My first care was to go for a doctor, whom I found in the next street. He came with me to the house and had no difficulty in pronouncing it to be a case of *delirium tremens*. After patient nursing and medical attention he was once more brought round, and when strong enough he gave me an account of his recent relapse into his old way as follows:

"For two years and five months I remained perfectly sober; and were it not for that fatal glass of sherry, which stirred up old associations not yet obliterated, I should in all probability be sober still. However, there is no use in trying to gather up spilt milk. I am miserable and wretched, disgusted with myself; and even if God should in mercy forgive me, I can never forgive myself."

"What has become of all your clothes?"

"Gone for drink."

"Have you no money left?"

"Not a shilling."

"What do you mean to do."

"Don't know. I'm thinking of going to one of the lodging-

houses in St. Giles's. If I had a few pounds I could stay there with economy till, as Mr. Micawber would say, 'something may turn up.'"

He asked me to leave him some money, which I did, and promised to call again next day. When I called the door was opened by the landlady, who, with an air of mystery, said: "Oh! sir, your friend has had some money given him yesterday, and last night, in one of his fits, he attacked a Dutch gentleman lodging in the house, and almost killed him with a poker; and in the encounter your friend has been very seriously punished about the face by the Dutchman." I went up at once to Mr. M——, and found him perfectly calm and quiet, but his face so swollen that he was hardly recognisable.

"What's all this?"

"An unfortunate row I got into, when not quite sober, last night."

"Well, certainly, if you only saw yourself in a photograph, you would not be able to swear to your personal identity. Where on earth is all this to end? Come, you must leave this place at once, and accompany me home."

"No, not to-day. I have a reason for it; but to-morrow, if you will call, I'll go."

I called as arranged, and on seeing me he said, "There" (showing me a photograph); "I wanted to have that taken, just as I was, in my rags and wretchedness, and bloated face. I know the day will come when I shall rise out of this horrible pit. I have been sinking, sinking, gradually through the mud till at last my feet have struck the hard bottom, and I can fall no lower. In spite of appearances against me, I feel I shall yet come to the surface; there is that within which tells me it shall be so. And that photo I ask you to keep in memory of my sinful past; so that when you hear one day of my having come to myself, you may have a portrait of the awful degradation into which habitual sin is capable of leading its deluded victim."

That photograph I still possess, and though it presents anything but a pleasant picture, yet when viewed alongside the subsequent experiences of my friend, it has the advantage of showing the enormous difference, even in the outward features, between the expression which the habitual sin of the drunkard depicts upon the human countenance, and that which is produced by Divine Grace when it becomes the habit of the soul.

After spending a few weeks with me, he went to a relative who lived in a distant part of the country. This man was a sincere and practical Christian, and in his house, and by his kind attention, Mr. M—— found a haven of peace and rest

after the storms and troubles of a chequered life. Eight months after he went to live with his relative, he died; but, as if the prescience which enabled him to state to me that he felt he could one day reconquer his foe before he passed away was inspired, I had the most minute account of those eight months, and how Divine Grace in the end made him triumph through the power of the Redeemer's love. During that period he was a rigid teetotaler. From the time he signed the pledge until he died—about three years and four months—never but for that one period did he ever, in the least degree, violate his pledge, and deeply and bitterly did he repent of it.

One day during his last illness, about three months before his death, he said to his cousin, in whose house he was living:

"Have you ever considered what *sin* is? It seems to me that comparatively few of us know what a terrible poison incessantly circulates through the veins and arteries of our moral nature. Of course a poor, broken-down drunkard like me is looked upon as being steeped to the very lips in sin. That form of sin offends every sense almost. To the eye, there is something abhorrent when one sees the drivelling idiotcy of the drunkard—his blurred and bloated face, and his whole appearance so disgusting. To the ear, there is something painfully distressing to listen to the wild and broken accents—half-oath, half-threat—the thick guttural sounds, and the helpless efforts to speak intelligibly; the very smell of the drink itself as it is given off from the offensive breath of the drunkard adds to the repulsiveness of the sin. Even the sense of touch is troubled at the helplessness of the drunken man, when propped up by the hands of friendly sympathizers. All this outward and visible exhibition of the effects of sin renders it an object of abhorrence to every one. But I fear it is more what the eye sees, than what the heart feels, which makes this particular sin so hateful. There are other forms of sin which are quite as destructive to the soul's welfare as drunkenness, but whose effects are not visible—sin which is invested with respectability and social rank; sin which, even in the Church itself, is eating out the soul's life; sin quite as ruinous to the destiny of man as drink; and yet there is nothing to indicate to the world who are its victims. Have you ever considered sin in this light?"

"No doubt," said his cousin, "there is much truth in what you say. Drunkenness is only one of many of the branches springing from the same root. Even if a man was never guilty of any gross form of sin, but habitually excluded God from his thoughts, such forgetfulness of the Divine Being would leave the soul in darkness."

"Exactly so; but in my case, my conscience gives me such

pain to think that I have sinned against light, and knowledge, and conviction, and warnings without number, and in the position of a minister of Christ, or purporting to be one. Oh! there are times when the black past rises before me, and I sink into absolute despair—I cannot see how God can extend pardon to so vile a wretch."

In reply, some of the Saviour's sayings were quoted. My friend was also reminded how, when St. Paul summed up a list of the most infamous kinds of sinners, he concluded in these words: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). The power of such Scriptures proclaims hope to all—to the very vilest—to the chief of sinners.

"Yes, I see it—I see it! That is a ray of sunshine in a dark and cloudy day—at least dark to me. I humble myself at the feet of Christ. I am not worthy of the least favour. All I can say, and what I do say, is, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' From my earliest day, as soon as I can remember anything, I had a taste for strong drink—it has been my besetting sin; but I seek no form of palliation. Mercy, Lord, is all my plea."

This conversation, as reported, took place about three months before his death. It shows sufficiently the drift of his thoughts. Day by day he was growing in knowledge, not of the head, for that he had all along, but of the heart, of himself, of his weakness. The plain truth of the Gospel, evidently, was making itself felt upon his soul, and in the last moment of consciousness before he passed away, he said, in reply to a remark made by his cousin, "I hope you are strong in the Lord." "Oh! yes, very." These were the last audible accents which fell from the lips of my friend, whom I valued and esteemed, in spite of all his errors, his follies, and his sins. He was a man of a strong nature, of strong passions, impulsive, excitable, and easily led astray. In the midst of his worst fits of sin, his conscience was ever admonishing him; and after a life of much sadness and sin, he was led like a child to his Father's footstool, and in the deepest penitence he poured out his heart's sorrow to Him, Who alone in heaven above, or on earth beneath, can speak peace to the troubled soul.

G. W. Weldon.