M W Mann

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AND
NEWS ITEM.

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The Voiceless.

We count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet-waiting singers slumber:
But o'er their silent sisters' breast
The wild flowers who will stop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy fame is proud to win them;
Alas for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them.

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone,
Whose song has told their heart's sad story;
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
The cross but not the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
On nameless sorrow's church yard pillow.

Oh hearts that break and give no sign,
Save whitening lips and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his cordial wine,
Slow dropped from Misery's crushing presses:
If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as Earth, as sweet as Heaven.

—*O. W. Holmes.*

DIGBY'S REFORM CLUB.

There was a quartette of free and jovial spirits in Burville, and John Digby was the acknowledged leader thereof. Peter Slade, and Tom Lowder, and Sam Pepper were his associates. They four were young men, freehearted and generous, with great capacity for enjoyment. On a certain Monday evening they were assembled in the small parlor of Lushton's tavern for the purpose of having a good time, as they were wont to assemble often. The season was winter, and the beverage they were indulging in was a compound of rum, sugar, milk, and eggs, familiarly known among the initiated as "Tom and Jerry." At an early stage of the wassail, before sense had been submerged, Peter Slade suggested that he had a complaint to make against one of the town, and thereupon he opened his vials of denunciation upon Parson Meekly, the old clergyman of the place.

"As near as I can find out," he said, "the parson just about the same as called us by name, and held us up as a set of graceless scamps."

"Not quite so bad as that," said John Digby "He did certainly allude to us very plainly; but the worst he brought against us was, that we were prostituting noble powers and opportunities to base and sinful purposes. Rather flattering, I thought, especially the 'noble powers.'"

"Flattering with a vengeance," growled Tom Lowden. "What business is it of his?"

"Aye," chimed Sam Pepper, "what business is it of his? And then look at the hullabaloo they're making over this foreign mission business. It was in connection with that Parson Meekly attacked us—They'd better look at home. I think we've suffering enough under our very noses that had better be looked out first."

"That's so," cried Slade. "I say 'charity begins at home.' What do you say, John?"

John Digby had listened attentively, and during the conversation he had turned his glass bottom upward upon the table.

"There may be truth in what you say," he slowly and thoughtfully replied; "but people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. We may object to furnishing our money for the foreign missions upon the plea that charity begins at home, and all that; but the question may come—What have we done for this charity at home? What have we done toward alleviating the distress of the poor of our own town? And if we haven't done anything in that direction—if we don't open our hands in charity at all—what right have we to say in what direction others shall aim their good works?"

Blank were the looks that greeted this speech. The trio of listeners were taken aback. They hadn't expected this from their leader.

"Now look here, boys," continued John Digby, pushing his inverted glass away to the centre of the table, and leaving it there; "I don't like this overhauling that Parson Meekly gave us any better than you do, and I propose to shut him up."

"Hi-yah!" shouted Sam Pepper. "That's the talk. I'm with you."

"Are you sure you've got the courage, Sam?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Count me in," said Tom.

"And me," added Peter. "Let's shut the old fellow up. What's the programme, Jack?"

"Well," answered Digby, soberly, "I have planned that we will take the wind out of Parson Meekly's sails by establishing a Reform Club of our own, and starting a Missionary Society on the same basis."

"Eh?"

"Look ye, boys, people besides the parson are talking pretty hard about us, and we'll shut them all up in a lump. I'd like to astonish 'em. I'd like to hit back in the most effective way. I'd like to make 'em take the back track here in Burville in their own business."

His hearers were interested, and listened eagerly.

"What is it?—Tell us how it's to be done?" they asked.

"Have you got the courage to do it?"

"We'll follow you," said Peter Slade.

"Honor bright?"

"Yes."

"Then listen."

"Hold on," cried Sam Pepper. "Let's fill up before you commence.

"Not with old Lushton's Tom and Jerry," returned Jack. "We shall want the cost of it for another purpose. Turn your glasses bottom up for the present. There, that's a go. Now listen. We are in the habit of meeting at the tavern three evenings in the week; and our expenses for liquor and cigars are at least two dollars an evening, aren't they?"

This was admitted with a nod.

"And in addition to this I spend at least a dollar more each week for beer and tobacco on my own hook—How is it with you?"

The others acknowledged that a dollar a week was little enough.

"Thus," resumed John Digby, "we have ten dollars a week as the result of our combined and individual expenditure for rum and tobacco. I, for one, think I could manage to live through the rest of the winter without any more of it; and for the sake of the experiment I would be willing to put my share of that ten dollars a week to a charitable use. Here it is in the beginning of December, and the winter has opened hard. There are poor families not far away which we can bless with our sympathy and our help. We might organize a benevolent society, or a missionary society, upon our own hook. Do you begin to understand?"

They understood him perfectly; and, since he would lead, they were ready to follow. In fact, they rather liked the idea. There was a charm of novelty and originality about it that captivated them. It would be fun to purchase flour and meat, tea and sugar, and fuel, and go around and assist the poor and the needy. They were young men, full of life and good feeling, and had caroused only because of the fun of the thing. Here was promise of fun in another direction, and they would go for it.

The matter was discussed and finally settled. They would make a square week of it at the beginning.

"During the week," said Jack, "we will look up the cases of all destitution and suffering, and on next Saturday after we will meet and compare notes. Then we will take our ten dollars, and do what we can for those who are suffering most. We must be methodical in this. We are not to spend a penny in this work of charity which is not saved by the cutting off of some useless expenditure of our own; and he of us who buys a cigar through the week shall deduct it from his contribution on Saturday."

"If we would be methodical," suggested Peter, "we must organize. I say if we are going to do anything of this kind, let us do it ship-shape."

Peter's proposition was unanimously accepted, and thereupon they proceeded to effect an organization, very simple, but nevertheless effective. They elected John Digby to serve as President, and as Treasurer, and as Secretary; and then they elected an Executive Committee of four, consisting of John Digby, Peter Slade, Tom Lowden, and Sam Pepper. And then they settled their bills at the bar, and went home.

Saturday evening came and the Reform Club met at Digby's shop, and each member was ready with his report. They were sober and thoughtful. They had thought, then they separated on Monday evening, that they should meet with the spirit of frolic in their new work, but the scenes which they had witnessed in the interim had changed the current of their feelings entirely.

"My soul!" exclaimed Sam Pepper, "I never dreamed what sorrow and suffering there was right here in our little town. Last night I went down to the Widow Bashlot's and I found her, with a sick child, absolutely freezing and starving."

"And I," said Tom Lowden, "found poor old Uncle Ben Driscoll and his wife both in the same plight. The old man is down with the rheumatism, and when both he and Aunt Sally sat and cried like babies with fear of going to the poor-house, I tell you, it brought the tears to my eyes."

And so the reports were made, and then they planned how they could best use their ten dollars. It seemed like a drop in the bucket when set against all the suffering and want they had found; but it would do something.

On that Saturday evening the Widow Bashlot bent over the bed of her sick child with weeping and with wails of anguish. The howling blast piped without and the keen frost nipped within. She suffered because she had not yet brought herself to beg. For herself, she would rather die than become a pauper; but for her child—"Oh! God, have mercy!"

A wailing cry like this had burst from her lips, when the tramp of feet at her door attracted her attention, and presently a gentle rap followed. She answered the summons and found four young men upon the stoop. She knew them well, for they had been schoolmates with her son, who had gone away to sea and never returned. And they came into the house; and they brought with them wood and provisions; and they piled up the fuel upon the hearth until the bright flame leaped and roared; and the sick child stretched out its wasted arms to embrace the genial warmth. And they brought forth bread, and tea, and sugar, and butter, and cheese.

"All right," said Sam Pepper, who regarded these as his especial charges, in answer to the widow's ejaculations of amazement. "We are John Digby's Reform Club; and we are going into the missionary work; and such folks as you are we want to convert—want to convert you from suffering to comfort if we can. So keep up a good heart, and let us do for you what your own Willie would have done if he had lived. It'll be comfort for us. We'll call often. You shan't want if we can help it."

The widow's sobbing, bursting return of gratitude, and her eager, heart-sent prayer of blessing cannot be reproduced by tongue or pen. When the young men had reached the highway Sam Pepper burst forth;

"Boys, as sure as Heaven, I would not exchange the blessing of that poor widow's heart for all the joy that ever came in the old way at the tavern. There's something more than fun in this."

And his companions agreed with him.

In another part of the town, on the outskirts of the village, in a poor, thatched hut, lived Ben Driscoll and his wife Sally. In other days they had been well and happy, and, though never beforehand, yet they had not known want until old age and sickness had deprived them of the ability to work. And on this cold winter's night Uncle Ben and Aunt Sally sat and shivered over the embers of such poor stuff as they had been able to gather from the snow-covered hedges, and the old man sighed as he thought of the alms-house. "If we could only get through the winter! But who's to help us?"

And Uncle Ben and his wife were aroused from their stupor of cold and hunger by the tramp of feet and the hum of voices; and very shortly the door of their cabin was opened and John Digby and his companions entered. A fire speedily blazed upon the hearth and a good store of provisions was opened upon the table.

The old man wondered, and Tom Lowden made answer—

"It's all right, Uncle Ben. This is John Digby's Reform Club. We've stopped our rations of spirits and tobacco, and are going to invest the result in a missionary enterprise. We want to convert you and Aunt Sally if we can."

"Convert us, Tom?"

"Aye, convert you to comfort and peace; and perhaps convert you to the belief that there's a grain of good left in humanity still. We mean to take you in hand for the winter, and you shan't suffer if we can help it."

The boys didn't leave the cot until they had helped the aged couple to a hearty meal, and had piled up fuel enough to last till they came again; and when they finally withdrew the song of blessing was sounding in their ears.

And so the reformers went on until their night's work was done, and when they came to separate they declared that they had found such enjoyment as they had never known before.

During the succeeding week three new members were added to the club—men who were willing to cut off expenses for rum and tobacco and devote the proceeds to the relief of the poor and distressed of the town.

And ere long Digby's Reform Club became a noted institution in the town. The projectors thereof could hardly credit the evidence of their own senses in contemplating the results of three months' labor. Two and twenty members had joined, and the fund for relief amounted to almost forty dollars a week, as each man was pledged to pay in weekly the exact sum his spirits and tobacco had cost him. If he continued to use tobacco he took a lower place in the company, and the use of spirit as a beverage was sufficient cause for expulsion. When people saw the great good that was being done, they were anxious to give their aid and be counted in with the happy crew; but the laws of the club were fixed—no money could come to its fund except such as had been saved by the donor from the conquest of some evil habit or the cutting off of some useless luxury.

It was a bright Sabbath in springtime, and it had been talked that Parson Meekly was going to preach a sermon upon Digby's Reform Club, and the old meeting house was filled to overflowing. The clergyman read his text from St. John's Gospel—"*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come and see.*" And when he had told the story of Digby's Club, and pictured the good results of its labors, he proclaimed to all—"Go ye, and do likewise."

Once John Digby and his compatriots had fancied that it would be a proud moment when they had brought the old clergyman to recognize the worth of their labors; but the blessings of those upon whom their bounty had fallen had made such sweet music in their ears and the satisfaction of duties truly done had dropped so soothingly upon their souls, that they found no room for that baser pride which they had aforetime anticipated.

How Gen. Badeau was Introduced Into English Society.

By-the-bye, Gen. Badeau lives in princely style outside of London, and may be seen by everybody but Americans in one of the neatest little aristocratic turnouts, in the way of a brougham, in or about the city. And the General's circle of acquaintances is of the most select and aristocratic of England. The way he was introduced to this is a little curious. We get the facts from Jones, who had them from the General direct. Now it must be remembered that an American Consul General in London is not regarded as a large vegetable in a social point of view; and a Consul General of the United States may live in London until he gains the ripe old age of Methuselah without being recognized or known even to the nobility and gentry of England. This did not happen to Badeau. When that Persian ruffian, the Shah, came to London, General Badeau, in common with other consuls, was invited to be presented to this brother of the sun and cousin to the moon. In accordance with the invitation, Gen. Badeau donned that uniform covered with dust and glory of the late war, and seating himself in his brougham behind two flunkies in livery ditto, and two handsome horses, was rolling along Londonwood, when he encountered a lot of bloods out on a lark.

Now to encounter this lot is about as disagreeable a thing as one can find of a summer's morning or night either, for English play is horse-play and it is considered a rare joke to give and take black eyes and bloody noses. Unfortunately our Consul General was not in a situation to accept such courtesies, as his battle-stained uniform and intellectual countenance had to be presented to His Imperial Scorbutic Majesty of the East. His carriage was surrounded by the bloods, and the first demonstration consisted in covering our elegant and able consular agent with flour. To this General Badeau remonstrated. He did not like flour applied externally. He said as much. He clothed his ideas on the occasion with anything but flowery language. He called the offenders dirty blackguards. To this they retorted by styling him a cad, and one went so far as to say that he was a howling cad; and when our excellent commercial representative, getting a further advance on flour in his mouth and eyes, grew furious, a resolution was offered and passed unanimously to have the cad out. The sergeant-at-arms, which meant the entire party, pulled the noble representative from his brougham, and one of the set proceeded, as he said "to dress him down." The General called on his myrmidons on the box, and the myrmidons coming to his aid, a general engagement occurred that would have been bad in the end for the General but for the timely interference of the police. Badeau did not ask to have the young gentlemen arrested; he only asked for their names and address. They were given and the belligerants separated.

When General Badeau, in his plight to be presented to the imperial old bile of Persia, returned home he found on the cards names of young gentlemen connected with the Government, and through our Minister he made complaint. At first they were inclined to laugh at the affair, but their respective relatives, high in office, characterized the act as exceedingly brutal and stupid, assuring these wild oats that to assault and insult a consul made up a very serious state of affairs. At last it was settled that the youthful ruffians should go in person and apologize for the outrage. They did so. Badeau had the good sense to receive the gentlemen and their apology in a graceful manner.

"Vary sorry, you know," said the spokesman, "rawther awkward, you see—acted like blagaiards—aw—fact is, rawther, vary. Hope'll forget—vary sorry. But had a bad lot of stuff, altogather stupid."

"Don't mention it," cried General B. "I would not have minded a little lark, but the fact is, I was about being put to the Shah, and although he represents the flowery land of song, flour don't make a good court dress. But it's all right now. Come, let us see if I haven't some better stuff."

The young lords found the Yankee consul, as they called him, a "tip top fellah," and so Badeau was thrashed into good society.—*Washington Capital.*

[From the New York Sun.]

A Woman's First Sermon.

Unity Chapel is a small but neat and comfortable house of worship, near One Hundred and Twenty-eighth street and Fourth avenue. It belongs to a Unitarian congregation embracing some of the most intelligent and cultivated residents of Harlem. It was from the pulpit of Unity Chapel that Celia Burleigh preached her first sermon and yesterday morning (October 12), from the same stand, Mrs. Julia Howe, of Boston, held forth. Mrs. Howe has been, for a long time, before the public as a writer, and once or twice essayed the role of lecturer, but never until yesterday has she attempted a sermon. She is a comely matron of middle age, has a sweet expression of countenance and a voice which, too weak for effective public speaking, is yet very pleasant to hear. She was dressed in plain black, yesterday, spoke deliberately and with few gestures and seemed to create a favorable impression upon her critical hearers.

Mrs. Howe's text was the sixth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew: "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

The speaker said she would try to lead the thoughts of her hearers in a simple way to consider the matters she would present, and succeeded admirably in holding herself to her promise. "It is a great misfortune," she said, in entering upon the discussion of her chosen subject, "that we are so familiar with the sound that we understand but little of the sense of many beautiful truths taught us in the Bible. Words and expressions from Holy Writ become dull like coins in constant use, that after a while lose their weight and are no longer worth the price stamped upon their face. The pictures in Christ's mind were all real and it is a pity that they are not always reproduced with closer attention paid to their purity of form and naturalness of coloring.

"Of the ten virgins who took lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom, one-half were wise. This proportion is larger than we should have the right to expect in our day. How very few of us have the oil of wisdom with us while we wait for the bridegroom? The oil of the parable was wasted just as our natural powers waste without cultivation, and when the sudden call for the exercise of these powers comes to us how few of us are ready. Our trials nearly always come suddenly and give us but little time for preparation. It behooves us, then, to be always ready, to have oil in our lamps and to have them trimmed and fit for use."

Mrs. Howe spoke eloquently and touchingly of the coming of the angel of death into the household and the parting with the dearest of the flock. "This losing is death itself. It is the tearing away of the very heart-strings. But there will be an eternity of happiness when all the loved ones will meet at the side of the throne of God and never, never part again." The speaker recalled her visit to Westminster Abbey. "There are the tombs of kings and queens and great warriors and poets and statesmen; but I never think of it that I do not call to mind the rude but suggestive sculpture on a family tomb, representing father, mother, daughters and sons in a long procession, telling in a homely way of the never-ending march of the blest before the Almighty, when the cares and trials of this life are over and the dear ones are all gathered together in heaven.

"Our great trials come to us sometimes in the form of terrible temptations, and what can be more sudden than these? And what is there that demands more careful preparation to withstand? When we think of it, very little wrong is done by premeditation. If you are asked whether you will do a mean and cowardly act or a brave and magnanimous one, you answer a brave one, and at the time you really mean what you say and in your heart you intend to act bravely. But the temptation comes when you least expect it. It comes with the suddenness of a flash. You are unprepared. Your better nature is asleep, and you yield and are lost. Think how frightful are the results of some of these visitations. Look at the French revolution, that era of national chaos which has not yet given place to order. Take our own late war, which was foretold years ago by De Tocqueville. We winked at the corruptions that were sapping the foundations of our liberties. Great and good men lifted up their voices and cried to us, "Be prepared!" but we slumbered and slept, and then came the dreadful hour of slaughter. We had no oil in our lamps, and this great, foolish nation was taken and shaken and made to look God in the face. Then we were forced to learn that cotton was not king, that money was not king, that policy was not king, but that truth, justice and God demanded our allegiance. Then there was rushing to the market-place to buy the wisdom that we had

[Continued on Fourth Page.]