

John Todd's Reformation.

It not unfrequently happens that when prayers and entreaties and shame suffering and degradation have failed to check a man in his down hill course, some incident seemingly changes the whole current of his life.

John Todd had sunk very low. Once he had been gay, handsome and happy. When he made Mary Somers his wife there was not a young man in our village whose prospects seemed brighter.

For months and years his friends tried to save John Todd. They expostulated, they prayed, they begged, they reasoned, but all to no avail, and at length they gave it up.

One night, quivering and shaking, with not a penny in his pocket, John Todd entered his dilapidated home and asked his wife for liquor.

She cursed her savagely and then commenced to search, professing to believe that she had liquor hidden away somewhere.

At length, away back on one of the shelves of a small locker over the fireplace he found a bottle the contents of which smelled like rum.

As he raised it to his lips his wife, who had been watching him, sprang forward and dashed the bottle from his hand, shivering it upon the hearth.

With a fierce oath John Todd smote his wife to the floor, right upon the broken glass, and then staggered away to his bed. He would not go out again, for he had no money.

On the following morning his oldest child—a girl of twelve years—came to his bedside.

"O, papa, do you know what you did last night?"

"He had a dim recollection, but made no reply."

"You knocked mamma down and cut her badly."

"Aye, child, she—she!"

"She saved your life, papa. That was poison in the bottle you were holding to your lips—a most deadly poison."

"Poison child?"

"Yes, don't you remember what grandma sent over for mamma to kill bugs with? It was corrosive sublimate and alcohol."

John Todd sank back upon his pillow and did not get up until noon. When he awoke he was very weak and tremulous.

He dressed himself and went out into the kitchen, where he saw his wife standing by the fire-place, with a napkin bound around her head.

He went to her side and laid his hand upon her shoulder. She turned and looked into his face, but he did not speak.

He only kissed her and then went out. "Only kissed her! What did it mean?"

Mary Todd caught her hands over her heart to crush back the sudden, surging hope. It was madness to hope now.

And yet, with the impression of the kiss upon her cheek, and with the memory of the look that had accompanied it, she sank upon her knees and wept as if she prayed.

John Todd went away into the woods where he wandered until nightfall, and with the last gleaming of the setting sun he was upon his knees, his palsied hands reverently folded, speaking a vow to Heaven that his home should be once more happy if he could make it so.

Out of the darkness of desolation, even in the midst of ruin, comes the angle of hope and promise to the stricken soul. Mary heard, and saw, and took heart, and gave her smile and blessing to the work.

That was twenty years ago. John Todd has kept the faith from that day to this. He is beloved, respected and honored wherever he is known; and a happier woman than his wife is not to be found anywhere.

A Big Rattlesnake.

One day last week four or five Detroiters went into Maomb county to shoot squirrels and kick their shins against logs and fence rails.

They had just eaten a cold lunch in the woods one noon when one of the party, a young man named Dougherty, stretched out on his back, pulled his hat over his eyes, and gave his mind up to the work of assisting his body to catch a little rest.

The remainder of the party having an understanding before hand, quietly withdrew, one by one. One of them passed around to a bush, near Dougherty's feet and took a tin rattlesnake from his pocket.

Another stood close to the young man's legs, and in a suppressed voice, when the signal was given, whispered:

"For Heaven's sake! Dougherty, don't move as much as a finger! A big rattlesnake is right under your leg!"

Dougherty was flat on his back, eyes covered, arms sprawled out, and his voice trembled as he replied:

"My God! what shall I do?"

"Keep perfectly quiet! It is your only hope! If you ever raise a finger he will spit his fangs into you!"

The man with the rattlesnake gave it a shake, and reached out and laid a club across Dougherty's legs, while the other man moved off about twenty feet and exclaimed:

"Heaven, what can we do? If we shoot we may kill Dougherty!"

The club was rattled off on the ground and the victim whispered:

"For mercy sake kill it!"

The club was rattled over his legs again, the box shaken, and the man whispered back:

"Be quiet or it is instant death! I think the snake wants to go to sleep, and if you will keep still you will be all right."

The box was shaken, the club moved around, and finally the "snake" seemed to Dougherty to settle down on his breast. He dared not whisper for fear of rousing it, but one of the men called out:

"There it is asleep. We'll move away and wait for it to die off!"

up the dirt until they were exhausted, while poor Dougherty lay there like a log, not even daring to draw an ordinary breath. The sweat ran down his face, and started out from his body until his shirt was wringing wet. The fellows took their guns and tramped away, leaving him thus, and were gone for an hour and a half. When they returned Dougherty was sitting up, having discovered the joke about five minutes previously. He did not have a word to say, but there was a whole unabridged dictionary in his eye. They spoke to him, but for answer he rose up, shouldered his gun, made a bee line for the highway, and none of the party has met him since.

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