

THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson

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MISCELLANEOUS.

LAZY BILL SMITH.

CHAPTER I.

I don't say that Bill Smith was the laziest man that ever lived, but he was decidedly the laziest ever I saw. And I will venture to say further, that his match could not be found in all Peppereborro. There was where he lived—there he lives now.

Well, Bill was a toper—for that man never existed who was too lazy to drink. Of course he was not one of the real tear down and drag out sort; but then he drank hard, and was generally boozey towards evening; for he was too lazy to get drunk very early in the day.

One evening just about two years and three months ago, he was very drunk.—The night was cold, the wind blew fiercely and the light snow swept widely over the ground, and added terror to the howlings of old Boreas. That night, Bill was full two miles from his own miserable hovel, snugly ensconced behind some old boxes and barrels, in one corner of a filthy rum shop.—How he came there so far from home I do not know, but will guess, that he happened on board some farmer's waggon or sleigh that passed his house, and was too lazy to get out till the vehicle stopped at a little grocery. But at any rate, Bill was there, two full miles from home; the night was wild, and the rum seller wanted to shut up his grocery.

'Bill you must clear out,' said the rum seller.

Bill made no answer.

'I say Bill; you must clear out—go home.'

Bill began to snore; he was sleepy and tired to boot; he always was.

'Hallo, Bill—I say, come crawl out and go home; 'tis most nine o'clock.'

'Wait a while,' said Bill, 'don't be in a hurry—there's nothing gained by hurrying.'

'But I must shut up Bill, and go home. There's nothing doing here, and I can't afford the firewood.'

Bill roused up a little—not much, but a little, and winked. Perhaps he would have said something but just then the door opened, and a stranger walked in. He had rode a long distance; and seeing a light in the rummy, had called to inquire how much farther it was to a public house.

'Just two miles and a half,' said old boozle, the rum seller; 'and here's a chap that's going e'enamost there—lives right on the road.'

Bill roused up a little more; perhaps there was a chance to ride, and it would not do to lose it. After a little more ceremony, that may be imagined, and with a little assistance that Billy actually needed, the two got into the sleigh and rode off.

'I s'pose I live here,' said Bill, when the sleigh had got a few rods past his house.—The stranger reigned up his nag and Bill got out. He had begun to get sober, and would have thanked the gentleman for his ride, but he was really too lazy, and so he jostled back slowly to his own door, raised the latch and went in.

CHAPTER II.

There was quite a stir in Peppereborro

the next day. A stranger had come to town, and it was pretty generally rumored that he was to deliver a temperance lecture in the village school house. Here and there little groups were gathered together, talking the matter over; for it was indeed something new to have a temperance lecture there; the oldest inhabitant could not remember the like of it. Bill's appetite, and an itching to ascertain who and what the stranger was, urged him as far as the tavern, where he arrived about noon. Of course he made one of the group there, who talked about the stranger and his business, though precious little did he do towards making up the conversation.

'Are you going to jine the new pledge Bill?' asked an old covey, as he entered the bar room.

Bill didn't know exactly what answer to make, and so, true to his nature, he made none at all.

'How is it uncle Simon, continued the same voice, addressing another of the loungers 'are you going to jine the Thomsonsians to night?—they say it's all the go down the city.'

'The Thomsonsians?' said uncle Simon 'I don't know—they allow steaming it, I suppose.'

Old Simon was the wit of the town, and of course this sally produced a laugh.

'Not a devil bit,' answered a square rigged double breasted fellow, who had stood in a corner of the room all the while. 'I've seen 'em and heard 'em lecture too; but they don't hold to steamin' any way, as I know; nor they ain't Thomsonsians neither.'

'What are they Sam?' asked uncle Simon.

'They are Washingtonians,' said Sam, 'and they don't hold to drinkin' a drop of liquor.'

'Afore folks,' added Simon, with emphasis—and here was another laugh.

The lecturer was there, and in good time began his discourse. He dwelt long on the evil consequences of intemperance, and among other things showed that it uniformly produced laziness—the worst kind of laziness—even a disregard of duties, on the performance of which depend cleanliness, health and happiness.

Bill heard the whole and winked.—The others heard, and looked knowingly at Bill.

Presently the Pledge went round, beginning with uncle Simon, who was the oldest man and biggest toper in the house.

'I'll sign if Bill Smith will,' said Simon.

'And I too,' said the next; and the next, and—

'But who is Bill Smith?' asked the stranger.

'There he sits,' answered one, pointing to a seat near the door; for Bill had not got far into the house—he was too lazy.

The Pledge was carried to him, and he was requested to sign it.

'I can't,' said Bill, 'I'm tired.'

'But you must' said the stranger; 'here are three more waiting for you to sign.'

'Don't you see I can't?' answered Bill.

'And besides 'tisn't best to hurry; there's nothing got by hurrying. I'm tired.'

'Sign Bill,' said uncle Simon; 'sign Bill, and then make a speech.'

The audience laughed; Bill looked sober; he was evidently thinking of something and this required an effort. I suspect he was thinking of the lecture and his own laziness. Presently he spoke.

'I s'pose I might sign it and make a speech too,' he said; 'for though I'm a little lazy now-a-days, seeing there's nothing to do, I used to be as smart as any fellow in Peppereborro.'

'So you was' said Simon; 'now sign the Thompsonian Society Bill; and make a speech.'

'I guess on the whole I had better wait' said Bill; 'perhaps some other time will do as well.'

But the stranger insisted for full half an hour, and strange to say; Bill signed the Pledge.

'And now make a speech' was the cry from every part of the house. But Bill wouldn't make a speech that night and the other topers wouldn't sign the Pledge till the speech had been made.

'I'll come here next Tuesday night and make a good speech' said Bill with more energy than he had displayed for months before 'if uncle Simon and the rest of you will come and hear me.'

'Agreed, agreed' was heard from all parts of the house. And then the audience dispersed.

CHAPTER III.

'Tis strange what havoc intemperance will make of intellect and ambition. When William Smith was twenty five years of age he was considered the most industrious intelligent and noble hearted of all the young men in his native town. He was the pride of all the circle in which he moved, and bid fair to shine a bright ornament in the most respectable society. He married a wife and for a while lived happily. But the seed's of intemperance had been planted within him, and in ten years from that time he had become 'Lazy Bill'

Bill Smith went home that night after the temperance meeting and told his wife what he had done

'I've signed the total abstinence pledge by thunder Kate, hit or miss; and next Tuesday night I am going to preach on temperance.'

At first his wife would not believe one word of it; but the next day the indications of a change for the better were too strong to go unnoticed, and she admitted that 'something must be in the wind.'

The signing of the Pledge dated from Wednesday, and on Friday Bill did what he had not done before for two years; he worked all day, mended his windows, put new shingles on his roof, hauled firewood on his hand sled, &c. Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday were similarly spent; and when the temperance meeting came on Tuesday evening, he brushed up his old coat, took his wife by the arm and trudged silently to the old school house

The audience had got there before him, for every one was anxious to hear what Lazy Bill could say on the subject of temperance. Old Simon had seated himself close to the desk that he might have the better opportunity to play his pranks, and exercise his powers of ridicule. But when Smith entered, looking so changed, so noble so dignified, comparatively, the old man crept away abashed, and apparently astonished. 'Can this be Lazy Bill,' he mentally asked, and the more he asked the question the more he was puzzled to answer it. Soon Smith commenced.

'Ten years ago I was respectable; industrious and happy. I came into this neighborhood; bought me a few acres of land, built me a small house, got married, and went to work. We used to have social parties in those times, and Sarah there, (pointing to his wife,) and I used to attend them. Sarah learned to knit edging and tell stories, and I learned to drink wine. Very soon I began to find myself occasionally impatient for the time of the next party to arrive, and when it came, I was equally impatient to see the wine go round.

'Finally I drank to excess—even to intoxication—at once of these parties; and from that time, though for a while heartily ashamed of my conduct, I had less of self respect and more of the appetite for liquor. I began to visit the tavern, and the little rum shop down there at the other village & with others of like inclinations and appetites, I spent my time lounging about these grogeries; sitting now in the sun, now in the shade; never engaged in any more active business than whittling a pine stick, or tipping a decanter of New England rum. I lost all my ambition, by degrees—became lazy and indolent, and you called me Lazy Bill. At first my wife scolded and fretted at my changed conduct, but this only made it worse. Then she cried and entreated; but this had the same effect—producing 'trouble;' and I drank more rum to drown it.

Drunkards are sure to find trouble enough when rum has become its only antidote. I drank, lost the little property I had accumulated, broke the heart of my wife, and finally became heedless of every thing.

'So I livid along till last Wednesday night. You know what we heard then, and I need not say that I was convinced that rum had made me 'Lazy Bill,' and caused all my trouble. I then signed the Pledge, and till now have kept it inviolate; and, God helping me, I will never drink another drop of liquor as long as I live. Already I begin to feel the fires of ambition again in my breast, and to imagine myself a man. My wife there is happier, and looks healthier, and my little boy smiles sweetly when I take him in my arms.

'In short, I am a new man, with new feelings and new hopes, and now I am going to lead a new life—regain, if possible my character and my property, and be happy. And I want my old companions to go with me. Some of you promised to sign the Pledge if I would; and as nothing has fallen me to discourage that resolution I hope you will come up here and redeem your promises.

There was a pause for some minutes. The audience seemed paralyzed with astonishment. Old Simon had been seen to brush away something that had apparently escaped from between his eyelids, and all were looking to him for something that should break the spell of enchantment. Presently he rose, walked up silently to the desk, took up the pen, and put his name to the Pledge. Now the people seemed to breathe freer; and one by one; every person in the house followed his example.

CHAPTER IV.

Five or six months ago I was passing through the little town of Peppereborro, and recollecting some of the incidents related above; bethought me to ascertain whether Bill had kept his Pledge. I could not then recollect his surname, and was obliged to inquire for 'Lazy Bill,' as of old. Nobody knew him, or could tell where he lived; Finally, I called at a house and interrogated the woman most industriously for the whereabouts of 'Lazy Bill;' but she knew nothing of him, and turned to go away. Just then an old gentleman passed the house.

'There's old uncle Simon Leighton,' said the woman, 'and he knows where your man lives, if any body does.'

I hurried into the street, and soon over taking uncle Simon, put to him the question 'Where does Lazy Bill live?'

'Lazy Bill!' said he; 'I s'pose you mean William Smith, the carriage manufacturer.'

'That's his name,' I replied, 'though I did not know he was a maker of carriages.'

'He lives on the old spot' said Simon, 'just where he has lived for twelve years; but he don't look much like Lazy Bill now.'

I hurried on, and soon came to the place where; two years before, I had dropped that miserable being called 'Lazy Bill,' whom I had taken from the grocery of the village below to pilot me to a hotel. The old hovel had been torn down; and on its site stood a pretty white cottage, surrounded with a yard of flowers, just withering from the effects of autumn frost. Beyond it was a large building, which, from the sounds proceeding from it, I judged to be the workshop of Wm. Smith; the carriage maker. Thither I bent my steps; and on inquiring for Mr. Smith; was pointed to a noble looking man in the further end of the shop, whose manly bearing and healthy looking countenance were evidence enough that the Pledge had remained unbroken. On my approach he recognized me, shook my hand heartily, and throwing off his apron, invited me into his house.

We walked in together, and there I found one of the prettiest and happiest families I had ever set my eyes upon. The wife was all animation and beauty. The

oldest boy was at work in the shop, but on learning that it was the 'stranger' who had called, he came in, and appeared overjoyed to see me. Our meeting there was a glorious one; and never shall I forget the warm grasp of the hand that the father gave me on taking leave of him.

'Tell my old acquaintance at S——,' said he 'that Lazy Bill is now one of the happiest fellows in Christendom; that his wife and children are as gay as larks and lively as crickets; that his property and his industry have come back to him; and better than all, that not a drop of liquor is bought, or sold, or drank, in the little town of Peppereborro.'

One of our papers gives the following.—An amusing incident happened at a baptism not long since, worth relating. The ceremony had been administered to all the candidates except one who was a bushy; and while the clergyman was in the act of immersing him, a large Newfoundland dog, belonging to the former; dashed into the water and seizing his master by the clothes dragged him to the shore, in spite of his struggles, and the astonished minister. Having safely landed his owner the dog testified his joy in a way usual with dogs—occasionally casting an angry look, accompanied by a growl at the discomfited minister, whom he doubtless thought had some sinister design against his master.

'My dear madam, said a doctor to his patient, I am truly gratified to see you yet in life. At my last visit yesterday, you know I told you, you had but six hours to live.' 'Yes,' doctor you did; but I didn't take the does you left me.'—[Genius.

Grammar.—A school master, while correcting an urchin for using bad language told him to go to the other end of the room and speak to one of the scholars, and that grammatically or he should be punished. On going he thus addressed himself to the scholar. Thomas, there is a common substantive, of the masculine gender, third person, singular number, angry mood, who sits perched on an eminence at the other end of the room, and wishes to articulate a few sentences with you in the present tense.'

ORIGINAL ANECDOTE.

Hallo you man with a pail and frock, said a British officer, as he brought his fiery steed to a stand in front of Governor Chittenden's dwelling—can you inform me whether his honor the Governor of Vermont resides here?'

He does, was the response of the man, still wending his way to the pig sty

Is his honor at home? continued the man of spurs.

Most certainly,' replied the man of the frock.

Take my horse by the bit then, said the officer, I have business to transact with your master.

Without a second bidding, the man doze as requested and the officer alighted and made his way up to the door and gave the pannel several hearty taps with the but of his whip—for be it known, in those days of Republican simplicity, knockers and bells, like servants, were in but little use. The good dame of the house answered the summons in persons; and having seated the officer, and ascertained his desire to see the Governor, departed to inform her husband of the guest's arrival, but on ascertaining that the officer had made a hitching post of her husband, she immediately returned and informed him that the Gov. was engaged in the yard, and could not well wait upon his honor and his horse at the same time. The predicament of the officer can be better imagined than described.

We have heard of a cobbler who swallowed a lapstone, but that feat was a trifle in comparison to what the good folks of New Orleans are performing. There according to the Pycayune, they are 'swallowing cobbles!'