

TEMPERANCE;
OR, A SAILOR'S NARRATIVE.

One evening, not long since, a number of old ship-masters chanced to meet at a social supper, and after the cloth was removed we went in for yarn spinning. And among our number was Captain Richard Nutter, and a finer man or better sailor never trod a deck. At length it came his turn to tell a story, or, what we preferred—and what the rest of us had done—relate some incident of experience in his own life.

Well, said he, rejecting the wine, which was at that moment passed to him for the first time, I will give you a bit of the early part of my ocean life, and it is a very important bit, too, for upon it I have built the whole of my subsequent manhood.

We prepared to listen to Capt. Nutter with the most profound attention, for he was not only an old seaman, but one of the most successful commanders in our mercantile marine. We listened, and his story was as follows:

I was very young when first I entered on ship-board, and at the age of fourteen I considered myself quite a sailor. When I was eighteen, I was shipped on board an East Indian, for a long voyage. There were six of us on board of about the same age, and we had about the same duties to perform. The ship—the old Lady Dunlap—was a large one, and our crew was large in proportion, there being fifty-two all told. We boys, as we were called, messed together, and in all other respects were separate from the rest of the crew, just as much as the officers were. Our captain was a noble hearted, honorable man, kind and generous, but yet very strict. Of course we youngsters found plenty of occasion to find fault with him, and very often were his decisions arraigned before our mess, and decidedly condemned. In fact, we should have reversed many of his judgments, if we had the power; but as he was the commander, and we only foremast hands—and boys at that—he had his own way, and the luminous decisions we came to were consequently of no avail, and lost to the world.

Now we boys had learned, in the course of our travels, to drink grog as well as any sailors. We could toss off a glass of rum and water with as much grace as any one, and we claimed right so to do, not only as a privilege, but as an honor to which a life upon the ocean entitled us. But even in this respect our captain pretended to differ from us. When we could get on shore, we would invariably indulge in our cups, and not unfrequently would we come off, or be brought off, in a state anything but sober. I said we, but there was one of our number who could not be induced to touch a drop of anything intoxicating. His name was John Small, and he belonged to one of the extreme back towns of New Jersey.

Now Jack Small not only refrained from drinking himself, but he used sometimes to ask us to let the stuff alone. He gave that job up, however, for we made such sport of him that he was glad to let us alone. But our captain had sharp eyes, and it was not long before he began to show Jack favors which he did not show to us. He would often take Jack on shore with him to spend the night, and such things as that, while we were kept on board the ship. Of course this created a sort of envy on our part, and it ended in a decided ill-will towards poor Jack.

Now, in truth, Jack was one of the best fellows in the world. He was kind, obliging, honest, always willing to lend a helping hand in case of distress, and as true a friend as ever lived—only he wouldn't drink with us, that was all. No—that wasn't all. He learned faster than we did—he was a better sailor. But this we tried to lay to the captain's paying him the most attention, though we knew better at the time, for we had the privilege of learning just as much as we had a mind to. The truth of the matter was, we loved the idea of being old salts, better than we did anything else; and we spent more time in watching for opportunities to have a spree, than we did in learning to perfect ourselves in the profession we had chosen.

It even got so at length that Jack Small was called upon to take the deck sometimes when the officers were busy, and he used to work out the reckonings at noon as easily as did the captain. Yet Jack was in our mess, and he was a constant eye-sore. We saw that he was reaching rapidly ahead of us in every useful particular, and yet we would not open our eyes. We were envious of his good fortune, as we called it, and used to seize every opportunity to tease and run him. But he never got angry in re-

turn. He sometimes would laugh at us, and at others he would so feelingly chide us that we would remain very silent for a while.

At length the idea entered our heads that Jack should drink with us. We talked the matter over in the mess when Jack was absent, and we mutually pledged each other that we would make him drink at the first opportunity. After this determination was taken, we treated Jack more kindly, and he was happier than he had been for sometime. Once more we laughed and joked with him in the mess, and he in return helped us in our navigation. We were on our homeward bound passage, by the way of Brazil, and our ship stopped at Rio Janerio, where we remained a week or so. One pleasant morning we six youngsters received permission to go on shore and spend the whole day; and accordingly we rigged up in our best togs and were carried to the landing.

Now was our chance, and we put our heads together to see how it should be done. Jack's very first desire after he got ashore, was to go up and examine the various things of interest in the city. He wanted to visit the churches and such like places, and to please him we agreed to go with him if he would go and take dinner with us. He agreed to this at once, and we thought we had him sure. We planned that after dinner was eaten we would have some light, sweet wine, brought on, and we would contrive to get enough rum into what he drank to upset him, for nothing on earth could please us more than to get Jack Small drunk, and carry him on board in that manner, for we fancied that the captain's favoritism would be at an end, and that he would no longer look upon our rival with preference over ourselves. We had the matter all arranged, and in the meantime we paid Jack all the attention in our power—so much so that he at length signified a willingness to go anywhere to please us, provided we would not go into any bad place.

Ah! what have you here? asked Jack, betraying some uneasiness at the appearance of the glasses and bottles.

Only a little new wine, I replied, as carelessly as I could. Mere juice of the grape.

It isn't wine, nevertheless, pursued he.

It isn't wine, cried Sam Pratt, who was about one of the hardest nuts old Neptune ever cracked.

No, chimed in Tim Black, another of about the same stamp. It's only a little simple juice. Come boys, fill up.

The glasses were accordingly filled, Sam Pratt performing that duty, and he took good care that Jack's glass had a good quantity of sweetened rum in it.

No, said Jack, as the glass was moved towards him; if you are going to commence thus, I will keep your company with water while you remain orderly, but I will not touch wine.

This was spoken very mildly, and with a kind smile, but yet it was spoken firmly, and we could see that our plan was about being knocked in the head. We urged him to drink with us—only one glass, if no more. We told him how innocent it was, and how happy his social glass would make us; but we could not move him.

Then let him go! cried Tim, who had already drank some. In fact the whole of us but Jack had drank more or less during the forenoon. Let him go. We don't want the mean fellow with us!

That's it, added Sam, with a bitter "off he goes." If he's too good to drink with his shipmates, we don't want him.

You misunderstand me, said Jack, in a tone of pain. I am not too good to drink with you, in the sense in which you would take it. But I do not wish to drink at all.

Too stingy—that's all, said I, determined to make him drink if I could. But Jack looked at me so reproachfully as I said this, that I wished that I had not spoken as I did.

If you wish to enjoy your wine, messmates, said Small, at the same time rising from his chair, you can do so, but I beg you will excuse me. I will pay my share of the expenses for the dinner.

And for your share of the wine, said Tim, for we ordered for you.

No, returned Jack, I cannot pay for any of the wine—

Mean! cried two or three at a breath.

No, no, messmates, not mean. I will pay for the whole of the dinner—for every article you and I have had in this house save the wine.

And as he spoke he rang the bell. He asked the waiter who entered what was the bill for the company, without the wine, and after the amount had been stated, he took out his purse to pay it,

when Sam Pratt, who was our acknowledged leader, caught his arm.

No—not so, said Sam. You shall not pay it, for we will not eat at the expense of one who will sneak out of the scrape in this way. We want nothing more to do with you unless you take a glass of wine with us.

Very well, said Jack; and as he spoke, I could see that his lip quivered, and that he dared not speak more.

He turned toward the door then, but before he reached it, Tim Black ran and caught him, at the same time exclaiming:—

May I be blessed if you go off so, any way. You've commenced, and now you've got to stick it out!

This was the signal for us to commence again, and once more we tried to urge Jack to drink the wine; and when we found that urging would not do, we commenced to abuse and scoff. We accused him of trying to step over us on board of ship, and of all other bad things of which we could think. For a while, the poor fellow seemed inclined to let his anger get the upper hand; but at length he calmed himself, and stepping back to his chair, he said:—

Shipmates, will you listen to me for a moment?

Silence gave consent, and in a moment more he resumed:—

Since matters have come to this pass, I have resolved to tell you what I had meant to keep locked up in my bosom.

We had always thought from Jack's manner, that there was something peculiar connected with his early life, and we were all attention in a moment.

My story is but a short one, he continued, and I can tell it in a very few words. From the time of my earliest childhood, I never knew what it was to have a happy home. My father was a drunkard!—Once he had been a good man and a good husband; but rum ruined all his manhood and made a brute of him. I can remember how cold and cheerless was the first winter of my life, to which my memory leads me back. We had no fire—no food—no clothes—no joy—no nothing, nothing but misery and woe! My poor mother used to clasp me to her bosom to keep me warm; and once—once I remember—when her very tears froze on my cheek! Oh! how my mother prayed to God for her husband; and I, who could but just prattle, learned to pray too. And I used to see that husband and father return to his home, and I remember how bitterly my poor mother cried and trembled.

When I grew older, I had to go out and beg for bread. All cold and shivering, I waded through the deep snow, with my clothes in tatters, and my freezing feet almost bare. And I saw other children dressed warm and comfortable, and I knew they were happy, for they laughed and sung as they bounded along toward school. These boys had sober fathers. I knew that their fathers were no better than mine had been once, for my mother had told me how noble my own father could be, if the accursed demon rum had not been in his way—but the fatal power was upon him, and though he often promised, and though he often tried, yet he could not escape.

Time passed on, and I was eight years old, and these eight years had been years of such sorrow and suffering as I pray God I may never see another experience. At length, one cold morning in the dead of winter, my father was not at home. He had not been at home through the night. My mother sent me to the tavern to see if I could find him. I had gone half the way when I saw something in the snow by the side of the road. I stopped, and a shudder ran through me, for it looked like a human form. I went up to it, and turned the head over, and brushed the snow from the face. It was my father!—and he was stiff and cold! I laid my hand upon his pale brow, and it was like solid marble. He was dead!

Poor Jack stopped a moment and wiped his eyes. Not one of us spoke, for we had become too deeply moved. But he soon went on.

I went to the tavern and told the people what I had found, and the landlord sent two of his men to carry the frozen body of my father home. Oh, shipmates, I cannot tell you how my mother wept and groaned. She sank down upon her knees and clasped the icy corpse to her beating bosom, as though she would have given it life from the warmth of her own breast. She loved her husband through all his errors, and her love was all powerful now. The two men went off and left the body still on the floor. My mother wished me to come and kneel by her side. I did so. My child, said she to me—and the big tears rolled down her cheeks—you know what has caused all this. This man was once as noble and

happy, and true as a man can be; but, oh! see how he has been stricken down. Promise me, my child, oh! promise, here before your dead father, and your broken-hearted mother, that you will never, never touch a single drop of the fatal poison which has wrought for us all this misery.

Oh! shipmates, I did promise, then, and there, all that my mother asked, and God knows that to this moment that promise has never been broken. My father was buried, and some good kind neighbors helped us through the winter. When the next spring came, I could work, and I earned something for my mother. Not for the wealth of the world would I break the pledge I gave my mother and my God, on that dark, cold morning. And even had I made no such pledge, I would not touch the fatal cup, for I know that I have a fond, doting mother who would be made miserable by my dishonor, and I would rather die than bring more sorrow upon her head. Perhaps you have no mothers; and if you have, they do not look to you for support, for I know you too well to believe that any of you would ever bring down a loving mother's grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. That is all, shipmates. Let me now go, and you may enjoy yourselves alone, for I do not believe that you will again urge the wine cup upon me.

As Jack thus spoke he turned toward the door, but Tim Black stopped him.

Hold on, Jack, cried Tim, wiping his eyes, and starting up from his chair. I have got a mother, and I love her as well as you love yours, and your mother shall not be happier than mine, for by the love I bear her, I here swear that she shall never have a drunken son. I will drink no more.

Give us your hand, Tim, cried Sam Pratt, I'll go with you.

I waited no longer, but quickly starting from my chair I joined the other two, and ere long the whole five of us joined with Jack Small in his noble life plan. We called for pen, ink and paper, and made Jack draw up a pledge. He signed it first, and we followed him, and when the deed was done, I knew we were far happier than we had been before for many years. The wine on the table was untouched, and the liquor we had drank during the forenoon was now all gone in its effect.

Towards evening we returned to the ship. There was a frown upon the captain's brow as we came over the side, for he had never known us to come off from a day's liberty sober. But when we had all come over the side and reported ourselves to him, his countenance changed. He could hardly give evidence of his own senses.

Look here, boys, he said, after he had examined us, thoroughly, what does this mean?

Show him the paper, whispered I.

Jack had our pledge, and without speaking, he handed it to the captain. He took it and read it, and his face changed its expression several times. At length I saw a tear start to his eye.

Boys, he said, as he folded up the paper, let me keep this, and if you stick to your noble resolution, you shall never want a friend while I live.

We let the captain keep the paper, and when he had put it in his pocket he came and took us each in turn by the hand. He was much affected, and I knew the circumstance made him happy. From that day our prospects brightened. Jack Small no longer had our envy, for he took hold and taught us navigation, for we were proud of him. On the next voyage we all six were rated as able seamen, and received full wages, and we left not that noble hearted captain until we were to become officers on board other ships.

Jack Small is now one of the best masters in the world, and I believe the rest of our party are still living, honored and respected men. Three years ago we all met—the whole six of us—at the Astor House, in New York, and not one of us had broken the pledge which we made in the hotel at Rio Janeiro. Four of us were then commanders of good ships, one was a merchant in New York, the other was just going out as American Consul to one of the Italian cities on the Mediterranean.

You know why I did not drink wine with you, and of course you will not urge it upon me, nor take my refusal as a mark of coldness or disrespect.—[Etc.]

THE first army wagon used by the National army in the war against the rebellion, has been preserved and will figure in the world's Exhibition in Paris, next year.

THE Mobile Tribune says that the cotton factory at Macon, Georgia, is in operation and doing well. It turns out ninety-six thousand yards of sheeting per month.