

DIGBY'S REFORM CLUB.

A Sketch for Whom it may Concern.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

There was a quartette of free and jovial spirits in Burville, and John Digby was the acknowledged leader thereof. Peter Slade, and Tom Lowden, and Sam Pepper were his associates. They were four young men, free-hearted 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 egg, 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 dignitaries 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?"

"Ay," chimed Sam Pepper, "what business is it of his? And then look at the hullabaloo they're making over this foreign mission. It was in connection with that 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 for 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 these foreign missions upon the plea that charity begins at home, and all that; but the question may come back—What have we done for this charity at home? What have we done toward alleviating the distresses 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 astorish '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 here 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 by 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, and 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 the 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 destitution and suffering, and on next Saturday afternoon 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 organize. The organization arrived at was 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 the bill 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, when 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 school-mates with her son who had gone away to sea and never returned. And they came into the house, and 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 true as Heaven, I wouldn't 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 years they had been well and happy, and although never forehanded, 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 chill 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 goodly 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 Jack Digby's Reform Club. We've stopped our rations of spirit 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, also 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 did not 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 expense 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 spirit 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 would 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 spring-

time, and it had been told 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 aforesaid anticipated.—*New York Ledger.*

PRESIDENT SMITH AND PARTY.—The following concerning the movements of President Smith and party we find in the *Millennial Star* of Dec. 10—

"President George A. Smith, Elders Lorenzo Snow, Feramor Little, Paul A. Schettler, George Dunford, Thomas W. Jennings and sisters Eliza R. Snow and Clara S. Little left London on the evening of Saturday, Nov. 30th, and proceeded to Harwich. There they shipped on board the steamer *Richard Young*, and started at 2 a. m. of Dec. 1st for Rotterdam. We learn by letter from President Smith, dated Rotterdam, Dec. 5th, that most of the little party suffered from sea-sickness in crossing the channel. President Smith accompanied Elder Schettler on a visit to Zeist. Here were some of Bro. Schettler's relatives who belong to a colony of Moravians which settled at Zeist in 1745, and were mostly from Germany, having emigrated from that country because of religious intolerance. Bro. George A. writes, 'Their settlement is a model of industry, cleanliness, order and temperance. They have purchased the title of the land they live on; and their improvements are of a permanent character.'

"On the 3rd instant the party went to the Hague. They spent the day in sight seeing, and the evening very pleasantly with the Hon. Chas. T. Gorham, the American Minister, and his estimable lady, who had invited the party to tea.

"On the 4th the cathedral at Haarlem was visited. The party were entertained for an hour with music from the grand organ at this place. The afternoon was spent in the painting galleries and in the King's palace at Amsterdam. This palace stands on over thirteen thousand piles, this is accounted for by the fact that the site of Amsterdam was originally a salt marsh. The Ball Room in this palace is very fine; it is one hundred and twenty feet long, sixty feet wide and one hundred feet high; the walls being of Parian marble.

"On the 5th the party visited the navy yard and other places of interest and returned to Rotterdam in the evening.

"On the 6th they were to leave the domain of Holland and enter that of Belgium."

University of Deseret.

The following is the programme of the University of Deseret, for the term ending February 7, 1873:

Hour.	Classes.	DOCTOR PARK. Classes.
9 to 9½	Fifth Reader	Rhetoric
9½ to 10	Fourth Reader	Latin
10 to 10½	First Arithmetic B	Sec. Arithmetic F
10½ to 11	Third Arithmetic I	First Algebra
11 to 11½	Higher Algebra	Normal Lectures
11½ to 12	Penmanship	
12 to 12½	Intermission	
12½ to 1	Adv. Geography	First Grammar
1 to 1½	Int. Geography	Adv. Grammar
1½ to 2	Nat. Philosophy	Physiology
2 to 2½	U. S. History	Book-keeping
2½ to 3	Photography	Surveying

Prof. Maceer has German classes from 3:30 to 5:30 p. m. on Tuesdays and Fridays.

N. B. Classes will be organized in such other branches as are in course when justified by a sufficient number of applicants.

Besides the above mentioned classes there are those of the primary and intermediate departments, under charge of Miss M. E. Cook, which are in a flourishing condition and number upwards of 70 pupils.

Prof. Bishop, who has lately been added to the faculty of the University, will be a valuable aid to Dr. Park, as he is a gentleman of scholarly attainments of a high order.

Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy produces perfect cures of the worst cases of Catarrh, "Cold in the Head," Cough and Catarrhal Headache, as hundreds of testimonials from well-known citizens and eminent physicians who have used it in their practice abundantly testify. It is mild, pleasant and unobnoxious. The proprietor offers \$3.00 for a case of Catarrh that he cannot cure. Sold by druggists at 50 cents. 637 2 w 91