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Aunt Iris' Story

[Original.]

MANY years ago when I, with several of my cousins, was spending the vacation during the hot summer months with our aunt, she told us a story I think we will remember until the day of our death.

Aunt Iris had long been a puzzle to us. She was always sad and gentle, scarcely ever laughing heartily, and that seemed a very strange thing to us merry, chatting girls. Although she was so very quiet, we all loved her very dearly.

This afternoon we were outdoors lazily reclining under the shade of a great oak tree that threw its friendly shadows far away, and very cool and pleasant did they seem this hot day.

We had been having a very lively discussion about the life of a noted man. But for nearly a half hour scarcely a word had been spoken. Each one was busy with her own thoughts. Suddenly the silence was broken by little Mary, the pet of us all, exclaiming: "A penny for your thoughts, Aunt Iris!"

Thus addressed, my aunt turned her large, dark eyes upon Mary and smiled very sadly (it seemed as if her smiles always had tears back of them) and said, slowly: "Well, girls, if you will all be very quiet and not condemn me too much, I will try to tell you what I was thinking about. It has never been told by my lips, for it is a very sad story. But, perhaps, it will help you never to sin as I did."

At this we drew a little nearer to her, and we opened our eyes in amazement when she uttered the word sin, for it did not seem to us that Aunt Iris could sin, she was always so sweet and gentle. She smiled as she saw our look of wonder, and then proceeded:

"Yes, girls, it was an awful sin, and can never be forgiven in this world. Your discussion just now set me to thinking about my own life. It was many years ago when I was not yet out of my teens that all this occurred, and yet it is as fresh in my memory now as if it had happened yesterday. Ah, yes, little one, you have had your revenge a hundred times over, although you can never know it," she murmured, sadly. A moment she seemed lost in thought, but presently resumed, with a far-away look in her splendid black eyes:

"Girls, you all remember that picture in my album I called little Kitty Hart. You can plainly see what a beautiful creature she was—beautiful as an angel! Clustering golden curls, surrounding a face exquisitely fair and innocent, a pair of heavenly blue eyes that seemed to look truth into the very soul. How I loved that girl then, and little did I think I should be the one to ruin her young life. I was exactly the opposite of Kitty. I had hair dark as midnight, wicked, black eyes that could flash with hate or grow soft and tender with love. It happened that we had a picnic about this time, and there we met and both fell in love with handsome Harry Ray. Oh! how I loved that handsome boyish face! I swore then and there to win him or die in the attempt.

"I can see her now as she looked that day, clad in pure white and wearing modest daisies. The moment Harry Ray bowed before sweet Kitty Hart, his heart passed from his keeping into hers. I saw it, I knew it, yet my passionate, jealous nature decreed to win him at any cost.

"As I saw them move away from me toward the cool and inviting lake my wrath knew no bounds. I could have ground her beautiful face into an unshapely mass with my heel, and have felt a savage delight in doing it, had it been in my power. But this was the first of many just such scenes. Never would Harry notice me when Kitty was near, and it so filled me with wrath that I almost believe that the love I bore him was turned into hatred. I longed to have revenge. Time passed on until at last the marriage day was set, and still I had found no plan to part the lovers.

"At last an idea filled my brain which I now think Satan himself must have prepared for me. I began slowly to carry it out.

"Fate seemed to work for me this time. Kitty received a letter from a distant aunt, begging her to make her a week's visit. As her aunt's health was very poor, and she was not expected to live very long, gentle Kitty did not have the heart to refuse her request, much as she disliked to leave Harry even for so short a time. I, in my jealous hatred, used all means in my power to get her away, telling her it would be such a short time and that she could write to Harry every day if she wished. I told her it might be the last chance she would have, for her aunt was liable to die at any time, and then she would be sorry she had refused her last request. O, hypocrite that I was, trying to get her away so that I might destroy her happiness and secure my own!

"The evening before her departure Harry came over to bid her good-by. Never will I forget that evening. It seemed as if she had a foreboding of coming evil. She seemed so very quiet and unlike her usual merry self. Nothing could have been better for me. I had planned it to make Harry think she had something else on her mind. But I very well knew it was the separation from him that made her blue eyes so misty and sad. Soon they left me and wandered away by themselves. I followed, and hid myself where I could overhear every word that passed between them.

"'Harry,' Kitty's soft voice was saying, 'I am sorry I wrote auntie I would come. I know I am very foolish, as it is for so short a time. But I, feel all the while as if something would happen while I am away. I have tried to shake off the feeling, but I cannot.'

"'Nonsense, little one,' said Harry. 'You have grown as whimsical as an old woman. What can possibly happen? Six weeks from to-day you will be all my own, and then nothing can take you from me for even a week. So cheer up; to-morrow you will laugh at your own fears.'

"I could see by the pale moonlight that Kitty smiled sadly, and shook her curly, golden head. They then passed on and I could hear no more.

"I laughed in fiendish glee to myself to think this was to be the last time they would ever walk so lovingly together. I was shocked at myself; I did not know I could be so wicked. For a moment I was almost sorry and had nearly decided to leave them alone in peace. Then the tempter whispered in my ear that I might have been Harry's betrothed bride had it not been for Kitty's babyish face. I clinched my hands in hatred as I thought of it, and all the good in me died for the time being. I turned and fled from the spot into the house. I dropped a letter I had prepared for her, just where I knew she could not help seeing it Then I rushed upstairs to my own room.

"Soon I heard Kitty's step on the stair, and I knew the letter had done its work. A moment she paused at my door, then passed wearily on. I threw myself down upon the bed, but could not sleep. Whenever I closed my eyes I could see Kitty's sweet face and reproachful eyes looking at me.

"It was almost dawn when I at last fell into a troubled sleep. I was awakened by some one lightly tapping at my door. I called: 'Come in.' Kitty entered, holding in her hand that letter so fatal to her happiness.

"'Iris,' she began, 'did you see or drop any paper in the parlor? I found a sheet of paper there, and it puzzles me greatly. I do not know what to think about it. Read it, Iris, and tell me what you think.'

"I took the letter in my hand, then bit my lips in vexation. I had forgotten to place all the letter there. The most important part was missing. But, thought I, hastily casting my eye over the page before me, perhaps if I play my cards well I shall win yet. This is what I saw:

"'Dear Bess,' the letter began, 'I am still here with the wealthy young lady. I am getting along very nicely, indeed. Am engaged to her, and will soon contrive a plan to get some of her money. It seems almost too bad to fool her, for she is a sweet little thing. But Bess, darling, once I get the money it will have to be, good-by, Kitty. I will soon be back to you. Until then, be—'

"That was all. I could see by the white face of Kitty that no more was needed. 'The wretch,' I said, pretending to be very angry, but still not daring to lift my guilty eyes to Kitty's innocent face. 'I would let him know I did not care by breaking the engagement with him.'

"'But,' began Kitty, 'it may be Harry did not write it. I will not believe it. There must be some mistake. Harry could not be such a wretch!'

"Tears filled her eyes, and she fell sobbing upon the bed. I tried to comfort her, knowing only too well how true Harry was, although pretending he was, indeed, a brute.

"At last her violent sobs ceased and she sat up and dried her tears.

"'Come, Kitty dear,' said I, 'you must hurry and prepare yourself for your journey. It is almost time to start now, and you are not ready at all. Do not think any more about Harry, but go now and get ready.'

"I cannot stir a step, Iris,' said Kitty, very decidedly, 'until I have seen Harry and had an explanation from him.'

"Here, indeed, was a difficulty. If she saw Harry she would soon find out it was all a fraud. So, after thinking a moment, I told her to write a note and I would carry it to him; of course he would never see it, and it could do no harm, only serve to blind her still more. Soon she had finished the letter and started slowly away to her room, while I turned my steps toward the cool and shady woods, to loiter away the time until I could return to the house.

"Oh, that I might have been struck dead before I had retraced my steps! but in a short time I went slowly back, thinking what I could tell Kitty when she asked me about Harry.

"Presently she came down, dressed as usual, in pure white, and looking so pure and beautiful that I could hardly find it in my heart to tell her the cruel lie, which I knew would destroy her peace and happiness for many a long day. But I turned my guilty face away and went on, unfeelingly, to tell her it was impossible for Harry to see her that morning, as he had some very important business to attend to, but he sent his best regards and wished her a pleasant journey. Then I hesitated, as if I had something more to say, yet dreaded to proceed.

"'Go on, Iris,' commanded Kitty, with paling face and flashing eyes, 'tell me all.'

"'Well,' I continued, 'it is a hard message to carry, yet it is best that you should know, cruel as it may seem. Kitty,' (I tried to make my voice tremble as if trying to suppress my feelings) 'he requested me to tell you he did not think best for you to correspond while you were away. It was so short a time it seemed very foolish. Do you hate me for carrying so cruel a message, Kitty darling?' I asked.

"'No, indeed," she slowly faltered; 'you are not to blame, Iris. You would do anything in your power to help me, would you not, dear?'

"'Ah! those trusting words, how they cut to the very soul!

"A moment she stood irresolute, then kissed us all good-by, and descended to the waiting carriage. As the turn in the road hid her from view, I rushed upstairs to my own room, closed and locked the door. Seating myself, I drew pen and paper toward me for the purpose of writing a letter to Harry. Sheet after sheet I destroyed in my attempt to imitate Kitty's writing. At last I succeeded to my satisfaction, and here is what I had written:

"GO ON, IRIS."

"'DEAR HARRY: Pray do not think me cruel and fickle-minded. But I have gone away from here, intending to return a bride. He is old and rich, Harry; that makes the difference. If you had had his money, or I Iris' disposition, I should have chosen you, for you are much nicer looking. Good-by, dear old Harry; forgive your little Kitty, if you can.'

"I smiled in triumph, as I read it again to make sure that it was perfectly correct. That clause about myself is a clever one; perhaps he will marry me right away, just to spite her. But little did I know Harry's disposition. I placed the letter in my pocket and went down to the parlor. I soon had the pleasure of seeing Harry coming swiftly across the shady lawn. He smiled brightly when he saw me, but quickly looked beyond me, to catch sight of the little form he loved so well, and was destined never more to see in life.

"'Kitty, has she gone?' he quickly asked. 'I came as early as possible; she did not know I was coming. I wanted to surprise her. Can it be I am too late?'

I noticed a shade of disappointment cross his handsome face, as I told him he was too late, but it quickly cleared again, as I held that cruel, false letter toward him, saying, in my most alluring tone: 'Here is a letter she left for you, Harry; perhaps that will be a little comfort to you.'

"I smiled to think how soon that happiness would be turned into the most bitter sorrow. I remember how eagerly he tore open the envelope, and how ghastly his face grew as he cast his eyes over the written page.

"'Iris, did you know of this and yet do nothing to stop me from rushing on to my cruel doom? How false she was all the time, yet how madly I love her. It seems almost impossible; it cannot be true. I will not believe it. Tell me it is false.'

"He fiercely grasped my hands and begged me to tell him it was not true.

"'Alas, Harry, it is too true. What could I do to help you? Had I said a word you would have thought me meddling. Your noble heart is not the first one she has broken. If you had only chosen some one more worthy;' here I dropped my eyes and tried to force a blush to my cheeks. 'One thing, Harry,' I resumed, 'you may be sure I did not know how terrible that note was or I would never have carried it.'

"But all looks and words were wasted on him, for he threw my hand from him and began madly to walk the floor.

"'Harry,' I whispered, going close to him, 'she is so unworthy of you, could you not think of some one else, some one not very far away, and marry her right away, just to let Kitty know you did not care?'

"COULD YOU NOT THINK OF SOME ONE ELSE?"

"The next minute I could have bitten my tongue off for saying those silly, foolish words, for he cast such a look of bitter contempt on me that I was glad to beat a hasty retreat.

"Nearly an hour passed before I heard him leave the house and pass slowly down the gravel walk. The cruel work was done now, and what had I gained? I had committed an act that I should live long years to bitterly repent. Early the next morning we were startled by a messenger galloping up the walk and hastily handing my mother a telegram. For a minute my heart seemed to stand still as my mother, with trembling fingers, tore open the envelope. With a face pale as death she read aloud the few terrible words: 'Kitty is dead; horse threw her; she died almost instantly. Come at once.'

"I stood rooted to the spot, horror stricken. I saw my mother's pale face, heard her give orders concerning the preparations to be made, knew she kissed me goodby and told me not to grieve so. I saw her depart upon her sorrowful journey; yet I did not realize anything. All I could hear were those awful words my mother had just read. Suddenly my great crime dawned upon me. It seemed as if I was her murderer. I might just as well have slain her with my own hand. Had it not been for me she would not have gone away, and now she would have been well and happy, instead of being so stiff and cold in death's embrace. Then I thought of Harry, poor, deceived Harry. All I could do was to go to him, confess all and receive the curses I deserved. How my heart ached for him now. With my head almost bursting with pain I started madly off to tell him what a sinful creature I had been. As I drew near the house I saw Harry seated under a cool, shady tree, his dark, curly head bowed sorrowfully in his hands. As I approached he raised his head; I noticed how changed his handsome, boyish face was.

"How I told him I never knew. I remember he madly cursed me. I deserved it. I knew it, yet they seemed to fall all unheeded by me. My brain seemed to be a burning mass. I longed to lie down on the cool, green grass and die. I started homeward, but I only staggered on a few steps and fell senseless by the dusty roadside. I knew no more for weeks. When I came to myself again, my mother was seated at my bedside. I thought it very strange and started up thinking I had only overslept. But my mother gently forced me back upon the pillow, telling me I had been very ill with brain fever and I must be very quiet. Then a wave of recollection swept back over my poor bewildered brain and I remembered all. I wept as if my poor, sinful heart would break. My mother tried in vain to comfort me. At last my violent sobs ceased and I fell asleep, only to awaken much better. Why are we never allowed to die when we so earnestly long for death?

"They told me afterwards how they had brought poor Kitty home. No mark of violence was seen excepting a a small dark spot on one white temple. They robed her in white, such as she had always worn in life. Beautiful she looked, even in death. A smile was frozen on the marble face. In death all must have been peace. They told me how madly Harry had grieved, calling upon her to forgive him for thinking her false. 'And to think she died believing me false!' he moaned. 'I did not know; you will forgive me, darling. You, in your bright home above, can see and know all. If I could only die and go to her!' was his cry day and night.

"They did not know what he meant, and thought his brain must be turned by his awful sorrow. After the funeral he went away and we never saw him again.

"'He will wander over the earth a heart-broken man,' said my mother. Little did she dream her own daughter was the means of bring about that awful tragedy. I never told her, for it would only have made her sorrow greater to bear. All I could do was to pray that Kitty might look down from Heaven and forgive the cruel deed I committed. For long, long years I used to see her in my dreams, her sad, reproachful eyes full upon me, one little finger always pointing sorrowfully to her little grave, as if mutely chiding me for placing it there. But now it appears always smiling brightly and her hand beckons me to come. I sometimes think perhaps poor Harry is dead and has joined her above and now she can forgive me.

"Now, girls, do you wonder I am sad? All these years I have been repenting my sinful act."

The tears had gathered in our eyes and were fast falling down our cheeks. Little Mary, always gentle and tender-hearted, was sobbing softly. As she finished, we withdrew one by one, until at last she was alone. It was a long time before she joined us again, but we knew she had been to visit a little green grave that we had often seen but never knew the story connected with it.

Many years have passed away now, and poor Aunt Iris has gone to meet Kitty above, but her story will remain fresh in our memory as long as life remains in our heart.

BELLE HICKS.

TEMPERANCE NOTES.

THE ZAMZUMMIMS.

DEUTERONOMY 2:20.

In the ancient days of story,
  When the earth was fresh and green,
There were men of lofty stature
  Such as now are never seen.

There were giants in those ages,
  In whose presence we should be
Like the Lilliputian children,
  In their home across the sea.

They could smite a gathered army
  With the terror of the fates,
Or destroy a boastful city,
  While they carried off its gates.

But, my children, have you noticed,
  In the records of those times,
How these giants, hard and haughty,
  Were addressed in haughty lines?

"The Zamzummims" was their title;
  And it must have been a strain
On the folks who lived around them
  To have grappled such a name.

Had it been but Jones or Johnson,
  Or but Smith or even Smyth,
People might have learned to speak it
  Without hazarding their life.

But I wonder, while we're talking
  Of these mighty men of yore—
Of these lusty sons of Anak,
  Who have slain a hundred score,

How the plan would work, supposing
  We should leave the modern way,
And attach the hardest titles
  To the giants of to-day.

There's the wine cup for example,
  What a monster that has been
In its ministry to Satan,
  And to all its kith and kin!

And the cider barrel also,
  With its iron-banded staves—
That has helped to dig a million
  Of unhappy drunkard's graves.

There's the club room of the wealthy
  In a parlor overhead,
And the grog shop in the cellar,
  Where the criminals are bred.

There's the license of the traffic,
  As supported at the polls,
Where the hypocrites are busy
  In the bartering of souls.

What a company of giants
  To be full in league with death!
How they polish up their titles!
  How they sweeten up their breath.

How they try to keep in fashion
  With the modern styles of speech,
And select their evil mottoes
  From the words in easy reach.

If I had my way, I'll tell you
  What I certainly would do,
I would change the present system
  In a special point or two.

I would put the hardest labels
  On the cider, wine and gin,
And, instead of liquor merchant,
  I would write it Zamzummim.

I would fix it so that children—
  Such as each of you, my boys—
Could not speak the tempting language
  Which the drinkard's lip employs.

I would go to Greek and Hebrew,
  And to the Algonquin some,
Till I found the worst of letters
  To express the thought of rum.

I would introduce a system
  Which, without a fault or flaw,
Would be sure to leave its user
  With a broken under jaw.

And, perhaps, by that maneuver,
  When 'twas practiced once or twice,
A stop might come to talking rum,
  Profanity and vice.

—J. P. Trowbridge, in Union Signal.

RAILROAD SALOONS.

A Source of Danger to the Lives of the Traveling Public.

The express trains on many of the great trunk lines of railroads carry with them a literal saloon for the sale of alcoholic drinks. The trainmen are forbidden to drink under penalty of immediate discharge, and the bar-keepers (called porters) are required not to sell or give spirits to any employe in service on the road. Managers of roads are aware of the risk and danger of the service rendered by men who use spirits, hence stringent rules are laid down, and efforts made to employ only healthy, temperate men, especially on trains and where great responsibility and exact duties are required. While the vast majority of trainmen on all railroads are practical abstainers, there is always a small number who are concealed drinkers, growing worse steadily. The result of their drinking is always some accident and exposure with discharge. Often the accidents are of little interest to the public, because they are not attended with loss of life. In some instances the person who made the mistake is killed and his use of spirits (as the real cause of the accident) is concealed from the public. Where gross carelessness and stupidity result in an accident among experienced trainmen, the use of alcohol is not unfrequently the real cause.

These men are not public drinkers, and are known as temperate men, but after accidents it will appear that they have used spirits and probably carried it with them. There is another class of active, responsible trainmen, whose long-tried services have given them reputation with the company, who all unexpectedly make very serious mistakes in their ordinary work which result in great disasters. Alcohol and its compounds are often at the bottom of these sudden failures. Want of ordinary caution, and sudden boldness in assuming a great risk, failure to remember orders, and faulty reasoning, are the usual symptoms. Such men use alcohol as a medicine and tonic, to enable them to do their work better. They fully recognize the danger of large doses, but are deluded with the idea that in certain circumstances small doses are necessary for their work. The fact is well known that the continuous strain and irregularity of railroad work soon wears out the brain and nervous system, producing states of exhaustion for which alcohol in any form is a most seductive tonic. To an overworked, tired out trainman, who has found spirits a perfect relief, no rules or restrictions can prevent him from taking spirits from the traveling saloon on the train, or the saloon at the station. Of course no one will see him, but his changed spirits and manner will tell the story. Those are the men who make the mistakes from which accidents come. A tired brakeman took a glass of spirits and went back to flag an approaching train—fell asleep and a frightful disaster followed. An overworked engineer, after a glass of spirits at the station, failed to see the danger signal a few miles farther on, and was killed in a frightful wreck. These and similar instances are repeated every year, on nearly all the roads, only many of them simply involve the loss of property and are unnoticed. The culpability and downright stupidity of the company managers in this matter are almost phenomenal. Irrespective of all moral considerations, and simply from a business point, it is absurd to expect any number of temperate men, engaged in a peculiarly nerve-exhausting occupation, to abstain from spirits, especially when exposed to its free use any time, and under all circumstances.

Loose gunpowder and sulphur matches might be carried in proximity for some time without accident. Public places for the sale of spirits on trains and at stations, under the control of the company, may seem to be harmless, but the quantity of accidents due directly and indirectly to them is beyond all question. It is an unwritten law of the saloon managers on trains and at stations, that trainmen are to have spirits free at all times, on the pretense of their use as medicines. It is a higher law of nature that the strain of exact and perilous duty, day after day, reacts in states of exhaustion, for which spirits bring most rapid temporary relief.

The same great physical laws make

it impossible for men in this condition to abstain where the means of relief are at hand, even though they be temporary. No company can depend on the best judgment of its trusted trainmen as long as free spirits are carried round with them on the train, and are found at every station. A railroad dispatcher at a saloon station, after a glass of spirits, gave the wrong order. Ten lives and over a million of dollars were lost. The dispatcher suicided in grief at his mistake. The company received a thousand dollars a year for the rent of the saloon at the station. The long night runs on through trains furnish abundant illustration of the peril and unknown risks of trains which carry traveling saloons. To the companies it is a question of selfish interest. To the traveling public it is a question of personal peril. Every year accidents occur which are clearly preventable, and a growing public sentiment demands better and safer means of transit. The saloon is always a source of danger in ways that are most unexpected. No one can tell how and when it may influence the brain capacity of the trainmen. Obviously it is the clear duty of all persons to demand that the saloons should be dropped from railroad trains; to demand that trainmen be free from exposure and be protected from every possible danger that will imperil their work and the lives of others. The trainmen themselves demand this protection, and no company can be free from grave losses due to this source except by this means.—T. D. Crothers, in Union Signal.

SCOTLAND'S LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

Grocery Stores Help the Saloons to Ruin the People.

Drinking, both moderate and immoderate, is much more common in the British Isles than in the United States. The fact is, the church, and this is especially true in Scotland, has not yet cast out this curse of the nineteenth century. Brewers and saloon-keepers are permitted not only to be members, but office-holders in the church in Scotland. Two or three years ago, at the installation dinner given to the pastor of one of the Edinburgh churches (the banquet was held at a "temperance" hotel) wine was provided for all the guests.

Not long ago the papers reported that a member of the Glasgow presbytery had introduced a resolution that license-holders, or saloonkeepers, should not be permitted to hold office in the church. He found only two members to support his resolution. The consequence of all this is apparent in the habits of the people. You cannot walk through the streets on Saturday evening without meeting dozens of men, and often women, reeling along the sidewalk.

Drinking among women is much more common in the British Isles than in the United States. On holidays it is no uncommon thing to see the saloons half full of women. About two-thirds of the groceries in Edinburgh sell liquor.

This has greatly increased drinking at home, as many women order liquor with their groceries who would not enter a saloon to buy. During the cold months of November and December you see dozens of barefooted, ragged, hungry-looking children running the streets. Yet no less than $350,000 is annually expended in charity in Edinburgh. "But," said Mr. D. Lewis, "the drink traffic has counteracted our labors to an almost incredible extent." And so it will ever be until nations adopt prohibition.

The drink traffic will be able to furnish candidates for the submerged tenth far more rapidly than Gen. Booth with the Salvation Army and British philanthropy combined can save them.—The Voice.

WRECKED BY DRINK.

Grog Far More Disastrous Than Is Fog to Sailors.

Arthur and his father spent a delightful week at the seashore. He delighted to watch the vessels as they came and went, and would often climb up high on the rocks for this purpose, that he might have a better outlook. One day, as he walked along the shore with his father, they picked up here and there a cork or a wine-bottle; and at length his father pointed out to him a great hulk of a vessel that had recently been wrecked. It had on it an immense load of coal—several hundred tons. You could now look into it and see piles of coal, but no one could get at it. And it would cost more to get it out than it was worth. "How did it happen to get wrecked?" asked Arthur. "I asked that question," replied his father, "of a gentleman with whom I walked to the wreck the day after the accident, and I said to him: 'I suppose it was caused by fog.' He replied in one word to my question, and that word was 'grog.' So, upon inquiry, I learned that this was true; that the crew had been drinking, and, of course, with unsteady heads they could not steer the vessel in a straightforward course. So it is with many wrecks in life. Men make mistakes that end in ruin, and they often find that there is more danger in grog than in fog."—Pebbles from the Brook.

GENERAL GLEANINGS.

FRANCES E. WILLARD is said to have recently refused to attend a dinner of the Sunset club in Chicago, lest by her presence she should seem to indorse the use of wine at the table.

A TEMPERANCE lecturer was once asked: "What shall we do with the grain now required for distilling?" The prompt reply was: "Feed the drunkards' wives with it; they have gone hungry long enough."

RUSSIA has become infected with the vice of ether drinking, and the pernicious habit has spread so rapidly that the government has judged it necessary to prohibit the free sale of ether and of certain of its compounds, and to schedule it among the poisons.

THE Christian churches of Great Britain and Ireland are united in their determination that the growth, manufacture and sale of opium (except for medicinal purposes) shall be prohibited. As it is a government monopoly, a single blow will crush the evil traffic.

THE society for the abolition of strong drink in Holland certifies that in a population of 3,500,000 there are 35,000 licenses for the sale of liquor annually granted. Computing two-thirds of the total population to be women and children, there is a saloon to every thirty-three men; a woeful condition.

ACCORDING to the Philadelphia Record, recent experiments made by the proprietors of a distillery of that city have resulted in the production of a kind of whisky which leaves no suspicion of an odor upon the breath. It is said of it that the new whisky has the same effect upon the brain and the legs as that now in use, however.

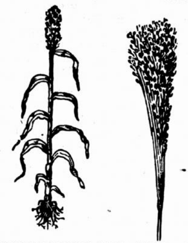
THE principal action of alcohol is that of a narcotic when taken in full doses, and of a sedative in small doses. This is an important fact, and one that indicates much danger, in common with all remedies of this class. As their action is only palliative, they usually require repetition, and neurotic patients who are most in need of such remedies are least able to bear them. Nervous diseases and will-power are closely allied, and the soothing effects produced by stimulants are so irresistibly strong that a dangerous habit is entered upon almost before one is aware of it.—Journal of Inebriety.

THE FARMING WORLD.

BROOM CORN CULTURE.

All About Seeding, Planting, Harvesting and Marketing.

Broom corn is a species of grass somewhat resembling Indian corn but having narrower leaves, and bearing both the staminate and pistillate flowers together in clusters at the top instead of on different parts of the plant as does corn. There are two kinds of flowers, perfect and imperfect, each perfect being accompanied by an imperfect one raised upon a little stalk. The imperfect flower falls early. The stems of the flower clusters are what form the broom. The main ones should be uniform in size, elastic, tough, long and of good color. There are a number of varieties of broom corn, all developed by care and cultivation from the wild state. Little is known of the early history of the plant. The dwarf variety illustrated is preferred for some kinds of brooms but is not much raised because of the difficulty in harvesting it in good condition. The brush is partly inclosed in a sheath, and in wet weather the water collects therein causing the brush to become gummy and to turn red. The common sorts grow without fertilization from 12 to 15 feet high.



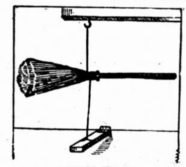
DWARF BROOMCORN STALK AND BRUSH

In the prairie regions, land which produces good yields of Indian corn will also grow paying crops of broom corn. The soil should be free from foul stuff, as the young broom corn plants are small and delicate and cannot fight their way among the weeds. It is usual to plant the seeds two or three inches apart in drills three and one-half feet apart. If thicker than this it is best to thin. Rows should be planted north and south to let the sun in to the best advantage. Plant when the soil has become warm in spring, usually a little later than Indian corn. Cover seed ¾ to ¼ inches deep. Two quarts per acre of good seed is about the right amount but as much of the seed is chaffy and will not germinate, it is necessary to allow something for this. The cultivation is similar to that of Indian corn. Broom corn may be grown for several successive years upon the same ground. It does not exhaust the soil and the dense growth keeps down and kills out the weeds. Authorities differ as to the time of harvesting, but the buyers demand a brush of a light green color and to secure this it must be gathered as soon as the "blossoms" begin to fall, which happens when the seeds first form. Before cutting, the stalks are "tabled" to facilitate handling, that is, bending or breaking the tops of two contiguous rows toward each other diagonally so that those of one row cross those of the other, forming a sort of table. The table is about 30 inches high to be most convenient for cutters and the brushes extend beyond the table. After tabling, the brush and about 8 inches of stem is cut off with a knife and laid upon the table. From here it is loaded upon wagons and hauled to the scrapers, where the seeds are taken off. The scrapers consist of rapidly revolving cylinders having iron teeth upon the surfaces. The bunches of broom corn are held between these and the seeds removed. The straight and crooked brush is separated either when loaded upon the wagons or at the scrapers. After being freed from seed the brush is taken to the drying house. This consists of a shed with a tight roof and sides. Every four or six feet along the sides is a narrow door which is kept open during fine weather, but closed when wet and stormy. The brush is spread upon racks made of laths or light lumber, two or three inches thick. The time required for drying depends much upon the season. When dry it is baled for market. Care must be taken to keep the brush straight and to have the bales compact and firm and of 300 pounds weight or more.—Orange Judd Farmer.

HOMEMADE BROOMS.

Work That Every Farmer Can Do at Home on Rainy Days.

Anyone at all ingenious can make brooms for home use. Set the stalk end of brush enough for the number of brooms to be made in water and leave it for an hour or two. When softened gather enough for a broom, putting the largest and best stalks on the outside. From the ceiling of the room suspend a strong cord. Wind this two or three times about the brush, attach the other end to a treadle hinged to the wall, and with the foot increase the pressure, at the same time rolling the brush round several times to shape it. Wind the ends with cord, beginning at the lower or broom end. Place the pressure cord close to the brush and wind the twine below this, moving the former up as needed. To make the broom flat, press it between two narrow boards fastened together at one end with a strong leather hinge, or it may be placed between two boards and screwed into a vice. Three or four inches below the winding cord, wind a cord once or twice, draw it close and tie firmly leaving enough of one end to sew with. Sew through and through with a large needle six or eight inches long, letting the cord pass over the portion tied on at each stitch. Sharpen the end of the handle and drive the sharpened end exactly in the center of the broom neck and fasten it with two small tacks upon opposite sides. Clip the lower end to make it even. This broom-making may be done on rainy days instead of sitting about the house or going to town, and will be clear gain.—Orange Judd Farmer.



WINDING BROOMS.

THE greater the variety of good grasses in the pasture the better for the thrift of the stock that feed there. An especial advantage is that mixed grasses give a longer season of good pasturage. An early variety shades the tender blades of the later one, and it in turn shades the exposed roots of one that has passed the more vigorous period of its growth.

Wrecked Amid the Breakers.

Many a good ship by bad seamanship strikes, sinks and goes down. So many a strong constitution and fine physique are wrecked and become a total loss through neglect of the premonitions of kidney trouble easily remediable at the outset with Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. The impetus given to inactive kidneys and bladder by the Bitters, never produces irritation as unmedicated stimulants do, and prevents disease. Take the Bitters in rheumatism, dyspepsia, constipation, malaria, la grippe.

A LITTLE Boston girl complains because she can't find anything about the dates of the aurora in the almanacs.

The Only One Ever Printed—Can You Find the Word?

There is a 3 inch display advertisement in this paper, this week, which has no two words alike except one word. The same is true of each new one appearing each week, from The Dr. Harter Medicine Co. This house places a "Crescent" on everything they make and publish. Look for it, send them the name of the word and they will return you book, beautiful lithographs or samples free.

THE man who strikes an attitude imagines that he is making a great hit.—Galveston News.

"A WORD to the wise is sufficient," but it is not always wise to say that word to one who is suffering the tortures of a headache However, always risk it and recommend Bradycrotine. All druggists. 50c.

YOU can't hurt an armless man, because he can't feel anything.

SUFFERERS FROM COUGHS, SORE THROAT, etc., should try "*Brown's Bronchial Troches*," a simple but sure remedy. *Sold only in boxes.* Price 25 cts.

WANTED—A skillful dentist, to fill the teeth of a gale.

BEECHAM'S PILLS are a painless and effectual remedy for all bilious disorders. 25 cents a box. For sale by all druggists.

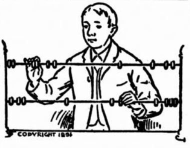
THE proper thing for a jury is to be firm, but not fixed.

LADIES can permanently beautify their complexion with Glenn's Sulphur Soap. Hill's Hair and Whisker Dye, 50 cents.

Boys may now indulge in base bawl without being mean or babyish.

THERE is always better fishing on the other side of the river.

A TRAMP will beat a railroad, but not a carpet.



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The proprietors of Dr. Sage's Remedy, in good faith, offer that amount for an incurable case of Catarrh. Don't think that you have one, though.

They'll pay you, if they can't cure you. That's certain.

But they can cure you. That's just about as certain, too.

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Robs Confinement of its Pain, Horror and Risk.

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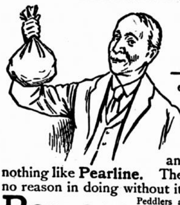

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