

## NOTHING BUT CLARET.

BY MRS. NELLIE AMES.

"It never hurt me!"

There was defiance and decision in the tone of Walter Uxbridge, Esq., as he looked into the handsome, motherly face on the opposite side of the dining table.

"No, Walter, I don't think it ever did; but then my dear, there are very few of us in this world who can do exactly as we please. Don't you know what St. Paul says about putting stumbling blocks in our brother's way?"

"Don't quote St. Paul, for goodness sake. What don't he say? A sensible conservative one minute, recommending a little wine for the stomach's sake, and the next an out and out teetotaler, forbidding meat and fish, as well as strong drink."

"But you know, well enough, what he means, whatever he has said. You are only talking that way to tease me. St. Paul thought it proper for a man who was master of his own spirit, to take a little wine if he needed it; but not to do this in a place where he could influence others weaker than he, or where it would be likely to hurt another's feelings."

"That is, he approved of drinking behind the door, something I shall never do guilty of, Mary; all the world is welcome to know what I do, and comment on my doings if it sees fit. This claret is excellent. I never heard of any body getting drunk on claret, did you?"

"I have no fear of Frank, that I know of," said Mrs. Uxbridge thoughtfully.

"Perhaps it is Mildred, then, interrupted her husband.

"No, no Mildred!"

"Strange that you should have no fears of your daughter becoming a drunkard," interrupted Mr. Uxbridge again.

The irony of this remark had not the effect intended; for the lady went on thoughtfully, almost as if she had not heard.

"No, no Mildred, although intemperance is not unknown among women!"

"Well, then, who in the world are you worrying about?" broke in the gentleman again. "You feel confident that Frank is beyond temptation, and there isn't any one else as I can see. Perhaps you are afraid that I shall lose my equilibrium some time!" and Mr. Uxbridge dropped another piece of ice in his glass, and surveyed the ruby liquid with the expression of an amateur.

"It is no especial credit to you that you are not a drunkard," continued the wife, in a firmer tone. "Strong drink does not tempt you in every way, save in an epicurean sort of a fashion, that leads you to desire all good things, wine no more than others. You do not drink to excess for the best of reasons, your appetite does not lead you so far, if it did, you would be like other drunkards. The question seems to be now, have we no duties outside of our own especial family? Oughtn't we to be as particular in regard to our neighbor's children as our own. To love our neighbor as ourselves, requires great watchfulness, because it isn't so easy. I don't believe, Walter, that it is right to have wine on our dinner table, or to offer it to our friends, unless we are morally sure it can do no harm. I am very much stirred up on this subject."

"I should think so," laughed Mr. Uxbridge, with most imperturbable good humor. "You women are strange creatures. After going along easy for a number of years, all of a sudden you fly off on a tangent, get your backs up, quarrel with your broad and butter, abuse the bridge that has carried you safe over, and stir up things generally. You'd make jolly rulers, you would! Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; that's just it exactly!"

"Oh, mamma," interrupted a sweet voice just at this moment; and a young lady entered, followed by a gentleman evidently very much at home. "Oh, mamma, Harry and I have had such a delightful ride. The horses acted splendidly, and do you believe Harry couldn't keep up with me to save his life?" and Miss Mildred, the skirt of her long riding habit gracefully disposed on her arm, her bright face flushed with excitement, hurried to her room to prepare for dinner.

"Don't wait for Mildred, Harry," said Mrs. Uxbridge, "it will take her some minutes to change her dress, you must be hungry after your ride."

"As a shark," laughingly responded the visitor, as he took his seat at the host's right hand.

"Here's some excellent claret," said Mr. Uxbridge, passing the bottle. The light faded from his wife's face as she waited to see what reply their visitor would make. Very deliberately the young man transferred some pieces of ice to his glass; then, as if he had weighed the matter thoroughly and decided not to touch it, said:

"No, I guess not. If Mrs. Uxbridge will give me a cup of coffee, I think I should like it better. I am sufficiently warm now without any more heating."

"But, man alive, claret is cooling. There's nothing in the world that will cool a man off so quick."

Mrs. Uxbridge passed the coffee, and tried to change the subject. No use. Mine host was in the minority, and that would never do. His wife was against him, his prospective son-in-law disagreed with him, and Walter Uxbridge, Esq., felt himself quite insulted. Just then Mildred entered, and seated herself opposite her lover.

"Have a little claret, Mildred?" inquired papa, bottle in hand, ready to fill her glass.

"Just a little bit," she replied. "Claret makes one feel so comfort-

ably cool. Aren't you taking any, Harry? Help him, papa, I have a toast to offer."

Mr. Uxbridge obeyed with alacrity. Mildred raised her glass gracefully, and said, as her lover followed her example.

"Here's to the health of Harry Carlton, Esq. May he never mount a worse horse than the one he rode to-day, and may he at last conquer all fear of the noble animal, and learn to keep pace with his companion."

"A hearty laugh followed, in which all joined but Mrs. Uxbridge. She hid her face behind the coffee urn, and did her best to keep from breaking down. Why should she feel so sick at heart about so trifling a matter as the drinking of a little claret? asked herself. Why did she shudder and grow cold as she lifted her eyes to the radiant face of her daughter? The visitor drained his glass, and his host promptly refilled it. Mildred slipped a little of hers. Wine evidently had no charm for this light-hearted, brilliant young lady. The next day Mrs. Uxbridge tried to make her daughter understand how keenly she felt on this subject of wine, the drinking, and the intemperate occurrences of the previous evening had made her.

"I thought something was the matter, mother," Mildred replied, "but you need have no fears about Harry. He never touches liquor of any kind. He told me so himself. Claret is so simple, you know; scarcely more than lemonade. If it had been anything else, I should not have thought of offering it, of course."

That evening Mildred waited in vain for her lover.

"Where do you think he is, mother?" she asked, returning from the window for the dozenth time. "He never disappointed me before. We shall be too late for the first act, even if he should come this minute," and Mildred removed her gloves and her tasteful opera hat, and prepared to spend the remainder of the evening at home.

The next day passed, and the next, and still no tidings from her absent lover. Mr. Uxbridge called at his home, and discovered that he had not been seen by any of his relatives since the day he went horseback riding with Mildred. It lacked one day of a week when the young lady received the following note:

"DEAR MILDRED.—Was taken very ill the night I left your house. Stopped at the 5th Avenue Hotel, and have been here ever since, most of the time unconscious. Am very much better, and shall see you to-morrow."

He came looking very ill, and Mrs. Uxbridge took him right into her heart, and nursed him like one of her own children. During the time that intervened between this and the marriage, only a little more than three months, Mildred had several times been called upon to wonder at the strange absence of her lover. His excuse was illness on each occasion, and his haggard face and woe-begone appearance generally testified to its truth. Mr. Uxbridge feared the young man would become a confirmed invalid; Mrs. Uxbridge was filled with gloomy forebodings, and Mildred, bereft of her usual light-heartedness, prepared for the wedding.

"Sometimes I think Walter," said the anxious mother one evening just before the wedding, "or rather fear that Harry dissipates at these times he is away. He will not consent to see our physicians; declares there is nothing especially the matter, and still I can't see that he improves in the least. I am free to confess that my confidence is shaken, and I desire very much that this marriage be postponed until I come to a more thorough understanding of the case."

"If all the women were like you, wife, this world would be a paragon," responded Mr. Uxbridge, with his usual coarse, good-natured laugh.

"You torment yourself," he continued, "and you try to torment me. If you had your way, Mildred would be an old maid, I should live on bread and butter, and weak tea, and when my friends came to see me, they would be treated to a glass of cold water and a temperance lecture. Now you have mounted a new Pegasus, and I suppose you'll ride him till he is played out, and then hunt up something else. Let the young folks alone, and don't bother your head any more."

Thus repulsed, Mrs. Uxbridge knew not what to do. She dared not whisper a word of her dreadful suspicions to her daughter, and there was no way of possessing herself of the information she stood so much in need of. With a heart almost paralyzed, she watched the progress of events. Inexorable old Time brought the wedding day at last, and with grief unutterable, the fond mother parted with her daughter for her wedding trip. Mr. Uxbridge superintended the wedding, and champagne had sparkled in fair hands, and fair lips had pledged the newly-wedded pair in numberless toasts. Harry Carlton touched not, tasted not.

"Now, my son," said Mr. Uxbridge with great impressment, passing him a glass of wine with his own hands. "Here's to you and yours, yours and mine! I drink, man, as the young gentleman made no motion to touch his lips to the scintillating beverage."

"You will please excuse me," stammered the new-made husband with a painful blush. "You know I am not very well, and champagne does not agree with me."

"All right," replied Mr. Uxbridge. "You and my wife will do to go together; but I'm not sure but two temperance advocates in one family will be too much for me."

The wedding journey came to an end, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Carlton went to housekeeping in their own pleasant home, and for awhile everything went on smoothly, and the heart of the mother grew light. Six months of delightful companionship, prompt attendance at business, and then the cloud descended. The young

husband remained away from home for days at a time, without giving the least excuse. To his wife's fearful entreaties to know the cause of his absences, he turned a deaf ear.

"It wouldn't do you any good to know where I have been," he replied, almost brutally on one occasion, after she had implored for his confidence.

"But, Harry, I can't endure it," sobbed the poor little wife. "I am worried almost to death when you stay away so."

"And you think you would like it better if I should come home at these times?"

"Oh, Harry, how can you ask such a question? of course I should."

"Very well, then; I promise never to remain away again," and he was as good as his word.

"A month after that, a bearded, disfigured man reeled into the handsome home of the Carletons.

"Oh, Harry, what is the matter?" groaned poor Mildred, as her husband staggered to a seat.

"Drunk," he answered, with a demoniac laugh. "You needn't be afraid of me. I shan't hurt you," as the poor child drew away, "and before I got so bad I can't talk, I have something to say to you. I never could drink liquor; never could touch it without just such consequences as these. It is a hereditary curse. I had not touched a drop of anything for five years until that night at your father's house, when you pledged me in claret, and I didn't know how to refuse. I have never been myself since."

And he was never himself again. A few months more, and the unhappy soul was released from the curse of intemperance, and Mildred Carleton was a drunkard's widow.

### Letters from My Mother.

BY A PROFESSIONAL MAN.

I have a package of them yet in my possession; and now, having attained to mature manhood, and being burdened more or less with cares and responsibilities, I sit down to read them over again with subdued spirit and softened heart.

The first came to hand when I was but a youth—a mere boy among strangers, and learning the rudiments of professional life. In this I am reminded of her affectionate solicitude for me; and she hopes I shall "not neglect my devotional duties now that I am away from home, and exposed to new temptations."

In the next letter, written a month later, she portrays how I am "missed from the home circle;" but as my engagement seems to be for the best, she is "willing to submit to it," and concludes by reminding me that I am the "object of her unceasing, prayerful desires."

An so, month after month, did these affectionate home epistles continue to be received.

In looking over some of them, at this calm evening hour, after the lapse of many long years, a bright hallow of interest gathers around them; and more than ever do they seem guarded with tender expressions, which none but a loving Christian mother can employ.

For instance, again, here is a letter just drawn from the pile before me which is yellow with age, and the ink with which it is written so faded that it is almost impossible to read it. By the date, I discover it is written in June, the sweetest summer month. She had "dismissed from her mind all domestic concerns, and was devoting a little time on the afternoon of that bright summer day in writing to her absent son. How grateful her heart would feel if I could spend a few days at home, this beautiful season of the year, when the productions of the garden, unscored by the sun's fierce rays, are tender, fresh and sweet; the cherry trees in front of the house laden with ripe fruit; the flowers in full bloom, and the woods and the fields arrayed in their brightest verdure. The little bird which, year after year, builds its nest on the branch I could reach from my chamber window, has long ago forsaken the spot, taking her group of little ones with her, but returns every morning and evening to warble her sweet notes by the very door. There is my fishing rod in the hall, suspended by two nails overhead, just as I left it. Hanging in one of the upper rooms in the house is a cap that I had left behind; in another place a coat somewhat the worse for wear; in your corner a pair of boots; and visit with me rooms she would, there was sure to be something to keep her constantly reminded of her youngest son. She wishes it was her privilege to prepare for me a substantial supper to sit down to that night after the day's work was done; or that she had an opportunity to send by some kind hand a basket of fruit and cakes."

If I failed to appreciate in those days the ten thousand kind acts and expressions which a fond mother's heart gave impulse to, I trust that I value them now in the light of experience.

Another, written several months later, urges me to come home and spend Christmas Day, which was close at hand. This letter has a peculiar home fragrance about it, and inspires me with many delightful associations. A good old-fashioned Christmas dinner was to be prepared on that occasion.

The next letter, which I draw from a package, and now hold in my hand, I notice is folded in the old-fashioned way, with the superscription on the outside, and was originally fastened with a large red wafer. It has a primitive look about it, strangely in contrast with the delicate envelopes so generally used at the present day. But I will proceed to unfold it, and see what I can find interesting inside. The handwriting, I perceive, has somewhat changed, as if age had commenced to do its work, and weaken the nerve. In this I am most forcibly reminded of my mother, and she "hopes I shall come prepared to pay a good long visit."

"My family." What strange events have come to pass in the long years that have intervened since I received the first letter! By Time's restless current I have been carried along till past the bounds of boyhood; and now, here I am, full grown, matured, and with a family.

Peradventure I am living yet, and striving to do some good in the world, in answer to that mother's prayers and intercessions; and I will not let this fit opportunity slip by without again expressing my gratitude to the Author of all good for the heaven-born influence of a Christian mother, who first showed me how to clap my hands, and taught me to lip the hallowed name of the Saviour.

After this she remained silent for many months. When at last the next letter came to hand, it referred to the severe accident which had rendered her helpless so long—occasioned by a fall, resulting in a broken limb. Her pain and sufferings in the meantime were great, but she was thankful to be able to use her pen once more, after so long an intermission. My letters had cheered her in her prostrate condition, and she besought blessings upon my head for the many kind words written to an aged parent in affliction.

But I do not wish to weary the reader with any more extracts from these letters. There was a time, soon after this, when the last letter was written. The hand which traced it has been motionless, and folded on her breast, since the work of death was finished many years ago.

I shall never cease to look back upon those memorials of a mother's affection with hallowed feelings of delight.

A young man who was attending a night writing-school, was smitten by the charms of a lady present, and at the close of the school pressed forward and asked if he might escort her home. "Yes," said she, "if you will carry my little boy." He is gradually recovering from his shock.

Miss Sarah Savage, of Portland, wants \$5,000 from her mistress, who injected vitriol into the optic as Sarah was peeping through the key-hole of the parlor door. Sarah has quit the peeping business whether she gets the money or not.

A man who had recently been elected a major of militia, and who was not overburdened with brains, took it into his head on the morning of parade, to exercise a little by himself. The field selected for this purpose was his own apartment. Placing himself in a military attitude, with his sword drawn, he exclaimed: "Attention, company! Rear rank, three paces, march!" and he tumbled down into the cellar. His wife hearing the racket, came running in, saying, "My dear, have you killed yourself?" "Go about your business, woman," said the hero; "what do you know about war?"

Roosters are the pugilists among birds, and having no suitable shoulders to strike from, they strike from the heel. When a rooster gets whipped, the hens all march off with the other rooster, if he ain't half so big or handsome. It is pluck that wins a hen. Roosters as a class won't do any housework; you can't get a rooster to pay any attention to a young one. They spend most of their time in crowing and strutting about, and wance in a while they find a worm, which they make such a great fuss over, calling their wives up from a distance, apparently to treat them, but as the hens get thero, this elegant cuss bends over and gobbles up the worm. Just like a man for all the world.—Josh Billings.

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## Things Wise and Otherwise.

The greatest feat in eating ever recorded, is told of a man who commenced by bolting a door, after which he threw up a window, and swallowed a whole story.

A milk picher thrown by his wife at a Nelson street man, on Monday noon, missed the aim and ruined a handsome frame which enclosed the words "God bless our home."

Jack who is at boarding-school in the country, writes home: "Please send me a good trap to catch a woodchuck, and a piece of carpet for me to say my prayers on."

"Have you Blasted Hopes?" asked a young lady of a librarian with his handkerchief tied over his jaw. "No ma'am," said he, "it's only a blasted toothache."

Young Bennett gets credit for all the *Herald* does, though he is seldom seen in the office, and his friends say that fish and oysters can't work him up to the writing pitch.

Whenever we hear a man making a disparaging insinuation in regard to his mother-in-law, we always feel like saying to him, "Sir, you never would have been anywhere if your father had never had a mother-in-law."

Mr. Smith is bound to have his joke. His wife walked nearly in front of a railway train the other day, and he said that if she had gone a step farther his children would have had a step-mother.

A cowardly fellow having kicked a newsboy for posting him to an evening newspaper, the lad waited till another boy accosted the "gentleman," and then shouted in the hearing of all bystanders, "It's no use to try him, Jim, he can't read."

A negro held a cow while a cross-eyed man was to hit her on the head with an axe. The negro observing the man's eyes, in some fear enquired: "Is you gwine to hit what you look?" "Yes," "Den, hold de cow yourself," said Cuffee.

A young man in Ashtabula sought to secure his sweetheart by strategy, so he took her out for a boat ride, and threatened to jump overboard into the lake if she didn't consent to marry him. But it didn't work. She offered to bet him a dollar that he didn't dive in.

An Irish domestic, newly engaged, presented to his master one morning a pair of boots, the leg of one of which was much longer than the other. "How comes it, you rascal, that these boots are not of the same length?" "I really don't know, sir; but what bothers me most is that the pair down stairs are in the same fix."

A Detroit negro prisoner, on his way to the penitentiary for larceny, was asked what he thought of his trial. He said: "When do lawyer dat 'tended me made his speech, I made sure dat I was going to take my ole hat and walk right out of dat cot' room; but when the older lawyer got up and commenced talking, I knew I was the biggest rascal on top of de earf."

A boy of sixteen, employed the other day in manipulating some old government stores, thought, from the smell, that two small pills which he found must be gunpowder. He tried with a match, and found that he was correct in his surmises. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death. This precocious youth adds another to the long list of martyrs to science.

Here is a veritable extract from a letter sent from a little boy in the country to his mother in the city: "The peach trees here are too slippery for me to climb; uncle won't let me sail boats in the milk-pails; there's no birds' nests around that I can see; Saline Law split molasses on my best pants; a snailbor more than I am, who plays with me, wears a gold chain; and I want to go home."

When a man milks a cow he should not attempt to smoke a cigar at the same time. A young man out in the country tried it, and got along well enough until he lowered his head and touched the cow's flank with the lighted end of his weed. The next instant himself and his cigar were dreadfully "put out." The cow introduced about two tons weight into one of her hind legs, and then passed it under the milker's loft.

A Milwaukee man who was about to leave for Chicago recently, and whose wife came with him to the train to see him off, attempted to kiss her good-bye without taking his cigar from his mouth. The effort was a failure, and the unfortunate man loosed from the cars, pursued by an infuriated woman with a hat in her hand, a patch of ashes on her cheek, and a great deal of fire in her eye. He got a livelier send off than he bargained for.

Quaint conceits have little folks. "My leg won't walk," said a little girl as she limped down stairs after some slight hurt; "my bones need oiling." The same little girl, having been troubled for some days with canker in her mouth, had contracted so careless ways in eating. One day her mother reproved her: "My dear, don't make so much noise with your lips." "But, mamma," was the quick response, "it is a great deal easier to eat out loud when you have a sore mouth."

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Advancing years, sickness, care, dissipation, mental and hereditary debility, all tend to destroy the hair, and deprive it of its natural vitality. Ayer's Hair Vigor, by long and extensive use, has proven that it stops the falling of the hair immediately; often restores the growth, and always surely restores its color, when faded or gray. It stimulates the nutritive organs to healthy action, and preserves both the hair and its beauty. Thus, unruly, weak or sickly hair becomes glossy, pliable and strengthened; lost hair regrows with lively expression; falling hair is checked and established; thin hair thickens; and faded or gray hair resumes its original color. Its operation is pure and harmless. It cures dandruff, itching humors, and keeps the scalp cool, clean and soft—conditions which conditions, diseases of the scalp are impossible.

As a dressing for ladies' hair, the Vigor is prized for the grateful and agreeable perfume, and valued for the soft texture and richness of its fragrance.

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