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If we can not get bacon, let us bless God that there are still some cabbages in the garden. Must is a hard nut to crack, but it has a sweet kernel. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Whatever falls from the skies is, sooner or later, good for the land: whatever comes to us from God is worth having, even though it be a rod. We can not by nature like trouble any more than a mouse can fall in love with a cat, and yet Paul by grace came to glory in tribulations also. Losses and crosses

are heavy to bear, but when our hearts are right with God, it is wonderful how easy the yoke becomes. We must needs go to glory by the way of Weeping Cross; and as we were never promised that we should ride to heaven in a feather bed, we must not be disappointed when we see the road to be rough, as our fathers found it before us. All's well that ends well; and, therefore, let us plow the heaviest soil with our eye on the sheaves of harvest, and learn to sing at our labor while others murmur.

"Sword and Trowel."

THE PARSON IN THE BALL-ROOM.

BY MAXWELL.

CHAPTER I.

SEEKING STRAY SHEEP.

"THERE'S a storm brewing," said young Parson Williams as he entered his study where his wife was reading over the lesson for her Bible-class. It was a Friday night in December. He drew off his boots, put on his slippers and his gown, sat by the stove and gazed into the fire. She thought that he was "making points" for a new sermon, and did not ask him to tell her how to explain the "music and dancing" which the brother of the prodigal heard in the house of his father after the return of the wretched wanderer.

"I feel as if I had not done all my duty to-night," said the parson in a tone of doubt.

"Have you not called at Mr. Canning's to see the sick child?" inquired Mrs. Williams. "I offered to watch with it to-night, for the weary mother ought to rest, but she said that her sisters would be with her."

"I have just come from the house," he replied, "and now I propose to go in search of her husband and sisters." She looked at him in wonder. "I

mean," said he, "that I am half inclined to go to the ball-room."

"What! is there a ball to-night? I thought that your sermon on 'Wounding Christ in the house of his friends,' had broken up that amusement. How would you dare to go?"

"There has been a ball every Friday night for a month. The church-people have ceased to have dancing-parties in their houses since the sermon roused their consciences, or filled them with shame, but the dancing professors have set their pastor at defiance. They seem more bewitched with the folly than those who make no profession of religion. Deacon Morris says, 'David danced, and I danced at my wedding,' and that is comfort enough for them. They act as if they thought it a duty. They have rented a hall, and the revels are becoming a disgrace."

"I do wonder if any of my Bible-class attend!" said Mrs. Williams. "Some of them are not so serious as they were last month. I hope Mary Ewing is not there. Suppose you go: what a brave thing it will be!"

The bravery of the act was not in the parson's thought. It was the duty of

seeking the straying members of his flock that weighed upon his mind. His sermon had been a bold plea for consistency in the lives of Christians, and he had been sustained by the majority of the villagers in Reddington. He felt that he would have the moral support of the people, and the divine favor of Heaven, if he obeyed his conscience. He was soon on the way to Morris Hall.

At the foot of the stairs that led up to the hall was a crowd of loungers from the bar-room, young men from the workshops, well-grown lads from Christian families, and rude boys from the hovels that stood along the railway. "Lewd fellows of the baser sort" were not wanting to the scene. A young couple came near. Miss Emma Ewing shrank back, saying, "O George, I can not go up there. Mother would feel awfully if she knew that I was in such company as this. She only allowed me to come to hear the music."

"This is only the outside," said George West, the chorister; "there is better company in the hall. Don't you hear the music? The whole band is there."

Just then the band ceased playing, and voices were heard from the hall, crying, "Put him out! put him out!" The uproar increased. The door was opened, and a drunken bar-tender was thrust out by two strong men, who finally cleared the stairs and sent him reeling into the street. Mary Ewing had taken a few steps homeward when she met her pastor. Surprised and confused, she would have shunned him in the lamp-light, had she not hoped that by appealing to him an end would be put to George's persuasions to return. "I did not know it was such a bad place," said she, "or I would not have come one step."

"So you have found yourself in the 'broad road,' Mary?" said her pastor kindly. "Do you not think that this would be a rather stormy looking night

for young ladies to venture out to a prayer-meeting?"

Mary burst into tears. George was convicted in his own conscience. Often had he failed to lead the song at the prayer-room, and excused his absence by saying that a "damp evening" injured his voice so that he could not sing on the Sabbath. The night before had been as bright as moon and stars could make it, and yet he had been absent. Two of the straying ones were now rescued, and the parson took courage.

The boys suddenly ceased their rude jeering at the poor drunken bar-tender when the parson made his appearance. "It's the minister," whispered some of the larger scholars of the Sunday school, as he gravely passed up the stairs, which were shaking under a cotillion. He opened the door, and such a silence was probably never in a ball-room, except when some one fell suddenly dead on the floor. Never had a strain of music ended more abruptly, than when Barney Morris, the deacon's son, caught sight of his pastor. There he stood with the fiddle under his chin, his right arm fixed like a dead limb, and his eyes flashing fire. The dancers seemed to be standing on one foot, like wild geese in a field on a winter's day. The spectators, some of whom had said that their church-vows would not allow them to dance, were hiding behind each other, and behind the doors. The master of ceremonies, as he afterwards said, was blank-minded.

"Excuse me," said the parson, in the politest manner; "I never before was at a ball, and I may not understand your rules. If it be not wrong to dance in my absence, I do not see why you should so suddenly cease in my presence. I did not come to interrupt you; I simply wish to inquire if there are any of my flock here."

"I think there are," said the floor-manager, Hopkins, as his eye surveyed the room. "I believe some professing

Christians attend here. They can answer for themselves." But not one of them responded.

"If they are able to attend the ball on a night that threatens storm," said Mr. Williams, "they will doubtless be able to appear in the prayer-room hereafter, particularly when the sky is so clear as it was last night. If 'there is a time to dance,' I trust they will remember that there is a time to pray. If one of these exercises must be given up for the other, I advise those of my flock to choose that one which will afford them the more happiness in the day of judgment. You have just spurned a young man who was intoxicated, and thrust him from the hall. You know that one year ago he was the most accomplished gentleman of the ball-room, and that his passion for this amusement has led him astray. Where did he get his glass of strong drink? In the very next room, where it is kept for the benefit of those who wish to have a stimulus to elegant manners. His boast that he would dance in every cotillion, until four o'clock in the morning, perhaps, led him to drink freely of the fire that has maddened his brain. You have cast him from you. It shall now be my privilege to see that he is treated with such tenderness as every Christian ought to show to the erring and the fallen."

"We did not come here to be lectured by a preacher, who can not allow people to enjoy themselves," said one of the musicians, who had taken "a glass too much."

"Hush! hush! Let him speak," was the protest of several voices. "Every one who chooses has a right to come here," said the floor-manager. "We have not been very select heretofore."

"It is no place for a preacher," was the rough answer. "Nor for a professor of religion," added some one in keen rebuke. "But it is a good place for young ladies to dance with men whom they

would be ashamed to have attend them to church," said some one in a tone of irony.

"We are not likely to have better company than your minister," rejoined the floor-manager. "Let us hear him respectfully."

"Yes, parson, choose a partner, and let us have a reel," said the tipsy musician. But he was severely reproved for his ill-manners. Silence was restored.

"I must decline the invitation," replied the parson, "unless you all think that it would be perfectly harmless for me to join you. What do you say?"

They said nothing. The floor-manager asked him, "Shall I put it to vote?"

"It is not necessary. . Silence is a decisive voter. If it did not seem very wrong for me to dance, I should be strongly urged by the whole party to do it. And then what a figure I should make! To tell the truth, I never danced, for, as Daniel Webster once said, 'I never had the capacity.' What a disgrace it would be! You would despise me. My ministry would be at an end. Not a church in the land would wish for my services. Now, if I have erred in coming here, may God forgive me. If you are in the wrong, may he have mercy. I bid you good-night."

The parson bowed and turned to the door. But it was not easy to make his way through the crowd of "outsiders" who had been eager to see and hear him. His glance struck shame into the heart of certain lads, whose parents supposed that they were at the academy, preparing for the annual exhibition. Their teacher had complained that the rage for dancing had made sad work in his school. Those who studied least imagined that they needed "more exercise." The culture of the mind was giving way to the culture of the feet. Books were neglected; lessons were a drudgery; the thoughts ran upon dress, company, mirth, and folly. These lads

had grown wonderfully within a month, and begun to think themselves too large to attend the Sabbath school. "Boys, let us go home," said one of them, when he felt his cheek burning under his kind pastor's eye.

"I've just come," said John Alden, "to bring home my sister. I'll go as soon as she will join me." He pressed toward the door. His sister Grettie was glad when she caught sight of him, for she felt like a captive bird in the fowler's net. It was her first night in a ball-room, and she resolved that it should be the last. The tempter had prevailed over her conscience by whispering, "Your Bible-class teacher will never find it out." But the presence of her pastor had exposed that falsehood. She and four of her classmates hastened to meet John, and they all followed in the wake of their pastor, down the crowded stairs and into the street.

The poor bar-tender had been left quite alone, sick and ashamed, and lying on a box, like a sack of meal. "That's the way they do," said he, as the parson aroused him. "They make me drunk, and then kick me out like a dog. I have not a friend in the world."

"I am your friend," said Mr. Williams. "Come with me."

"So you are, parson; I know it—don't I? Let me take—you to my bosom." He made an impulsive effort, threw himself upon the pastor, and clasped his arms about his neck, saying, "You're a—a brother. I'll take your advice—your ad—ad—monition." The parson's coat suffered from the embrace.

After no little effort, Mr. Williams got him upon his feet, and led him home. His mother was shocked. Never before had she seen her only son, Henry, dead drunk. A jealous rival had urged the glass upon him in order to disgrace him in the eyes of his admirers. He was laid upon a lounge, and he soon fell into a deep stupor. As Mrs. Hardy looked

upon his high forehead and his noble face, she thought how indulgent she had been, how proud of his superior mind, how pleased with his graceful manners, and how mistaken in allowing him to become the "bar-tender" in his uncle's tavern. With tears and prayers she resolved that his employment should be changed, and his habits more carefully guarded. He must be reformed. She believed, with her pastor, that the only sure reformation is regeneration. Therefore she sought the power of God.

The door of the post-office was closed, but a glimmer of light shone through the shutters when Mr. Williams returned that way to complete his search. He rapped; the door was opened, and he entered. He there found Mr. Canning, whom he had failed to discover in the ball-room. He took him by the hand, and explained to him his mission to Morris Hall, asking, "Was I in the right?"

"I think that you preachers might attend to your own affairs," replied Mr. Canning.

"Possibly that is what I am now doing. It is my duty to seek those who have gone astray, and lead them back to the fold. The laws of your own church make them subject to discipline. You assented to those laws when you were received into the communion of the church. You solemnly promised, as under oath before God and the people, that you would 'submit to its discipline.' I do not wish to employ harsh measures. Have I not preached, entreated, visited, and prayed? Have I not used the mildest measures to win you to observe the ordinances of the church, and to redeem your vows?"

"You have done your duty, sir."

"Not entirely: it will not be done until you and other straying ones are restored to the flock, or until the fold is purified. It is my duty to seek the erring, and restore them in the spirit of

meekness. 'If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?'

"But you need not be so troubled about the amusements of your people. Can not a lamb skip in the pasture without having the shepherd in pursuit of it?"

"Not if it is skipping over a precipice, or into the den of the wolf."

Mr. Canning understood the allusion. He had seen the wolf prowling about to devour the careless members of the flock of Christ. He had seen amusement lead to dissipation. He therefore brought forward one of Deacon Morris's ready arguments, saying, "My Bible tells me, 'There is a time to dance.'"

"So, too," replied the pastor, "'there is a time to kill.' Shall we devote one evening in the week to that employment? It is being done already with strong drink at the ball-room. 'There is a time to hate.' Your amusements are promoting hatred. Solomon did not mean that there was a time when these things could be done innocently and with the approval of God. He also says, 'There is a time to mourn.' Perhaps your good wife knows when that is: I left her in tears since you were at home. And when is the time to dance? Is it when your pastor and his pious co-workers are toiling to build up the church? Is it when your conduct makes you a stumbling-block, over which others may fall into perdition? Is it when the amusement interferes with the piety of professing Christians? Is it when your devoted wife, at this very hour, is bending over the cradle, and shedding her prayerful tears over a child which she may have to give up to God before another Sabbath?"

Mr. Canning was weeping. The strong man gave way to self-reproach and grief. His pastor reasoned with him patiently,

tenderly, pointedly, and then left him. Mr. Canning went to the Hall for his sisters-in-law. He found the party in confusion. There had been no dancing since the parson had entered the room. "There was a time to hate," and it had not yet passed away. The persons who most strongly persisted in having the amusement continued were the "church-members" present. Mr. Canning and his sisters-in-law went home. A cold rain began to fall. After midnight the party broke up in dissatisfaction, if not in disgust. The only person who seemed to wear a smile was floor-manager Hopkins. The amount of sound sleep taken that night in Reddington was less than it had been for many a month.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW PARISHIONERS.

IT was quite early the next morning when Barney Morris, the deacon's son, went into the drug-store where the floor-manager was chief-clerk, saying with oaths, "Hopkins, I have a killing headache: let me have something that will cure it in ten minutes. I must work like a horse to-day."

"Late hours don't seem to agree with you," said one of the driest of wits, whom the scenes of the previous evening would supply with jests for a month. "What was the matter, Barney? I hear that you all lost your *capacity* for fiddling and dancing very suddenly last night."

If wrath were a remedy for headache, Barney might have lost his in two minutes, while he swore, and gestured with a clenched fist, and stormily said, "I'll show the parson whether the young people of this town are sheep to be shut up in a pen every night as soon as it grows dark." (It was his father who had taught Barney this figure of speech.)

"Some of them, I understand, were shut up last night in the Hall, while a storm was howling outside. Did he put

them in there? If he did, I think it is about time for your father to cry him down. The deacon has been rather given to changing pastors, I believe. And to be shut up as you were until near daylight this morning, in such very uncomfortable quarters, without the *capacity* to dance! It's dreadful to think of it. I would not stand it if I were you."

"They could have stood it very well, if the pastor had not peeped in to see how his flock were getting along," said one of the company, whose numbers were fast increasing. "It is not the penning up, it is the parson they dislike."

"There are some of us who will have our way in spite of his preaching and his prying into our affairs," rejoined Barney. "If he wants a people whom he can rule with his nod, he will soon be seeking one in another parish. I'll show him." (The deacon was authority for this threat.)

"Here's the point, gentlemen," said the dry wit, looking around upon a score of his townsmen. "We have already a deacon, or a deacon's son, to rule with his nod; and all who are in favor of dismissing the parson will please to say *aye*."

"Hold a little," said Hopkins. "Have I a vote? I have not been one of his parishioners, have not belonged anywhere, but I intend to be one hereafter, for I like a parson who is brave enough to seek after the straying ones of his flock, and who has not *capacity*—" The final words of his sentence were swept away by a gust of laughter, amid which a stout man was heard saying, "I too will be a parishioner, and I will vote for the parson to remain here as long as he lives." "So will I," added a neighbor, whose boast had often been that he could be a moral man without the help of preachers, and he never went near them.

"I suggest a change in the question,"

said the dry wit. "All those in favor of settling the parson among us for life will manifest it by providing something for him to live on, and walking over to Deacon Downs's, and each one taking a pew. Let there be a rush at once."

"I amend," said Hopkins, "by adding that the new parishioners raise a purse on the spot for the parson." All responded to the proposal, except Barney Morris and one or two of his coterie, who left the drug-store for the deacon's mill, where they laid plans to secure liberty to the young people of the town. For the relief of Barney's headache, however, they took the tavern on their way, and there met with sympathy.

At almost every breakfast-table the parson's adventure had been discussed, and many persons expected that he would have an early call from Deacon Morris. They were not mistaken. The deacon took his coffee very hot, and hurried to the pastor's study. He sat down on the wood-box, and persisted in sitting there, saying that "any humble seat was good enough for him." He spoke of the church, how it ought to be "first in all his thoughts," and how its rulers "should rule by persuasion, and not by force." He enlarged on the importance of winning the hearts of the young people, for "You must lead them; you can't drive them." He dwelt upon the fact of their having youthful feelings and tastes, and their need of cheerful entertainments, for "they *must have amusements*; they must and will have them."

"Recreations, you mean," replied the parson, at length opening his lips, "for these need never be foolish nor hurtful."

"Well, pleasant, cheerful, amusing exercise. They are almost dying for the want of it. What a poor, puny, sickly race we are getting to be!"

"There is something they need far more."

"What is it?"

"Good Christian examples." The

deacon winced. The arrow went to the heart. "I mean examples of Christian cheerfulness, sobriety, temperance, activity, and usefulness. If these be followed, our young people will be healthful, happy, and prosperous. Good men will see their sons growing up, as you often pray, to be 'better than their fathers.' Don't you think so?"

The deacon was thinking painfully of his own Barney. But he had come on a special errand. He was too resolute a man to be turned from it. He had seated himself on the lowly wood-box to show who was the chief power in the church which had "hired" Parson Williams for one year. He assumed a soft tone; "his words were smoother than oil." By sweeping around a wide circle he came again to his point. "Our young people are worthy of your special care and effort," said he fawningly. "They are not worse than other young people. They love a little amusement, once in a while, — perhaps love it a little too well. But give them a little sweep; if you can draw them to church, there is hope that they will hear their errors kindly pointed out, and will reform. There is where your power over them lies. It is in preaching, not in prying into their liberties. They dislike interference, and excuse me, sir, for saying that they feel a little hurt by your going to the Hall last night."

"Perhaps some of them do, a little."

"Well," — the deacon drew a long sigh, — "what are you going to do about it?"

"Do my duty, sir, God helping me."

"But, surely, you will not preach to-morrow against dancing, — a subject that always appears to me unworthy of the pulpit. It is not sufficiently dignified."

"I will try to preach the gospel to-morrow, sir, and possibly I may notice some sins at the risk of dignity, or some follies which are sufficiently dignified to be zealously promoted by certain members of the church."

"But if you preach on dancing you will drive all our young people from the church, and this other denomination, just coming in among us, will get the whole of them. It has a preacher who takes the popular view of these amusements. I tremble, sir, for our church. It lies nearest my heart. I saw it in its infancy; yes, I may say that I have reared it. It is my child, dearer to me than all my children." The deacon was pathetic.

"If it be the Lord's child, he will take care of it, and he sent me to preach to it the entire gospel, against all folly, all immorality, all temptations, and all the deceitfulness of sin. As for the young people, they will not leave it. They will come, more of them than ever. You will see the church crowded to-morrow, and if you have to give up your pew and sit on one of the pulpit steps, I shall scarcely dare look at you, lest I should smile for joy."

"They may come for one day just to hear you rebuke us Christians, who are generous in our opinions of them. But do not be deceived. Do not suppose their presence is a proof that they sustain you. I fear for the influence of your course upon the church. I am afraid that you are only sending yourself away from us. You know that I am the last one to think of your going." The deacon heaved a sigh.

"Perhaps the first, as well as the last," replied Mr. Williams in a tone of justice to himself and his people. "You know, sir, that you are the only one who has started a whisper of this sort. Your desire may father your fear. I can see through your solicitude for me. Go on, sir: you may gather around you a small party; but who are they? Those whom you once told me were the most pious members of the church? Not one of them will join you. The non-professors? The worldly people? They all sustain me in my course. Who then? The few professors of religion who are

trying to make a compromise between piety and pleasure; they are the most zealous advocates of these amusements."

Just at this point there was a rap at the door. The parson opened it, and a lad handed him a letter. He broke the seal and drew from it a goodly array of bank-bills. He was so taken by surprise that he ran his eye over a note, and then read it aloud: "Your new parishioners beg of you to accept the inclosed as a small proof that they admire your moral courage, and sustain you in your efforts to roll back the tide of folly and of vice which threatens them." It was signed, "One who will no longer be floor-manager at a ball."

"New parishioners!" exclaimed Mr. Williams; "who can they be?"

"I know nothing at all about them," replied the deacon very nervously, "but if there are any persons who will help me in bearing the burden of supporting the gospel here, I shall be glad. I have tried to do my duty, sir. Good-morning." He hurried off through the town, but found none to sympathize with him until he came to his mill, where Barney and his clique were laying plans to carry on their campaign. They were so spitefully bent upon having a great and successful ball, that the deacon became disgusted. He reproved them, and took the side of the parson. But his counsels were mere chaff in the wind; they would have a grand ball at the largest tavern, and gain a victory over the pastor by giving mirth to his flock.

The next morning the deacon had an opportunity to see who were the new parishioners. One by one came families which had not been church-goers, and the sexton guided them to their places, here and there, with an air that said, "This is to be your pew." Soon the church began to be full. Deacon Morris was awake with interest. Seeing others standing in the aisles, he rose and beck-

oned them into his corner. When it was full he took a chair near the wall. But he had to give it to the son of the chief skeptic in the town. Benches were put in the space about the pulpit, and in the aisles, and these were filled. The deacon finally sat down on a pulpit step, and looked happy as he saw "the young people" all there, and even Barney in the gallery, ready to sing a deeper bass than was often heard in that region of country.

When the moment came for the pastor to announce his text all ears were attent. What would it be? "Everything depends on it," thought Deacon Morris, who had imagined that the destinies of the church were in the balance; too heavy a text would send it into the clouds. It was read from Psalm iv.:—"There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."

"It would be easy to show you something that is bad," began the parson, and the deacon trembled. "We might point out much that is evil in itself, or evil in its tendency. But there are times when we may not need to have our follies, our inconsistencies, and our sins set in order before us. We may see them already, feel ashamed of them, hate them, and be disposed to renounce them for ever. In our disgust of them we may ask, 'Who will show us any good in ourselves, in our conduct, in the course we pursue?' All is wrong, and we may be ready to confess it. We may be thankful that our errors have been shown us, for the true Christian penitent is willing to say, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness.'" The deacon shrugged his shoulder.

"Then we want a remedy, and we may ask, 'Who will show us any good?' Who will point out to us a way of deliverance from our follies, our faults, and the sorrows they cause? We are dissatisfied with our mode of life, and even

our enjoyments. We are not happy in them. We are restless. We crave some good not yet possessed — some good principle of life — some good possession which will satisfy the heart and the conscience. Who will show what it is, and how to obtain it? To such inquirers let me show the force of David's prayer, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.'

"I. It implies that we have so grieved the Lord that he is quite ashamed of us. He turns away his face; his countenance is cast down. Therefore all good is hidden from our eyes. We are in darkness. We are so out of favor that we can not pray, 'Lord, look down upon us.'

"II. Our first desire is to please the Lord. This is the very beginning of all good. Hence we pray, 'Lift thou up thy face; let it shine upon us.' We would roll away the reproach which we have cast on the Lord: we would remove the shadow of our sins from his countenance, and so please him that his face will shine upon us.

"III. When he is pleased, when his face shines upon us, then we see what is good. In his light and love we see that his requirements are good: 'his commandments are not grievous;' they rejoice the heart. They make us happy. There is nothing so good as to do and to be just what our Lord Jesus requires.

"IV. Our purpose will be to so live that the Lord will ever look upon us with favor, guiding us by his truth, and giving us courage against all temptations. We shall be careful where we go and what we do, wishing to be in no place where we can not say with gladness, 'Thou God seest me.' We are in the good way only when the Lord's countenance is shining upon us."

There was no direct allusion to the late scenes in the Hall, but all felt that it was one of the places where the face of the Lord did not shine. The impres-

sion upon all attentive minds was that Jehovah was the source of all goodness, all light for the soul, all spiritual life, and all happiness. "Was ever anything so well done?" said Deacon Morris to George West the chorister, on the way home. "You young people could not take offense."

"Take offense!" replied George, "who thought of such a thing? Our pastor has done his duty nobly and fearlessly. I take his gentle rebukes to myself, and you will find me henceforth at the prayer-meeting, and not again at the hall of mirth. The young people are nearly all of the same mind." The deacon was never again heard to say that he feared Mr. Williams would drive himself out of Reddington. He often had to sit on the pulpit steps while the parson held forth the word of life to listeners hungry and athirst after righteousness. The Lord lifted up the light of his countenance upon that church. A refreshing came from his presence. Many of the young people were first "added to the Lord," and then "added to the church."

"I see that I have been in error," said Deacon Morris, as his heart grew warm with piety. "My lax views about worldly amusements helped to make me a very inconsistent professor of religion. We have been a dead church, — dead as Sardis. While some of us encouraged dancing we had no revival of religion. There were not enough members of the church at a prayer-meeting to make a picket guard against the enemy, and Satan came in with all the troop of little foxes that spoil the vines. But what Christian feels like dancing now?"

"A revival is death to that folly," added Deacon Downs, with whom it was no new opinion. "God's Spirit is the certain cure for it."

"And that folly is death to a revival," remarked a good old lady. "Our pastor once saw an increasing interest in the

prayer-meeting. The young people began to attend. A series of meetings was held, but the labor was almost in vain. Satan revived his work, and the work of the Lord ceased. The serious became thoughtless, and for one whole winter our town was given to folly."

"There may be a kind of dancing which is not sinful in itself, but it is a kind rarely practiced. It does not satisfy those who seek pleasure in it," said the parson. "The only kind which is sufficiently exciting is worldly, and damaging to piety. You can not Christianize it, and hence I oppose it." The revived church took the same view.

But there were some who went on in their evil ways. Barney Morris and his companions had resolved to have their spite upon the parson. They made arrangements for a grand ball at the chief tavern in the town. It was to come off on the evening of Washington's birthday, as if that were the fittest time for them to illustrate their liberties. "Spare no expense," said they to the landlord. "Get up a splendid supper; be prepared for seventy-five couples. We will foot the bills." Tickets were sent far and near to be purchased by "the lovers of pleasure."

"I've sent a ticket to the parson," said Barney one day, laughing over the joke.

"But what if he should come to the ball?" replied his friend. "It would be just like him to walk in and look after some of his flock."

"I'll have a man at the door to refuse him admittance."

The next Sabbath Barney felt ashamed of his impertinence, for the parson began his sermon on the text, "Come, for all things are ready," by saying, "When our Lord sends this invitation to a sinner, he has a right to expect him to accept it. It is not always thus with men; they sometimes invite those to their feasts and revelries whom they do not

expect to come. It would be out of place. They invite simply to annoy. But Christ does not mean to annoy the sinner. Why should the godless man be vexed when the gracious call of the gospel is urged upon him? And yet he treats it as an annoyance! How trifling are his excuses!"

The town was full of whispers about "Barney's ball." The evening came. The tavern appeared in unusual style. The landlord was never more smiling, as he stood in the door expecting a demand for his utmost politeness. The new bartender was ready for active service; the former one had been reclaimed through the kindness of the parson. The band were putting their instruments in order. In the dining-room the table was beginning to groan.

"They are rather slow in coming," said the landlord. Barney inquired how many tickets had been sold. The number reported was not encouraging. A large sleigh drove up, but it was empty. Soon all the young people boarding at the hotel took seats in it, and drove away; they had made an engagement to spend the evening at the house of one of the deacons in the country.

"Well, Tom, this is pretty business," said Barney, addressing the favorite of three or four of his clique, who entered the tavern hall. "Where are your partners?" As for himself, he was expected to come alone; his wife was a consistent Christian.

"We could not get a lady in town to come with us," was the frank reply. The state of affairs was becoming quite evident. Four couples came from a neighboring village. Ten young men of Reddington were present, without a lady. It was a one-sided company, and of course there was no dancing. The "wholesome exercise" was not needed. The real motive for the amusement was wanting. Terpsichore being absent,

Bacchus ruled alone over his crestfallen votaries, who had plotted revenge upon the parson and had the bills to pay.

A few months after "Barney's ball" the town was thrown into an excitement because the parson was offered the pastorate of another church. "We can not spare him," said Deacon Morris. "No other man ever had such an influence over our young people, and they are our hope. He can lead them and mold them as he will. And I rather think that some of us older people have been molded into different men. We must keep him, no matter if he has been called to a larger field."

"Can't we make this field large enough for him?" inquired certain of the new parishioners.

"The church is filled already," said Deacon Downs. "He found only a handful of us when he came, and the Lord has so blessed his labors that there is now scarcely room for us all."

"Let us make more room. Pull out one end of the church and enlarge it."

"But we are in debt" —

"What of that?" urged the new parishioners. "We can pay the debt, and add fifteen feet to the building." The plan met with favor. A subscription was started at once, and the needed amount was pledged. Even Barney did not plead poverty on account of the expenses of his late failure. He had been made wiser by his follies, and had resolved to sing bass in a larger church, be a sober man, and be more attentive to his once neglected wife, whose tears and prayers were not in vain.

"It is in my heart to live and die with you," said the parson to his people; and he remained to stand in the new end of the church and preach, while Deacon Morris sometimes sat on one of the pulpit steps and heard the word by which he grew in grace.

THINGS THAT LAST.

LET us now look at some of those things that "will never wear out."

I have often heard a poor blind girl sweetly sing, "Kind words will never die." Ah! we believe that these are among the things that "will never wear out." And we are told in God's own book to be "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another."

The word of the Lord will never wear out. Though the grass shall wither, and the flowers fall away, the word of the Lord endureth for ever. 1 Peter i. 24, 25.

The life of the righteous will never wear out. They will live in the world to come as long as God shall live; but the death of the wicked will last for ever.

The joys of the kingdom of heaven will never wear out. The pleasures of

this world soon die; but the enjoyments of that world will never have an end.

The crown of glory will never wear out. The crown of the winner in the Olympic games soon faded; the crowns of kings will all wear out; but the crown of glory will never fade away. 1 Peter v. 4.

The "new song" will never wear out. We hear sometimes that some of our tunes are worn threadbare; but that will never be said of the new song.

Which will you choose? The lasting, or that which wastes away? the things of time, or of eternity? Will you choose wealth, honor, fame, or the joys of heaven, eternal life, the crown of glory, and the "new song?" May God enable us to make a wise choice; and, with Joshua, may we choose to serve the Lord.

Christian Treasury.