

A FATEFUL PROMISE.

CHAPTER II.

The following night the Gaiety Cabaret was bright with flashing lights, and joyous with the strains of music, as Wilkins and his party drove up.

It was small and very select, and quickly was ushered into the room which the host had reserved.

The ladies emerged from their dressing room, and their appearance was rather a shock to Geoff. He had never seen damsels so lightly clad, nor had he seen such freedom of manners. His mother, though no prude, was of the old school who believed in womanly dignity. The dances became wilder, the conduct more hilarious, as the wine circulated more freely.

Then, at a pause in the music, Wilkins called upon glasses to be charged, to drink the health of the guest of the evening. Geoff filled his glass with water, a little difficult to obtain. His host watched him closely, and said: "Surely you'll drink your good wishes in something warmer than that."

"I'm drinking Adam's Ale," said Geoff, bravely trying to keep up his own courage.

"Adam's Ale," sneered Wilkins, "better call it Eve's Special."

"Let him alone, please," said Mona White, a lovely girl who Geoff had been surprised to see at such a party.

The toast was drunk, and others followed. Modesty had long departed from that scene, and decency was fast following. Dimly, Geoff was feeling what his mother meant by "viewing the scene with eyes undimmed with wine." He saw his chums, flushed with wine, holding in their arms and on their knees, girls who were fast becoming too intoxicated to stand. He even saw Mona Wright with Wilkin's arm around her, going into a side room. She was his sister's friend, and he thought, "I wouldn't like my sister to be in a drunken revel like this."

The glamour of the scene could not blind him to the rottenness that underlay it.

As he stood by the entry, he heard Mona's voice cry out. He rushed into the room to find her struggling in Wilkins' arms, her clothing torn, her hair disordered.

"Oh! Geoff, save me," she cried. "You cur, let her go," and he grappled with the man who held her.

"Don't be a fool," cried the furious host, "You didn't think this was a Sunday School tea party, did you?"

"No! but I did think we were gentlemen!"

Geoff caught the half-fainting girl, and Wilkins launched a blow at him. It missed Geoff, but caught Mona and felled her to the ground, her head striking the corner of the door. Geoff stooped and raised her in his arms; Wilkins tried to snatch her from him; the lights went out, and a quick call of "The Police," sent everybody seeking cover.

Still holding the unconscious girl, Geoff stepped out from the door. Fortunately, it opened into a dark yard, and he escaped the notice of the police.

He saw a party of them driven off from the door, and then all was in quietness.

Then he considered his own position. Here he was, long after midnight, miles from home and with a girl, badly injured, he feared, in his arms. Heartily he wished he had stayed away, and he blessed his mother for the promise she had made him give her. With the thought of his mother came the memory of an old friend of her's, Mrs Cross, who lived in a flat quite near to the Cabaret, and he determined to go there and seek her help.

(To be continued).

AN ENGLISH VICAR'S "DRINK POINTS."

The Rev. George Denyer, Vicar of St. Paul's Church, Blackburn, issued some novel "drink points" in his parochial letter for November. He stated:—

The man who can afford to get drunk is too rich.

The best thing to keep in the beer bottle is the corn.

If you get the best of whisky, it will get the best of you.

The man who tried to drown his sorrow in drink, found that it could swim.

It costs a man more to have a seat in a public-house than to have a seat in the church.

It takes a long time to age whisky, but it won't take long for whisky to age you.

LETTER OF GREETING TO CONVENTION FROM OUR EX-PRESIDENT.

5 Bellevue Street,

Roslyn, Dunedin,

March 11th, 1929.

My Dear Miss Henderson,

Instead of a text as greeting to Convention, I am sending an extract from a three-minute's speech, made at the last State Convention in Boston, by Mrs Cambell, of New York, who was winner in the Competition. She said: "I hope every member in our Unions will wake up and shake up, get up and stay up, and go forth from our meetings determined to sing up and talk up, preach up and pay up, and never give up, let up, dry up, or shut up, until Prohibition is built up." May I add, that after the crushing defeat at last poll, we should accept the above advice, and also look up, read up, work up, keep up, until we march up to ultimate victory.

With best of good wishes and love,

Sincerely yours,

RACHEL DON.

FROM OUR NIUE SISTERS.

The Y^W people have had their meetings on the 27th of February. It was a pretty sight; each village marched into the church. There are ten new ones added on since August. This work is growing, and the young people are keen, and are trying hard to live up to their standard. They render a very good programme. The Alofi Band gave a play: "The Ten Virgins," "The Wedding Garment," "The Prodigal Son," and the "Talents." These were acted by young people. Three girls recited a piece called "Armoured." Hymns were sung by them. They did real well; I was very pleased with them. We will remember you all in our prayers. We have no white Missionary yet.

I must close now, with much love from you Niue sisters in Christ.

Yours sincerely,

MALAMA VAIOLA,

Head.