



### Take the Pledge.

Pray take the pledge and keep it,  
This is surely good advice,  
For the boy who'd win the battle,  
And be free from every vice.

For the world is full of drunkards,  
Who were once boys pure and fair,  
Oh, how sad it is that liquor  
Should have caught them in its snare.

So, as we tread life's pathway,  
With temptations in our train  
Let us leave alone the liquor  
That so muddles up our brain.

And not only leave the liquor,  
But in every other strife,  
Give obedience to the Saviour  
As we go along through life.

Then when our journey's ended,  
And we reach the other shore,  
We will hear God's welcome, saying,  
'Enter in for evermore.'

—'Australian Christian World.'

### The Hexam Show.

(A. L. Noble, in the 'Youth's Temperance Banner'.)

Hexam Centre is a queer, old town in England, as unlike an American town as possible. There are streets of houses built a hundred or more years ago; one lovely great mansion called 'The Priory,' a ruined castle on a hill and three inns called 'The Golden Dragon,' 'The Royal George' and 'The Red Lion.' The first two are quiet, charming little places for travellers; the last has become a rum-hole of the worst sort. One summer a caravan came to Hexam and the children went wild over the posters on fences. Hexam boys all thought an elephant, a camel or one tiger was simply marvellous. This caravan had a few animals, some wax works, a giant and a dwarf.

Three children were almost crazy with excitement about going, for John Hicks had promised little Tom, wee Annie and rosy-cheeked Bess that he would take them and their hard-working mother. It would cost five shillings, or a dollar and a quarter of our money, but he could save it out of his week's wages as a carrier. The show was to be on a Monday, and every day of the week before John heard the children chattering about it. Mary, his wife, had satisfied herself that it was not a low or vulgar performance—not a circus at all. Mary was a careful mother and John a kind father, unless—O the pity of the 'unless'—he had been drinking at the Red Lion. If he did that he neglected work, was unkind at home and the family suffered in every way. The man who kept the Red Lion was a very smooth-tongued, agreeable fellow, who made plenty of money, and so was very jolly and polite. He knew how to wheedle poor men out of their hard-earned wages. This Tom Wilson had three children just the ages of the little Hicks. They always had nice clothes and plenty to eat.

Well, the Saturday night before the caravan was coming John put five shillings on the mantle-piece in a little broken vase; then he told wee Annie for the hundredth time that the 'effelamp' trunk was not like mother's big chest, and he promised little Tom that he should hear the lion roar and see all the animals fed. Sunday the little tots tried their best to be good, not to talk of shows, not to let bears and tigers get loose in their catechisms or their hymns. Perhaps that was one reason their father forgot all about their expected treat and Sunday night got to drinking very hard. It was late when he reeled home, and next morning he was horribly cross, stupid and only anxious to get over to the Red Lion for a drink that would 'set him on his feet again.'

The children did not understand anything beyond the fact that they were to go to the show that afternoon; but when John went out they trailed along after him. While he was getting his drink Tom Wilson came out of the inn and gave his boy three shillings to go with his sisters to the caravan. He nodded to the little Hicks and whistled when Annie cried: 'Papa's going to take us, he is—this afternoon!'

Poor little Annie and poor Bess and her brother! They waited hour after hour for 'papa' who was snoring in a drunken sleep in Wilson's stable. When their mother found the money was gone from the vase she went away and cried herself ill in her bedroom. The little ones crept down a lane and listened to the distant music in the tent. Tom went further, being a boy, but was ordered roughly from the tent door. Their hearts were about broken when the afternoon was gone, their last hope disappointed, and all that remained was to hear the rapturous stories of lucky playmates who had seen the whole.

That night John Hicks having slept off his drunkenness was smoking his pipe in his garden when he heard three pitiful little voices, broken by Annie's sobs, talking over their woes. It was actually the first realization John had of its being the day of the wonderful caravan.

'What a good man Mr. Wilson is,' said Bess. 'I wish he was my papa and I'd have new clothes and treats.'

'Yes, he is rich, too,' said little Tom, 'and he makes it selling drink. I will sell drink some day and get rich and I never, never will promise my children treats and make them stay home when—'

He could not finish. Annie's crying broke out afresh. 'stuff,' pleaded Bessie, 'for that makes other stuff,' plead Bessie, 'for that makes other fathers poor and cross. I heard mamma say so, and she knows, for she cried all this afternoon.'

'Is that why sometimes we is so hungry?' asked Annie, in her sweet little voice.

Now, Annie was her father's pet. He felt a sudden remorse and shame, such as he never felt before in all his life. He had no need of sleep that night, and he thought to some purpose. Tuesday he worked as if he were two men and earned two men's wages. Wednesday morning he gave his wife a bashful kiss and a folded paper—a temperance pledge. She was so happy and so hysterical he had then to tell the children himself that at noon precisely he was going to take them all for a lovely drive to a town ten miles off, where the caravan was, only with a brass band and newer sights. They should have their treat, but, best of all, they should have a kind, sober father from that day on. They did not go perfectly crazy, but mama thought they had, but then she felt almost as excited.

### The Bar of Conscience.

(Happily, in our land the use of alcoholic beverages in the family is not so common as shown in this sketch of city life across the sea, but the temptations are great, so great as to make shipwreck of many a bright young life; so great that every true man and woman should rouse themselves for action and declare that 'something must and shall be done.')

In a room, whose furniture betrayed at once present poverty and past affluence, lay an emaciated young man, whose last sands seemed fast running out. His mother and a younger brother were at his side. The face of the dying youth was like ivory. Great beads of sweat were upon his brow. The minister, under whose care he had been when a boy, had just been engaged in commending his soul to God, and was about to leave, when shaking hands with him, he said:

'Oh, Walter, I am so glad that you are enabled to indulge hope in death; yet to this moment, I cannot conceive how, with all your good principles in early life, you could have been led astray as you have been.'

All appeared grieved at the good man's reference; but he proceeded—'Of all the young men I have ever known, you were the most promising, and the least likely to be led astray.'

An expression of agony seemed to pass over the face of the dying man. His eyes were closed for a few moments; when, looking up

to his sister and mother, they understood him to express a wish that he should be raised up. 'No, Walter!—no!' his mother said, 'you are not able.'

'Gratify me; I am dying!' he said. 'Mr. Ramsay may do others good by a knowledge of how I was led astray; and an hour longer or shorter of life makes little difference to me now. Perhaps I read Scripture less, and prayed less, and realized less of the divine presence, after I left home than before. Many things may have contributed to my first departure from rectitude; but my ruin, you are aware, was effected through strong drink.'

'I know it, Walter, and that surprises me; because before you left home you were so rigid an abstainer. You have refused wine in my house.'

'Yes; I was right at home,' he said, 'but from my earliest years, in this town and elsewhere, I have continually had temptations presented to me to induce me to use strong drink. Even in your own family, as you have mentioned; and of course in others. The licensé that a clergyman takes in cases of this kind, his people will carry out to a far greater extent than his example warrants. Abstinence in a minister will scarcely influence all his people to be temperate; the use of strong drink at all will, in a vast number of cases, be taken by them as a justification of their own intemperance. At home, I was constantly urged to drink as a favor; I was laughed at for not drinking, and sometimes frowned upon. My conduct was ascribed to my inability to use intoxicating drink without becoming a drunkard—to a desire for superiority over my equals—to a mean desire to save money, and many other motives of an unworthy character.'

'Still you resisted all these?'

'Only, perhaps, as a stronghold resists for a time attacks made upon it, each of which nevertheless weakens it and prepares it for its ultimate fall.'

'It should have had the opposite effect, Walter.'

'Yes, that is the general view, I daresay. I think it was my own; but contact with evil, and exposure to evil counsels, do not leave the mind unaffected. The man that has had the fewest temptations to a wrong course presented to him, in my opinion, is the least likely to yield to such persuasives when addressed to him on any new occasion. Practically I have found that, when my mind was not inclined to consent to such inducements, they still haunted the memory afterwards, and exercised a prejudicial influence upon me; and when inclined, the temptation was generally the occasion of my consenting to the evil. The many temptations to use strong drink at home, and the known practice of the best men there, I can assure you, often caused me to falter before I went to my new situation, and I solemnly believe conduced to my ultimately abandoning my abstinence principles, and to my ruin. I blame no one; I am myself the chief of sinners. In commencing the use of strong drink, at every step I violated my convictions of right, and silenced the voice of God within me. At the great judgment, I dare say nothing but "Unclean, unclean! God be merciful to me a sinner!" But, oh, Mr. Ramsay! could nothing be done to take these temptations out of the way of others?'

(To be continued.)

### A Good Temperance Story.

(X-Rays, in the 'Lincoln Leader'.)

There was once a bricklayer's laborer who in former days spent all he could on quenching an alarming thirst. One Sabbath morn the man stood at the street corner looking and longing for a pal to pass and stand him a free drink. His eye fell on a placard announcing that someone was that morning to 'preach a temperance sermon'—not a very alluring way of putting it to a man who had gone to bed intoxicated and awakened with a groan and a grumble. Nevertheless he went, and heard the sermon. Next Saturday night he accompanied his wife to market and they bought a few long strange luxuries. Moody and reflective, he said nothing to his wife; but every evening went home, Saturday went to market, every Sunday went to church. In the end he conquered his habit, and became a thrifty member of society. And the moral is—he now owns eight houses! Another case of buying your own cherries.