

beautiful song she had taught him to sing as soon as he could speak.

"How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!"

Albert made fair promises but soon broke them. He seldom used to think! What a sad habit for a boy!

One bad habit leads to another, and as 'Albert grew up, bad habits grew upon him. His chief delight was to please himself no matter who was the loser. His master could never depend upon him in the workshop, or if he sent him out upon an errand. He soon fell into the idle habit of smoking—and smoking led to drinking—and drinking—to bad, swearing company; and in this way he went on month after month: the ale-house was his constant haunt. Here he spent his evenings, and his money, with a set of wicked companions who did all they could to make him as bad as themselves.

Albert's mother was a widow; he might have been a comfort to her old age; but no, he almost broke her heart; for besides being unkind, he brought her home none of his earnings. The old lady had a brother, a good man, who kept a large shop. He had often talked to Albert, and Albert had as often promised to mend his ways. Indeed he would sometimes stop away from the ale-house and his drinking companions, and drink nothing for a month together; but he had no resolution. He would go to a temperance meeting at such times, and when urged to sign the pledge, would say, "I will do it to-morrow," or "next week," but his to-morrow never came.

Just about this time, the old lady was offered apartments in her brother's house; and Albert, on promise of good behaviour, became a lodger there also. Well, he had not been there a month, before he fell back into his old habits, and often did not return till midnight, or perhaps early in

the morning. His uncle was very much grieved to have such a person in his family, and warned him he must leave the house if he meant to spend the Christmas holidays in that way. That very night he said to his wife, "It is very dangerous to have that foolish youth about us; we don't know what may happen; I really can't let such a worthless fellow come into the house at all hours of the night; this shall be the last time."

It was indeed the last time; for before the sun rose next morning, the house was in a heap of smoking ruins, and the whole family were plunged into distress and poverty. It is supposed that Albert took a lighted cigar into his bedroom, and thus set fire to the house, not knowing what he was about.

Thus did a prodigal son, by idleness and love of strong drink, not only ruin himself for time and eternity, but bring a sober, happy, and respectable family into trouble and sorrow, from which they have not recovered to this day.

One is glad to turn away from the thoughts of Albert's bad doings, and to remember what a noble Band of Hope we have now-a-days. To think of thousands of boys and girls—growing up a sober, useful race—who shall by-and-by be a blessing to the world instead of a curse.

Reader! if you are pledged, be *firm*! Let nothing move you! If you are *not* pledged, do it *at once*, lest you should get into Albert's habits.—Never put off till to-morrow what may be done to-day."

Vain New Year's Wishers.

"I wish," said little Lucy Gray,

As fast as she could speak,

"That balls and parties I could have

This whole year, once a week.

I wish to go to every ball,

And dance the year away;

And bid good-bye to school and books,

And all my childish play."