

SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## The Quiet Hour

YOUNG  
PEOPLE

## WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY.\*

(By Rev. C. MacKinnon, B.D.)

Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, v. 1. Few sights are more beautiful than the bright scarlet tints of the autumn foliage; but there is a true touch of pathos in their probable explanation. The red tints are not, like the yellow, merely the bleached particles from which the green coloring matter has died out; the red is a new stain that has been freshly developed and flushes the little cells that compose the leaf. Chemical experiments have proved that it helps to converse the heat, and so to prolong for a few days the lingering life of the leaf. If this be so, the glorious beauty of the autumn is but the pathetic struggle of the doomed foliage to hold out a little longer against the increasing cold. The "glorious beauty" of the midnight reveler, his songs, his jests, his deeper draughts, what else are they but a desperate effort to keep up the spirits against the cold despair, that, like a blighting frost, is snipping all the bright flowers of the human heart? It is but a false and fleeting glory, a faint flicker before the fire dies out and the ashes are left cold and desolate.

A tempest of hail, v. 2. Yonder lies the prairie, a golden sea of ripening grain. A few days, and it will be gathered into sheaves, filling the farmer's heart with delight, when lo! a black cloud darkens the west. Moving in swift silence, it comes on with irresistible stride. The dumb beast takes warning, and seeks a hasty place of refuge. Man drops his tools, and hastens indoors. A blinding flash of lightning, a crashing peal of thunder, a furious blast of wind, the rattle of heavy hailstones like the discharge of a terrific fusillade, and it is all over in a few minutes. The clouds are gone, the sun shines forth in the glory of a peaceful and transparent sky; but the farmer beholds with dismay his waving harvest leveled to the ground and all the toil and expectation of a summer season gone for naught. He has been "halled out." No more vivid metaphor can represent the fierce judgment of God on sin or its dire consequences. It blasts the fruit of a whole life. It leaves the home desolate and utterly ruins the happiness of the heart. Man is powerless to withstand it. The only way to avoid it is to take warning and find refuge in Jesus Christ. From the tempest of divine wrath against sin, He will safely hide us. Let the storm rage ever so wildly round about us, He will keep us in safety and peace.

Through strong drink are out of the way, v. 7. A Christian missionary had the painful duty of visiting a soldier in India, who was condemned to death for having shot a black man, when in a fit of intoxication. Several prisoners gathered around, and to the request for a Bible answered that they had none. The murderer, however, replied that he once had possessed one and had brought it with him from his native land, but, in a moment of great recklessness, had been tempted to part with it for more liquor. "Oh," he added, "if I had listened to my Bible, I should not have been here." More than that poor soldier have exchanged their Bible for strong drink, though they would have been shocked at the thought of doing it so glaringly. They have preferred the wine cup to the word of God; and their choice has brought ruin to their lives.

\*S.S. Lesson, November 29, 1908. Isaiah 28: 1-13. Commit to memory v. 11. Golden Text.—I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.—1 Corinthians 9: 27.

Snared, v. 13. The southern pitcher plant has a leaf like a conical vault with a hood over the mouth. This hood is full of translucent spots, like little windows. On the outside of the mouth are sweet nectar glands, and the delicious nectar drops from atrail from them down the outside of the leaf. Just inside the mouth, however, there is a glazed zone so exceedingly slippery, that even the delicate foot of a fly cannot hold on to it, but must slide down its sides. Just below this glazed zone is another zone of stiff hairs all pointing downwards. In the bottom of the pitcher stands a quantity of water containing a juice that kills and digests flies. This pitcher plant is said to be fly catcher, and no one will doubt it; but it is not more treacherous to foolish insects, than it is the gilded saloon to the unwary youth who is so ignorant as to enter it. Tempted by its delusive pleasures, he crosses the fatal threshold; he fails; he tries to recover himself; but money and reputation are both gone. Too often he gives up hope, and becomes another victim of drink.

## A VETERAN PASTOR'S PRAYER.

Father, since thou hast plainly promised them, gently constrain us to take the good things of thy grace for granted. Why should we haggle and doubt, and tremble with fear, when thy word is engaged to us? . . . Since we are to die, and since it is a good thing for thy children to die, teach us to be content that the time and way of our departure rest with thee. And, while we thus place our lives in thy hands, much more make it a joy to us to leave our property there. Why should the heirs of eternal felicity squirm over a few dollars which we had planned to use for thee in one way, when we discover that thou hast chosen to take them from us in some other way? Art not thou a good creditor? . . . Father, make us ashamed to fret over anything. The Lord reigns—that is enough; let the earth rejoice . . . And why should we think our satisfaction depends on men, when our inmost souls know it all comes from thee? Suppose friends do sometimes fail; thou dost never fail. Art thou not more to us than all the rest? Suppose we are sometimes sick; have we not before us an eternity into which no sickness can ever come? . . . Teach us, like Paul, in whatever state we are, therein to be content. . . O Father, with the Cross as our pledge, make us sure that we are forgiven and accepted. . . Take away this unseemly strain that debauches faith, impeaches thy credit, and keeps our lives in needless pain. . . Show us how to reserve energy for our own legitimate tasks, and to leave the management of things to thee, assured that the Lord doeth all things well.

## GOD'S LIGHTS.

A little four-year-old girl inquired of her mother one moonlight night:

"Mamma, is the moon God's light?"

"Yes, Ethel," replied the mother. "His lights are always burning."

Then came the next question from the little girl:

"Will God blow out his light and go to sleep, too?"

"No, my child," replied the mother. "His lights are always burning."

Then the timid little girl gave utterance to a sentiment which thrilled the mother's heart with trust in her God.

"Well, mamma, while God's awake, I am not afraid."—Unidentified.

## A MATTER OF BENEVOLENCE.

By Eleanor H. Porter.

The whole house seemed suddenly like a clock and had stopped ticking—mother could not be found, and mother was the pendulum of that clock. Little Ned was fretting over his blocks; Paul could not find his slate pencil; Dorothy wanted her hair combed; father had lost a button off his coat—and they all wanted mother. It was Dorothy who found her, and who came hurrying into the sitting room to tell the others.

"Mother's crying," she gasped. "Crying!" echoed father, springing to his feet. "Where?"

"In the attic. I heard her. She was crying awfully!"

Rev. George Sandhurst did not wait to hear more. With long strides he crossed the room and hurried up the two flights of stairs to the attic.

"Edith!" he cried, a moment later. "Why, Edith!"

The sobs choked into silence.

"I—I didn't mean you should—know," faltered a very small voice.

"Edith, what in the world is the matter?"

There was no answer.

"Edith, dear, you must tell me."

Still no answer; indeed, it was not until after long minutes of urging, half tender, half stern, that the truth came out. Then Edith drew a sobbing breath of misery.

"I've been such a failure!" she moaned.

"A failure!—you?"

"Yes. I did not know it—until last night; then something I overheard—told me."

"You overheard?"

"I know—eavesdropping," smiled Edith, faintly. "But it was quite unavoidable. I assure you, and I heard only that one sentence—but that was enough." She hesitated, and then went on hurriedly.

"It was at the church social last night. I had almost reached the door of the coat-room when I heard Mrs. Jason's voice say: 'Yes, he's a good man, but I'm not sure but we'll have to be making a change, after all—his wife, you know; she's sickly, and we need a young, sprightly minister's wife who will take right hold and help.' Even then I scarcely realized the full meaning of what I had heard until I entered the room and saw their faces when they saw me. Then I knew."

A dull red rose to the minister's brow.

"But, Edith, you're not—sickly," he objected. Even as he spoke he noted the thin cheeks, the drooping mouth and the hollow eyes of the face before him.

"I seem so—to them," she sighed. And lately I've been so tired all the time. There is a limit to my strength, you know, and I've had to plead that excuse lots of times the last few months. There has been so much—the fair, the missionary box, and the Sabbath school concert, besides the regular meetings and sewing circles, to say nothing of sickness here at home."

She stopped, but only for a long, sobbing breath, then went on even more feverishly.

"I'm so tired—so—wretchedly tired. George, I'm so tired I'm wicked! I want to be like that poor woman who said she was going to heaven, and that she was 'going to do nothin' forever and ever. If I could only stop—just a minute—and catch my breath! But I can't. I can't remember when I had a moment to myself. There is always a next thing