

## The Barren Tree.

THERE stood in a beautiful garden  
A tall and stately tree;  
Crowned with its shining leafage,  
It was wondrous fair to see,  
But the tree was always fruitless;  
Never a blossom grew  
On its long and beautiful branches  
The whole bright season through.

The lord of the garden saw it,  
And he said, when the leaves were sore;  
"Cut down this tree so worthless,  
And plant another here.  
My garden is not for beauty  
Alone, but for fruit as well;  
And no barren tree must cumber  
The place in which I dwell."

The gardener heard in sorrow,  
For he loved the barren tree  
As we love some things about us  
That are only fair to see.  
"Leave it one season longer—  
Only one more, I pray."  
He pleaded; but the master  
Was firm, and answered, "Nay."

Then the gardener dug about it,  
And cut the roots apart  
And the fear of the fate before it  
Struck home to the poor tree's heart.  
Faithful and true to his master,  
Yet loving the tree so well,  
The gardener toiled in sorrow  
Till the stormy evening fell.

"To-morrow," he said, "I will finish  
The task that I have begun."  
But the morrow was wild with tempest,  
And the work remained undone.  
And through all the long, bleak winter  
There stood the desolate tree,  
With the cold, white snow about it,  
A sorrowful thing to see.

At last, the sweet Spring weather  
Made glad the hearts of men,  
And the trees in the lord's fair garden  
Put forth their leaves again.  
"I will finish my task to-morrow,"  
The busy gardener said,  
And thought, with a thrill of sorrow,  
That the beautiful tree was dead.

The lord came into his garden  
At an early hour next day,  
And then to the task unfinished  
The gardener led the way.  
And lo! all white with blossoms,  
Fairer than ever to see,  
In its promise of coming fruitage  
There stood the beautiful tree!

"It is well," said the lord of the garden,  
And he and the gardener knew  
That out of its loss and trial  
Its promise of fruitfulness grew,  
It is so with some lives that cumber  
For a time the Lord's domain;  
Out of trial and mighty sorrow  
There cometh a countless gain,  
And fruit for the Master's pleasure  
Is born of loss and pain.

—The Congregationalist.

## When It Began.

"SAY, boys, let's have a temperance society of our own."

It was Saturday morning, and the boys had met at Mr. Parker's shop for an hour's chat. The fact was, that Ben Parker had some beans to shell that morning, and the boys had been up in the loft helping him, and now they were resting outside; resting and whittling. How it does help a boy to rest, if he only has a jack-knife and a billet of wood! They whittled and talked, and if the truth must be told, they cut their fingers, too. At least Jack Carr did, and whimpered a little over it; but then Jack was a little fellow, so they overlooked his whimpering, and the boys pitied him until he was as good as new. They had been discussing the temperance meetings over at Montclair, where Ben had been staying a few days with his uncle. He had attended.

"Yes, I signed; of course I did," declared Ben; "anybody would after hearing that man talk." And then Ben went on to tell the boys all he could remember about the lecturer, the

meetings, the men who reformed, and the crowds which came to the meetings, and at length wound up with the exclamation, "Say, boys, let's have a temperance society of our own."

"I say so too," said Frank Sherman; "we manage to get together pretty often, and we might as we have something to meet for. I go in for any kind of a society."

"All right," said Joe Burch.  
"Come on! Let's go and talk to Grandfather Briggs about it; he will draw up a pledge for us with a lot of flourishes; I don't know any young fellow who can write half as well as grandfather can. And gathering reinforcements by the way the boys soon brought up at a little bird's nest of a cottage, where they were sure of a welcome. The boys were always welcomed by the old couple who lived there. These old people had not forgotten their childhood, and they understood just the kind of talk girls and boys like.

"We are going to start a temperance society," began Ben Parker, "and we have come down to ask you to write the pledge for us."

"Pledge, eh! What sort of a pledge?"

"Why, a temperance pledge, of course."

"But there are different kinds of temperance pledges."

"Are there?" said two or three of the boys in a breath. And Ben added, "I thought they were all alike."

"Hump! Let me read to you what was called a temperance pledge in the year 1808;" and taking an old book from the shelf where were stored a few volumes which appeared to have been well read, Mr. Briggs read as follows: "No member shall be intoxicated under penalty of fifty cents. No member shall drink rum, gin, whiskey, or wine under penalty of twenty-five cents; and no member shall offer any of such liquors to any other member under penalty of twenty-five cents for each offence." There, is that the pledge you want?" said the old gentleman, smiling, as he closed the book.

"Well, not exactly," said Ben; "who ever heard of such an absurd pledge as that?"

"That is the pledge, or at least the substance of it, which was adopted by the first temperance society in the United States. It does not seem much of a pledge to you, but it was a beginning of a great temperance reform which has been gaining ground ever since, though we sometimes think but slowly. The Total Abstinence Pledge was introduced in 1834: it was called the 'tee-total' pledge, and since then temperance societies have for the most part used this pledge."

"Grandpa, do you know why it was called the 'tee-total' pledge?"

"The story is, that a man in England, who stuttered fearfully, in trying to speak the word 'total,' stammered repeatedly over the first letter of the word. Try it and see how it sounds."

Of course the boys were ready to try it, and they will be apt to remember why people say "tee-total."

"What about the Washingtonians?" asked Frank Sherman. "I have heard uncle Philip speak of such a society, I think."

"Very likely you have; your uncle Philip and I joined the Washingtonians more than forty years ago, and I have my pledge now; here it is," producing as he spoke a worn and time-yellowed

card from between the leaves of the old family Bible. "You see it is a tee-total pledge. It is what they call an 'iron clad' nowadays, and I suspect it is what you boys are after. You see 'we do pledge ourselves as gentlemen not to drink any spirituous liquors, wine or cider.' It appears that six drinking men met at a tavern in Baltimore, and somehow the conversation turned upon the subject of temperance, and after some talk they decided to form themselves into a temperance society, much to the disturbance of the landlord."

"Well, it was queer to set about forming a society to undo the work of the man under whose roof they were entertained," said Ben, laughing.

"I believe they did not form themselves into a society there, but adjourned to the house of one of the number, and there drew up the forms of an association. At their next meeting they received two new members, and soon the movement became popular, and thousands were enrolled as members, and auxiliaries sprang up all over the country. Since that time there have been numerous organizations, all having the same end in view—the promotion of temperance. One of the most remarkable in the earlier days of the movement was the Father Mathew Society; and later we have had reform clubs, and red ribbon armies, and blue ribbon bands, and white ribbon unions. I always join everything that comes under the name of a temperance society, so if I write out your pledge you must let me belong. I signed the first tee-total pledge, and maybe yours will be the last one I shall have an opportunity to sign. So you'll let me, won't you?"

"Of course we will," cried the boys all together.

"And make it strong," said Ben Parker.

"Put in tobacco," said Joe Burch.

"And profanity," added Frank Sherman.

Now I rather like the ideas of those boys. What do you think about their plans?—Lover.

## Autumn.

BY REV. HILARY BYGRAVE.

Now the shadows lengthen early,  
And the birds that with us stay  
Ill at ease and anxious seeming,  
Sing not as they do in May.

For the wind suggests the keenness  
Of the Winter days so nigh,  
And the trees stand bare and lonely,  
As the leaves drop off and die.

Now the squirrels are most busy,  
Whisking here and leaping there;  
Gleam their colours in the sunlight,  
Sounds their chatter on the air;

And with cheerful toll and wisdom,  
Lay they up their winter store,  
'Gainst the time when snow will cover  
Sheltered wood and open moor.

Now the denseness of the forest  
Lessens as the days speed by,  
And, in search of game, the sportsman  
Listens for the quail's lone cry.

And church steeples in the distance,  
And towns lying far away,  
And the blue lake, gleam before us,  
That lay hid for many a day.

Oh! when summer's day is ended,  
And the strength of spring is spent,  
And the frame of man so sturdy  
'Neath the weight of time is bent,

May not man pass like the Autumn,  
Fading out in colours rare,  
And from heights of contemplation  
See a future large and fair.

## Kind Words.

"KIND words can never die." But if this were not equally true of unkind words our world would be far happier. Kind words are like the oil and the wine of the good Samaritan; unkind words are to the soul as nitric acid to iron. Most unkind words affect at least two souls—the one uttering them and the one hearing them. With the former rest their most withering and dwarfing effect. A thousand times better to be the one for whom harsh words were intended than the one uttering them. He who can restrain his anger and control his tongue under severe provocation is a hero. "You may tame the wild beast, or check the wildest conflagration in the American forests, but you can never arrest the progress of that cruel word which you uttered this morning."

## Unconscious Influence.

It is said that among the high Alps, at certain seasons, the traveller is told to proceed quietly; for on the steep slopes overhead the snow hangs so evenly balanced that the sound of a voice or the report of a gun may destroy the equilibrium and bring down an immense avalanche that will overwhelm everything in ruin in its downward path.

And so about our way there may be a soul in the very crisis of its moral history, trembling between life and death, and a mere touch or shadow may determine its destiny. A young lady who was deeply impressed with the truth, and was ready, under conviction of sin, to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" had all her solemn impressions dissipated by the unseemly jesting of a member of the church by her side as she passed out of the sanctuary. Her irreverent and worldly spirit cast a repellent shadow on the young lady not far from the kingdom of God. How important that we should always and everywhere walk worthy of our high calling as Christians.—Rev. T. Stork.

## Finger-Marks.

A GENTLEMAN employed a mason to do some work for him, and among other things to "thin-whiten" the walls of one of his rooms. This thin-whitening is almost colourless until dried. The gentleman was much surprised, on the morning after the chamber was finished, to find in the room white finger-marks. Opening a drawer he found the same on a pocket-book. An examination revealed the same marks on the contents of a bag. This proved clearly that the mason with his wet hands had opened the drawer, and searched the bag, which contained no money, and had then closed the drawer without once thinking that any one would ever know it. The "thin-whitening" which happened to be on his hands did not show at first, and he probably had no idea that twelve hours' drying would reveal his wickedness. As the work was all done on the afternoon the drawer was opened, the man did not come again, and to this day does not know that his acts are known to his employer. Beware of evil thoughts and deeds! They all leave their finger-marks, which will one day be revealed. Sin defiles the soul. It betrays those who engage in it by the marks it makes on them, though these may be invisible at first.—The Voice.