

Weekly



Visitor.

Devoted to the interests of the several Temperance organizations.

Vol. X.

{ PUBLISHER AND PROPRIETOR, }
P. H. STEWART.

Entertainment, Improvement, Progress. &c.

{ OFFICE—81 YONGE ST., TORONTO. }
BOX 500 P. O.

No. 11.

One Dollar a Year.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 1866.

Four Cents per copy.

FRANK NETHERTON, OR THE TALISMAN.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TIME OF TRIAL.

HOWARD took the first opportunity of being alone with Frank, to thank him for his kind forbearance, and assure him of his utter ignorance of the whole transaction beyond the fact of his having borrowed and lost the un-

“Then why were you so anxious that your name should not be mentioned?” asked Frank.

“Because, because,” replied Howard, bursting into tears, “no one believes what I say—not even you now; but indeed, indeed I am innocent this time.”

“I do believe that you are,” said Frank, holding out his hand, “and I am glad from my very heart. But you must allow that it did seem strange.”

“Not at all strange. No one really suspects you—and even Mr. Campbell himself; I am sure of that. Whereas, had you mentioned having lent the pencil-case to me, it would have been useless for to have denied the theft, or utter a single word. I should not have been believed. They know me to be a liar; and that I am always in disgrace, and doing something wrong, or would only have laughed at and despised me.”

“But you have not been in disgrace, or told an untruth for a long time, have you, Howard?” asked Frank, kindly.

“No; thanks to you.”

“Thanks to God, rather.”

“Yes, I mean that of course; but I must

thank you also. I did begin to think I was getting on better.”

“And I do think and hope that you are.”

“O Frank! none but a coward would have acted as I have done. I deserved that you should hate me.”

“On the contrary, I pity you very much, and am willing to stand your friend. After all, it does not signify, as Hamilton says; the truth is sure to be found out before long.”

“I would give anything to know who took the peaches,” said Howard; “and how the pencil-case came to be dropped just there.”

“We shall know all in good time,” replied Frank, cheerfully.

Time, however, wore on without any further discovery being made. It was evident that the majority of Frank's school-fellows; whatever they might have thought at first, began to regard him with mistrust and suspicion. They no longer sought his society, or cared for him to join in their amusements.

“If it had been any one else,” said they among themselves—and somehow every word was sure to reach Frank's ear—if it had been any one else he would have been punished long since; but Mr. Campbell's eyes will be opened at last. I am glad that he is found out, and all such canting, hypocritical fellows. I told you from the first how it would end. Those who preach most generally practice least.”

It is recorded in history, that when Catherine de Medici was told of an author who had written a violent attack upon her, she exclaimed, with tears—“Ah! if he did but know of me all that I know against myself!” It was with something of this feeling that Frank listened to the reproaches of his school-fellows.

But when they came to attack through him the religion which, amidst all his faults and shortcomings, he so loved and revered, it was a bitter trial indeed, and hard to bear.

“If this is all the good that reading the Bible does,” said one, “he had better leave it alone.”

“Those who talk so much about religion are sure to be the worst,” added another.

“The greater saint, the greater sinner!” observed a third, with a laugh, in which there were several found to join.

For once, Frederick Mortimer refused to side with the majority; and his affectionate sympathy was a great comfort to poor Frank. Doyle and Claude Hamilton also continued unchanged. Howard pitied Frank, and despised himself; but he wanted courage to do what was right. He kept apart, and was miserable. His Bible—his talisman, as he called it—remained untouched. He dared not open it. Things might have been different if he had. It is often thus; sin and sorrow, instead of driving us to, appear for a season to keep us from the only true source of comfort. We feel unworthy to open our Bibles—unworthy to pray, to take the name of God upon our lips. We forget that Christ is worthy; that he died for us. We forget that even if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who came into the world to save sinners. We put away the lamp—David's lamp, as Frank once called the Bible—and sit in darkness. Prayer, so sweetly termed by the good Lady Warwick ‘heartsease,’ is abstained from and we are miserable. Feeling ourselves to be sinners, we reject, through our unbelief, the all-forgiving Saviour. No wonder if we stumble in the darkness, and go wrong; no wonder if our hearts ache; no wonder if we are unhappy.

Frank deeply felt the change in Mr. Campbell's manner towards him; a change in part assumed to hide his real feelings. He had seen a great deal of Frank during his long ill-