

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### "NO DANGER FOR OUR GIRLS."

"There is no danger for our girls. Even if assailed by temptation, their honour as women would be like a coat of mail to them." This was the answer of a Christian mother when urged to give her influence against social drinking among the young, in what is called "society." Has, then, the enemy of all good signed a quit claim to the characters and souls of our girls any more than to those of our boys?

In a fine, brown-stone mansion on one of New York's most fashionable avenues, there lived, a few years ago, a gay and wealthy family, surrounded by everything their taste demanded of the beautiful in art and the luxuriant in style. They were the centre of a fashionable circle, and life was one round of amusement with them.

The head of the family drank a great deal of wine; but he "drank as a gentleman," taking his glass before breakfast, at dinner, and in the evening—and as much oftener as he desired it. But no one had ever seen him stagger, so he felt perfectly safe, and said he was "man enough to take care of himself." It was a hard fight to do it, however.

His father, he said, had used the same freedom, and his grandfather before him; but he forgot to tell that both of them overstepped the bounds of "a gentleman's freedom," and went down to drunkards' graves.

Wine was always on his dinner table, and was pressed upon his guests, especially on New Year's day, when it flowed as freely as water. His golden-haired little daughter, with a brow like the lily and cheeks like roses, always took her glass at table, and often called for more. Indeed, the proud father boasted more than once to guests that she was as good a judge of wine as he himself. But she was a girl, so he saw no danger. Alas, poor man, he forgot the dreadful inheritance she had received from her ancestors—the viper that kept him continually fighting to keep his honour "as a gentleman" before the world. But for him it might never have sprung to life in her breast.

When this pet of the household was seventeen years old, she was in a fashionable and yet admirable boarding-school, from whence there came occasional complaints of her disregard of rules, and her great wilfulness. The last and most serious one was of her gathering a company of young girls in her room while the teachers were sleeping, and feasting them on confectionery and champagne which made them all ill the next day. When reproved she had braved the matter out, saying that she could drink three times as much as she gave them without feeling it. This sad story closed with a request that she might be removed from the school, as those in charge dreaded her influence over her fellow-pupils.

The father only laughed, and said: "Blanche will have a good time wherever she is!"

The mother was deeply mortified lest their friends might talk about it, but she was not terror-stricken at either the danger or the sin of her child.

On her return home the young girl announced that she was now old enough to leave school altogether, and that she intended to do so. Her parents yielded to her importunity, and she was now ready for "society."

Then began a course of gaiety such as few girls so young ever ran. Exciting company, late hours, and improper dress soon told on her system. The roses faded from her cheeks, she lost her appetite, and her nervous system became thoroughly unstrung. She would mingle her sobs and her laughter together, till it was evident that she was a victim of that most unpitied of all diseases—hysteria. Then came that fashionable ailment, a name applied to almost any form of weakness, "nervous prostration;" and the physician ordered, what were already in constant use, wines and champagne!

It was not long before they found that their prescriptions were not the limit, but that she took wine when and where and in just such quantities as she chose. The parents soon found that in her walks she took lunches with wines at fashionable restaurants. A maid was thenceforth sent out with her, but she was soon bribed into deceiving the now anxious parents. Her place was filled with one more faithful;

but she was maligned and charged with theft; and such was still the influence of this erring daughter, that she secured the girl's dismissal without a recommendation. For the honest discharge of her duty this good woman was sent forth into the world to earn her bread with a shadow on her name.

Before Blanche W. was twenty years old she had more than once openly disgraced her parents and brought shame on her own womanhood.

The passion for wine soon became a passion for strong drink of any kind, and grew upon her so that, tender as her parents were, they were often obliged to confine her for days in her own room, under lock and key.

During one of these attacks—which seems like the assault of a demon—when not even a servant was allowed access to her, her mother found her, one morning, perfectly insensible from strong drink. Where the spirits had come from was a mystery soon solved, for by her pillow lay a half-pint cognac bottle with a long cord tied around the neck, and on it an apothecary's label—"Brandy."

She had doubtless watched from her window for some suspicious-looking passer-by, lowered the bottle, with money for brandy, and the commission for getting it, and asked to have it fastened to the cord again, in the darkness, so that she could draw it up.

Home restraint was an utter failure, and we next heard of the poor girl in a country parsonage, under the care of an early friend of her mother.

But although every possible entertainment was provided for her—books, magazines, music and embroidery within doors, and saddle horse, pony and phaeton without—she grew very restless and unhappy; and one day called for her bonnet and shawl, as she was going home!

These articles had been, according to her mother's orders, kept under lock and key.

After gently entreating her in every way, but in vain, the lady said: "Wait till to-morrow, and I will go with you, Blanche."

"I don't want you," was the rude reply of the poor, half-distracted girl, as she flew to her room, and threw herself upon her bed in a flood of angry tears. She cried herself to sleep, and her friend, hoping much from the soothing effects of rest, turned the key softly in her door, and sat up all night, dozing in a chair, to attend her when she should awaken.

What was the surprise of Blanche's friends in the morning to find her bed empty, all her clothes left, and only her money and valuables gone! On her table lay a scrap of paper, upon which was written:

"I go by the midnight train. I thank you for your kindness, and beg you to forgive me. I would do right if I could. You are a good and just woman; let me ask you this question: Is it not cruel as the grave to entail a passion on a child, and then restrain her—like a criminal—for indulging it? Pity me. I have no control over myself, but am dragged down by some power too strong to resist. Ruin lies right before me."

Alas, who knows the strength of the fetters with which that unfortunate girl was bound?

We can imagine the anguish of her parents at the sorry plight in which she presented herself at the door of that proud mansion the morning after her flight.

A year after this, a lady, visiting an insane asylum in another State, met Blanche there in a luxurious room, surrounded by everything that love or money could supply. She had been admitted "as a subject of melancholy in danger of injuring herself"—oh, how true!—and was undergoing medical treatment there. She assured her visitors—to whom she was most courteous—that she was not insane, and never had been; but being the victim of a nervous disease, her friends had cruelly sent her away from home, to be taken care of by strangers. The restraint here was too strong to be broken, and with occasional attacks of hysteria and melancholy, she remained a year; when her parents took her home, with strong hope that her trouble was all over.

Again in the world, she looked about for old friends and associates. But where were her friends? Where was "society?" Who of all the butterflies—belles and beaux who fluttered around her before public scandal had darkened her fame—cared to be seen with her now? Not one of these hollow-hearted children of fashion took her by the hand to lead her away from sin; very few of them knew her when they met her in the street.

Neither she nor her parents were in either health or

spirits to gather a fresh circle around them. They had no resources within themselves, and the house soon assumed the gloom of a sepulchre. The father drowned his sorrow and disappointment in more wine; the mother was tearful and gloomy, and both were crushed by the tantalizing remarks of their faded and wretched child: "It is all your own doings; you gave me wine from my cradle, and laughed when I called for more. I wish you had killed me instead."

A few wretched months went by, and the pallid girl of twenty-five years, with threads of white among the golden curls, was missing, and these parents, weary of life, were seeking for her, and, as far as we ever knew, in vain.

Is there no danger for our girls?

Only a few years ago, the mistress of one of the finest mansions in a suburban town, after ruining herself, and breaking the heart of her husband, and scattering her fortune, was lost to her family for years; and was finally restored to them—a poor comfort—from the Boston Police Court, whither she had been taken as a vagrant and a common drunkard!

Within a year a granddaughter of one of our Presidents—once a beauty and a belle in Washington—long estranged from and finally lost by her family—died in the garret of a wretched tenement house in Sullivan street, New York.

Is there no danger for our girls, as well as for our boys?—*Mrs. Chapin.*

[The facts of the above "over true" tale have had, and are having, their counterparts everywhere—quite as much in Canada as in the States—and yet fathers and mothers, friends and acquaintances, are continually putting temptation in the way of thoughtless, excitable girls, with the same foolish, inexcusable persuasion that there is "no danger." Danger! there is more danger with the girls than even with the boys, and the wreck, when it comes, is worse because more hopeless.—*Ed. C. P.]*

### ONE WHO TRIED TWO MASTERS.

"Do I believe in Jesus? Ay, sir, that I do, with all my soul, heart, mind and strength. I believe in Him, I love Him, and I mean to serve Him to the very best of my ability for the balance of my days."

The speaker was not a well-matured Christian, not by any means the type of a "perfect man in Christ Jesus;" on the contrary, it was only for a little while that he had begun to serve Jesus at all; and his very countenance was scarred and seamed by the sins of his former life. But he had come to a halt—had considered his ways, and "with full purpose of heart" had turned to the Lord. In this new life he was quite as much in earnest, quite as resolute and determined, as he had ever been in the way of evil.

I saw him first as he presented himself a candidate for Church membership, and when asked if he "believed in Jesus," with a look of mingled surprise at the implied doubt, and of joyful assurance that lighted up his whole face, he gave the answer quoted above.

Then, springing to his feet and facing the congregation, he added, "How can I help believing in One who has broken the fetters of sin that had bound me fast for so many years, and made a free man of me; One who had rooted out the terrible, burning thirst for liquor that was consuming me, body and soul, and given me in its stead a longing for Himself, His forgiveness, His everlasting love, and His blessed service? Don't talk to me about antidotes, or pledges, or any thing of the sort. They may be well enough for some men, and I don't doubt they have done a great deal of good in the world; but mine was a desperate case. I had lost all power over myself, the Evil One led me captive at his will, and nothing but Omnipotence itself was strong enough to break the evil yoke. Worse than all, I had lost all hope of myself, and ceased to make any effort to restrain my wicked propensities. I knew I was far on my way to perdition, but I was too hardened in sin and too stultified by strong drink, to be very much troubled either by my guilt or danger, till I was struck down, as was Saul of Tarsus, and like him had my eyes opened by Almighty power. Then I fell on my knees just where I was, and cried to God to save me from myself, and help me to come to Him. I saw my sins as I had never seen them before; I felt all my unworthiness, all my weakness, all my utter inability even to come to the great, merciful Saviour. I saw waiting to help and to save me. So I cried aloud, 'O Jesus, Master, save me in spite of myself; put out the hand and snatch me from the Evil One who