

A Litany of Pain.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

At times, when my pulses are throbbing
With currents whose feverish flow
Sets all the strong spirits a sobbing
With nameless yet passionate woe,
I question with feelings that falter,
I murmur with lips that complain,
"What profit to lay on God's altar
Oblations of pain?"

"Can He, in the infinite goodness
That floods all His being with light,
Complacently look on the sadness
That dares to intrude on His sight?
Can He, in His rhythmic creation,
Attuned to the chant of the spheres,
Bear the discord of moans, the vibration
Of down-dropping tears?"

"Would I, a mere woman, foreseeing
Some anguish my dearest must face,
Not guard, at the risk of my being,
Its onset, or die in his place?
And yet, can the Father who loves me
With love that's supreme, foreknow
That soul-wrench impending above me,
Nor ward off its woe?"

Be quiet, poor heart! Are the lessons
Life sets thee so hard to attain
That thou know'st not their potent essence
Lies wrapped in the problem of pain?
Even Nature such rudiment teaches;
That birth-throe presages the breath;
The soul, so high destined, reaches
Its highest through death.

No beaker is brimmed without bruising
The clusters that gladden the vine;
No gem glitters star-like, refusing
The rasp that uncovers its shine;
The diver must dare the commotion
Of billows above him that swirl,
Ere he from the depths of the ocean
Can bring up the pearl.

And He who is moulding the spirit,
Through disciplines changeful and sore,
That so it be fit to inherit
The marvellous heirship in store—
He measures the weight He is piling,
He tempers the surge with a touch,
There'll not be a graze of His filling
Too little, too much.

O heart canst thou trust Him? For sake of
Attainments the noblest, the best,
Content thee awhile to partake of
These trials so wisely impressed;
Nor question God's goodness, nor falter,
Nor say that thy service is vain,
If He bids thee bring to His altar
Oblations of pain.

The Result of Gambling.

BY MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

AT LAST! at last! There are precipices at the end of the rapids, in such courses as "our boy" has been running, more dreadful than Niagara.

Better, far better, the short agony of that wild race down the roaring rapids, and that one dizzy plunge, that finishes all, than those worse plunges that destroy all that a young man has to hope for in life, yet leave him living.

There are dreadful hours when men live only because they cannot die.

This poor fellow has been gambling. He is hopelessly involved, and the tempting whisper is ever at his ear—"Win and pay back!" One fortunate throw may redeem all. He hears among the lobby-members of the gambling-house of those who have won dazzling piles of money after hard runs of ill-luck. He is a teller in a bank, and tempting opportunities offer every day to take the money that will give him one more chance. *Not to steal*—no, indeed—but to borrow! Did the devil ever ask a well-brought-up youth to steal? Not he! Simply to borrow enough to turn his luck with, and he will put it all back before the time for settling accounts.

Borrowing of the bank, he calls it, and he curses with hard words the

false friends that will not help him. Nobody cares for him, he thinks, and he must care for himself; and so, from time to time, he keeps on borrowing. He could not stand this kind of life were it not for his daily drinks of brandy. That makes things look brighter and more hopeful, and dulls his senses to the roar of the coming cataract.

But the time of settlement of bank accounts is coming, and still his luck does not turn. Pray to God! he dare not; and the devil only laughs at his cries. He thinks of the agony of detection, of the shame and disgrace impending. What shall he do? The whisper comes: "*Forge a check. Why not!*" He can imitate writing cleverly, was always a skilful penman. He will do it. He does it; and here, to-day, the artist shows him standing, pale, agonized, detected, before the board who are met to examine the accounts of the bank.

There stands the same boy that left his country home so well-meaning, so beloved, and so happy. Behind him is the detective and the handcuffs, at the door the prison van, while the president of the board holds up the forged check.

Where are the respectable friends who first helped him to wear off his country greenness at select little suppers?

They are perfectly shocked at such revelations of depravity. Who would have thought of his turning out such a scamp! "What a mess he has made of it! The fellow was a fool—a weak-headed fool!"

Yes, he was weak-headed and weak-hearted, and he tried to walk where the strongest heads often turn; and you beguiled him to walk there. You laughed before him at the idea of total abstinence. You boasted before him of your manly powers of touching and tasting everything and never getting upset. You untied his boat, and helped him paddle it into the rapids, and then stood safe on the shore and saw him go down. You never did anything to hurt yourself? Possibly. But how many will be lost by being beguiled to do what you think you can do in safety, and they cannot do at all?

Come, now, boys, let us settle one or two things as absolute certainties when you start in life:

He who *never* drinks *never* will be drunk. That's so—isn't it? He who sometimes drinks, may be.

He who *never* goes into a gambling saloon never will gamble; and he who never gambles, never loses; but

He who goes to observe may gamble; and he who gambles will surely lose.

In all these things is it not best *not to begin*; and would not our country boys have done better to have started with a firm, positive "No!" instead of the treacherous "We'll see!"

He has seen, and seen a great deal too much; and in nine cases out of ten that sort of seeing ends in this way.

Beware of innocent beginnings in wrong ways, and remember the old text we started with:

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are THE WAYS OF DEATH."—*Hearth and Home.*

WHAT is it we all like to possess and yet always wish to leave behind us?—A good character.

Religious Progress.

In the first 1,500 years of the history of Christianity it gained 100,000,000 of adherents; in the next 300 years 100,000,000 more; but in the last 100 years it has gained 210,000,000 more. Please make these facts vivid. Here is a staff. Let it represent the course of Christian history. Let my hand represent 500 years. I measure off 500, 1,000, 1,500 years. In that length of time how many adherents did Christianity gain? 100,000,000. I add three finger-breadths more. In that length of time how many adherents did Christianity gain? 100,000,000. In the 300 years succeeding the Reformation, Christianity gained as many adherents as in the 1,500 years preceding; but I now add a single finger's breadth to represent one century. How many adherents has Christianity gained in that length of time? 210,000,000 more. Such has been the marvellous growth of the Christian nations in our century that in the last 83 years Christianity has gained more adherents than in the previous eighteen centuries. These are facts of colossal significance, and they cannot be dwelt on too graphically or too often. By adherents of Christianity I mean nominal Christians—that is, all who are not Pagans, Mohammedans, or Jews. At the present rate of progress, it is supposed that there will be 1,200,000,000 of nominal Christians in the world in the year 2000.

Break, Break, Break!

BREAK, break, break,
On the cold, gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Oh, well for the fisherman's boy
That he shouts with his sister at play!
Oh, well for the sailor-lad
That he sings in his boat on the bay.

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But, oh! for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.

Break, break, break,
At the foot of the crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

—Alfred Tennyson.

Our Concert.

BY JIMMY BROWN.

THERE is one good thing about Sue, if she is a girl, she is real charitable, and is all the time getting people to give money to missionaries and things. She collected mornahundred dollars from ever so many people last year, and sent it to a society, and her name was in all the papers as "Miss Susan Brown, the young lady that gave a hundred dollars to a noble cause and may others go and do likewise."

About a month ago she began to get up a concert for a noble object. I forget what the object was, for Sue didn't make up her mind about it until a day or two before the concert, but whatever it was, it didn't get much money.

Sue was to sing in the concert, and Mr. Travers was to sing, and father was to read something, and the Sunday-school was to sing, and the brass band was to play lots of things. Mr. Travers was real good about it, and attended to engaging the brass band, and getting the tickets printed.

We've got a first-rate band. You just ought to hear it once. I'm going to

join it some day, and play on the drum; that is if they don't find out about the mistake I made with the music.

When Mr. Travers went to see the leader of the band to settle what music was to be played at the concert he let me go with him. The man was awfully polite, and he showed Mr. Travers great stacks of music for him to select from. After a while he proposed to go and see a man somewhere who played in the band and they left me to wait until they came back.

I had nothing to do, so I looked at the music. The notes were all made with a pen and ink, and pretty bad they were. I should have been ashamed if I had made them. Just to prove that I could have done it better than the man who did it, I took a pen and ink and tried it. I made beautiful notes, and as a great many of the pieces of music weren't half full of notes I just filled in the places where there weren't any notes. I don't know how long Mr. Travers and the leader of the band were gone but I was so busy that I did not miss them, and when I heard them coming I sat up as quiet as possible, and never said anything about what I had done, because we should never praise ourselves or seem to be proud of our own work.

Now I solemnly say that I never meant to do any harm. All I meant to do was to improve the music that the man who wrote it had been too lazy to finish. Why, in some of those pieces of music there were places three or four inches long without a single note, and you can't tell me that was right. But I sometimes think there is no use in trying to help people as I tried to help our brass band. People are never grateful, and they always manage to blame a boy, no matter how good he is. I shall try, however not to give way to these feelings, but to keep on doing right no matter what happens.

The next night we had the concert, or at any rate we tried to have it. The performance was to begin with a song by Sue, and the band was to play just like a piano while she was singing. The song was all about being so weary and longing so hard to die, and Sue was singing it like anything, when all of a sudden the man with the big drum hit it a most awful bang and nearly frightened everybody to death.

People laughed out loud, and Sue could hardly go on with her song. But she took a fresh start, and got along pretty well till the big drum broke out again, and the man hammered away at it till the leader went and took his drum-stick away from him. The people just howled, and Sue burst out crying and longed to die in real earnest.

When things got a little bit quiet, and the man who played the drum had made it up with the leader the band began to play something on its own account. It began all right, but it didn't finish the way it was meant to finish. First one player and then another would blow a loud note in the wrong place, and the leader would hammer on the music stand, and the people would laugh themselves 'most sick.

There wasn't any more concert that night, and the people all got their money back, and now Mr. Travers and the leader of the band have offered a reward for "the person who maliciously altered the music"—that's what the notice says. But I wasn't malicious, and I do hope nobody will find out I did it, though I mean to tell father about it. —*Harper's Young People.*