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THE PROUD YOUTH.

BY Y.-L.E.

One lovely evening in the autumn of 1837, the family of Mr. — were met together around the happy fireside of their own home. The meeting, although a pleasing one, had in its composition a somewhat melancholy tinge, for the oldest son, a clever and promising young man, was about to take his departure for the English metropolis,—to throw off the restraints of parental supervision, and enter into a new world, with a proud heart as his companion.

Haldane had been religiously brought up, and although his ideas of self-government would not brook his taking the teetotal pledge, yet he had never witnessed, unless in a case of sickness, a single drop of intoxicating liquor administered to a solitary member of his father's family. In the houses of neighbours or friends he had occasionally tasted, and as no evil consequences had resulted from this course, he felt confident that he had sufficient nerve and moral power to keep so till his dying day. His father, who knew the world from experience, thought differently, and had frequently urged, with all the force of a father's love, that his son should yield to a wiser head, but the attempt was of no avail. This it was that deepened the melancholy of the present meeting; for the parent well knew that hundreds had gone forth from their early homes, as thoroughly determined as Haldane to act with propriety, but had fallen to the lowest depths of degradation, because they depended more on their own strength than on the God who made them.

The father, mother, six daughters, and two sons, composed the family circle; and throughout the length and breadth of the county of Forfar, no happier domestic community could be found. On the present occasion, the feelings of the parents were raised from earth to heaven. Hitherto, the God of their fathers had led them in peace. Death had not yet stretched out his hand to snatch even one little one from them; and as they looked around on their healthy children,

the richest incense, from the altar of their hearts, ascended in an unbroken strain to God, for his manifold mercies and great goodness.

"Haldane," said the father, after they had adjusted their seats, to enjoy the last evening's instructive family conversation it was their lot ever to enjoy; "Haldane, you leave your father's house to-morrow. You are about to enter upon a strange path. London, with all its greatness, is rife with wickedness of every kind. As yet I have nothing more evil to lay to your charge, than building your strong tower on your own self-confidence. In the opinion of the world, this may be lightly esteemed; but in the opinion and experience of Christians, to whose advice I would ever have you pay homage, it is an evil of great magnitude. It has been my endeavour early to impress on the minds of all my children a knowledge of their responsibility to God. Often has it gladdened my heart, when you, Haldane, were but a prattling child, to hear how readily you answered the first question in Watts' catechism, 'Who made you?' This fact has therefore grown with your growth, and I hope it will strengthen with your strength; and those who firmly believe this truth, see it their duty and their interest to humble themselves in the sight of Him who is their Creator and Preserver. To be proud of heart belongs to the character of an infidel, and not that of a Christian. Humble yourself, Haldane, for it is only those who do so that can be truly exalted. Depend not on your own strength; but, under all your trials and afflictions, depend on God. Throw all your confidence on Him, and he will sustain you."

The emotions of the father were apparent, for he held his handkerchief to his eyes, and a breathless silence pervaded the group. In a moment or two the old man was composed, and he continued.

"There is another subject, my son, on which I wish to say a word or two, for you will soon be beyond the reach of your earthly father's voice. The subject is temperance. Young as you are, you have seen some of the evils of the fearful vice of drunkenness. Around you, in this our native village, your own mind can revert to scenes of sorrow and suffering, caused by this self-sought scourge. There is much of this vice abroad in the great city to which you are going. There are many paths there to lead the unwary and unsuspecting to ruin. You may not think so now; you may not think so even when one of the paths is entered upon; for the consequences are hid:en by gilded decorations, which, when the hand of truth and righteousness is brought into contact with them, they crumble with the touch into a mass of hideous rottenness. Companions will surround you, and urge you forward into scenes of wickedness; and if you have nothing to lean upon but your own sinful heart, you will find that only a sorry fortress to withstand the attacks of Satan. You are not addicted to strong drink now; you have formed no love for it; it will, therefore, be no sacrifice for you to abstain altogether. The opinion you have formed that it would degrade you to sign the pledge, is erroneous and foolish. I have frequently requested you to sign before, and now, on the eve of your leaving, it may be, for ever, I ask you again: it may be my last request. Haldane, will