

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

TEMPERANCE LESSON.*

The Drunkard's Photograph.

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? v. 23. This is the drunkard's photograph, and it is a sorry spectacle. He was not always so marred and scarred. Once he was pure as the morning dew, had ability, education, ambition and bright prospects. But a change came over him. He became unhappy, irritable and quarrelsome. He lost his ambition, his ability became a thing of the past. His education went for nothing. His friends began to say regretfully, "How changed he is! He is no longer the kind, helpful, wholesome one we loved so much to meet. What has made him like this?"

The Reason Why.

They that tarry long at the wine, v. 30. This is the explanation of the photograph. Strong drink, secretly indulged in, wrought the ruin and fitted the man to sit for the drunkard's photograph. The young fellow who uses strong drink is not wanted to-day in the employment of any business that requires a clear head and a steady hand; for "failure" is written over the life of the one who trifles with the intoxicating cup. One of the cleverest inventors of recent years sat for the drunkard's photograph. The first bicycle ever built was his invention, and the manufacturers became rich from the sale of it. The first chain bicycle was also his invention. The link-belt chain used in large manufacturing plants was another. The man said, when he became a homeless beggar, "I have no one to blame but myself. I destroyed myself with liquor. I have lost my friends, my money, my health, in the wine cup. Miserable is my condition, and the cause is drink."

How to be Safe.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, v. 31. The only perfect safety from alcohol is steady total abstinence. Refuse to begin using it, and keep refusing, and you are safe. It has been said that, of all the essences, the devil likes aquiescence best. Dr. Nansen, the Arctic explorer, was a guest at a great dinner at Munich. The wine was there, according to custom, but Nansen was not partaking. To draw him out, a man said, "Did you take any alcohol with the sledges?" "No, I did not," said Nansen, "for if I had, I should never have returned." Dr. Lorenz, the great surgeon, has similar views. At a dinner given him in this country, he pushed away the wine glass, and asked for a cup of tea. "Are you a teetotaler?" he was asked. "I am a surgeon. My success depends on a clear brain, firm muscles and steady nerves. No one can take alcohol without blunting his physical keenness, which I must keep on edge. As a surgeon, I must not drink."

The Finished Product.

At the last it biteth like a Serpent, v. 32. Alcohol is a chemical substance, which, if taken into the stomach, gets into the blood and brain, and produces certain effects. At first, in some cases, there is an exhilarating effect that

seems to be desirable. The next time this exhilaration is wanted, you must take a larger quantity of the chemical, and then the last effects begin to appear. What are these? Well, if you put vinegar into milk, you cannot stop its curdling. If you throw stones into a threshing machine, can you keep the knives from breaking? In the same way you cannot keep alcohol from giving you at last a red nose and bleared eyes and trembling hands, and a cruel heart and a lying tongue.

Cruel Sport.

Thine eyes shall behold strange things (Rev. Ver.), v. 33. Not because they want to, but because they cannot help themselves. I was once summoned to the home of a man who had begun to feel the "last" effects of liquor. He was in a cheerful room that gave evidence of refined taste in the one who arranged it. On the walls were the home pictures the man once loved to see. The books he had prized were on their shelves in the corners of the cozy place. Scarcely had I entered, when, with a shriek he rushed from his chair, saying a snake was hanging before his eyes. Then he cried out that the walls were hung with leering demons and the bookcases filled with toads and snakes. From every corner and part of that quiet, lovely place, "strange things were looking at him, threatening him, biting at him, stinging him. He was a helpless hulk with whom the "invisible spirit of wine" which is the devil, was making cruel sport.

Past Redemption Point.

I will seek it yet again, v. 35. In spite of all entreaty, in the face of all dangers, trampling on prostrate living friends and promises made to the blessed dead, the alcohol slave says, "I will seek it yet again". His condition is hopeless, for his moral sense is atrophied, his bodily senses are numbed and stupefied, he has no self-respect, his manhood is gone. Only a power outside himself can save him. He is like a man on a wagon, who has lost the reins, and the horses are tearing madly to destruction, unless some one interpose to stop them. The power of alcohol is no mere opinion of the uninitiated. Those who have suffered most from it are the most vehement in warning against it. It is as mighty to destroy the great as the obscure. Judges, bankers, editors, authors, legislators, ministers, have fallen before it. Up to a certain point they are able to resist; beyond that they are like a boat above Niagara, when it passes Redemption Point.

The Way to Poorhouse.

I will seek it yet again, v. 35. A man met a ragged creature on the highway. Once the ragged one had been rich, respected and eminently useful in good work. He was staggering along with a bottle of liquor under his arm to the poorhouse where he was sheltered. But he had lost his way, and to the man he said, "Can you tell me the way to the poorhouse?" "You have it under your arm, my poor fellow," was the reply.

Stronger Than Mother's Love.

This heart-rending incident comes from an old-world city. A doctor had been summoned to see a sick girl in a poverty-stricken home. The patient lay moaning on a bed of rags. The mother stood by; her tattered clothes and blotched cheeks telling their own tale of drink. The doctor perceived at a glance

that the girl's life could be saved in only one way. With skilful hands, he inserted the little silver tube in her throat that enabled her to breathe freely. Then he went away, promising to return next day. He came back, to find the girl dead, and the silver tube gone, —pawed by the mother for drink!

The Enemy of the Best.

A well known literary man writes: "I have not failed to observe that all the drinks from lager beer to brandy dull the edge of self-criticism and make a man content with something less than the best work of which he is soberly capable. He thinks his work better, when he is really only more satisfied with himself."

Take the Pledge.

It is on behalf of these drunkards that I appeal to you; and for the sakes of their little sons and of their little daughters, and for the sake of those myriads of white young souls which are being trained in our schools. Remember, gentlemen, I entreat you, that the drunkards of to-day are not the drunkards of to-morrow; their ranks, as they are daily thinned by death, are daily recruited by those who as yet are not drunkards. If I knew that in this hall there were but one youth or man who would fall hereafter into this horrible abyss, then I should feel it would be well worth the sacrifice of every one of us taking the pledge, if by so doing we could save that one.—Dean Farrar.

THE DAY OF POWER.

God limits His power by our wills. He does not do all that He might do except as we will to let Him. The more our wills conform to God's, the greater become the possibilities of God's power in and through us. Therefore it is that the Psalmist, looking forward to a day of triumph for God and His people, sings, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power;" or, as the Revision gives it, "Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of Thy power."

When we are all yielding our wills wholly to God's control, His power will be revealed in its full richness and blessedness. But no child of God needs to wait for others in thus experiencing the day of God's power.—Sunday School Times.

NO FAILURES IN GOD'S SERVICE.

There is sometimes a man who, like Peter, has done a wrong deed that seems to blast his life, to cut him off from all possibilities of service; and he is going back to the fishing boats because, as Peter felt, he feels it is not worth while to try any longer. He has failed. But hear that word of the Lord to Peter, "Feed my sheep." He never forgives half way. He trusts him again, puts back into those stained hands, cleansed by forgiveness, the work of the kingdom of God and says: "Peter, you failed that once, but that does not mean you will have to stay down. Get up again. You will still be the leader of the church. Feed my sheep, tend my sheep, feed my lambs, do my work."—H. E. Fosdick.

Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content, and a hundred virtues which the idle will never know.—Charles Kingsley.

*S.S. Lesson, March 29. Proverbs 23: 29-35. Commit to memory v. 31. Golden Text.—At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. —Proverbs 23:32.