

The Telephone

A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF TEMPERANCE.

Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.—EXODUS, 14:15.

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WITHERED LEAVES,

BY "SISTER RUTH."

"The rustling leaves send forth a sigh,
For loves and hopes that early die."

"Sometimes we learn more from a man's errors than from his virtues."

Harold was the only surviving son of wealthy, indulgent parents. Three other sons had been given, but early gathered home—bright, but delicate leaves were they, with such a slender hold on life, and upon the parent stem. One sharp frost, followed by a chilling wind, was sufficient to detach them, and softly bear them down to the tender bosom of mother earth, to be sheltered forever "from storm and from cold"—before the cruel canker worm could find entrance, to mar the perfection of God's most beautiful creation—a little child. What wonder that the wounded hearts of the parents turned with almost idolatrous affection, to their first-born, only living son. He was a beautiful boy,—so delicate his complexion, so regular his features, people often said "Harold is too pretty for a boy."

Bright, as he was beautiful, it was his mother's pride (when he was only four years old) to have him dressed in velvet with rich laces, and brought into the drawing room to be admired and carressed by visitors, when

he should have been sleeping in his crib. His childish remarks and bright "sayings," were laughed at and commented upon by thoughtless friends, thus early administering to his vanity, injuring the tender mind, as the late hours injured the delicate body. When the little eye-lids grew heavy, and nature asserted herself, often a "little sip" of wine was given, "Not enough to hurt the baby, only to wake him up." Poor little Harold! Poor foolish parents, they had not learned to "think on these things," they did not believe in "inherited tastes," nor that such a drop could harm the child; could create a thirst for more, and when the boy grew old, and would care fully drain the partially emptied wine glass, after guests had departed, his mother languidly declared she believed that "Harold was really learning to like wine;"—how she would scorn the idea that her boy might, some day, learn to like it too well.

What unreasoning mortals we are! With an open Bible which tells us that "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise;" with living examples, and fresh proofs every day, of the misery of those who are "deceived thereby," still we shut our eyes and think that our boys are safely guarded by their home surroundings, by our love and care, and heed not the dang