

## THE PRICE OF A DRINK.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

"Five cents a glass!" Does any one think That is really the price of a drink?  
 "Five cents a glass," I hear you say;  
 "Why, that isn't very much to pay."  
 Ah, no, indeed; 'tis a very small sum  
 You are passing over 'twixt finger and thumb;

And if that were all you gave away  
 It wouldn't be very much to pay.

The price of a drink! Let him decide  
 Who has lost his courage and lost his pride,  
 And lies a grovelling heap of clay,  
 Not far removed from the beast to-day.  
 The price of a drink! Let that one tell  
 Who sleeps to-night in a murderer's cell,  
 And feels within him the fires of hell.  
 Honor and virtue, love and truth,  
 All the glory and pride of youth,  
 Hopes of manhood, the wreath of fame,  
 His endeavors and noble aim—  
 These are the treasures thrown away,  
 As the price of a drink from day to day.

"Five cents a glass!" H-w Satan laughed,  
 As over the bar the young man quaffed  
 The beaded liquor, for the demon knew  
 The terrible work that drink would do;  
 And before the morning the victim lay  
 With his life-blood swiftly eluding away;  
 And that was the price he paid, alas!  
 For the pleasure of taking a social glass.

The price of a drink! If you want to know  
 What some are willing to pay for it, go  
 Through that wretched tenement over there,  
 With dingy windows and broken stair,  
 Where foul disease like a vampire crawls,  
 With outstretched wings o'er the mouldy walls

There poverty dwells with her hungry brood,  
 Wild eyed as demons for lack of food;  
 There shame in a corner crouches low;  
 There violence deals its cruel blow;  
 And innocent ones are thus accused,  
 To pay the price of another's thirst.

"Five cents a glass!" Oh, if that were all,  
 The sacrifice would indeed be small,  
 But the money's worth is the least amount  
 We pay; and whoever will keep account  
 Will learn the terrible waste and blight  
 That follows that terrible appetite.

"Five cents a glass!" Does any one think  
 That this is really the price of a drink?  
 —N. O. Christian Advocate.

## ERNEST ADLER.

BY MARGARET E. WINSLOW.

National Temperance Society, New York.

CHAPTER VIII.—A NEW CREATURE.

In the life of the months that followed, to Ernest Adler all things had indeed become new. A new bodily and mental vigor had taken possession of him, and he felt a thirst for heroic achievement, which would have done honor to any knight of Round Table fame; a new love had sprung up in his heart passing that of woman, yet intensifying that which had only lain dormant for mother, wife, and children, and seeming in the warmth of its early glow to consume all the pleasure seeking selfishness which had stood at the root of the sad ruin of his life; a new purpose was forming itself, even the devotion of himself, with all the rich powers of his life and being, to the service of the Friend who, by the sacrifice of Himself, had wrought this great deliverance for him. No wonder that the sun shone as it had never shone before since the days of the bright, happy boyhood of the Professor's son; no wonder that an utter loathing of past scenes, past pleasures, and past indulgences took the place of the old cravings, and that he boldly asserted everywhere that the old appetite was totally and forever removed.

For Ernest was not one to live his new life in secret. The enthusiasm of his excitable nature was at once in a white heat, and on every possible occasion, in public and in private, he was again and again telling the story of the wonderful grace that had rescued him. Such men are very valuable upon platforms and in evangelistic meetings, and his "testimony" was eagerly sought, and when delivered, was followed constantly by visible and wonderful effects. Ernest had all the qualities of a popular orator. Who could tell with such thrilling paths the horrors of a drunkard's career,

or so mark the contrasts of the wonderful deliverance, or so earnestly point to the great Deliverer? The superiority of the college-bred gentleman, in both natural gifts and superadded culture, to the majority of "reformed men," who form the stock speakers of "Gospel Temperance meetings," the caused him at once to be in great requisition by those conducting such meetings while his sympathetic nature and personal acquaintance with the helpless, degraded condition of the slaves of appetite, made him extremely popular with the classes for which they are held; and so in the brief space of a few days, a sight was seen with which we have of late become very familiar, namely, the sudden exaltation of a man, but just now a practical infidel, or worse, a pleasure-seeker, a debauchee, a tramp, to the platform or rostrum; to stand forth as a leader, and to fight in improved armor and with unfamiliar weapons against the most terrible enemy, whose forces are organized with the most consummate skill that this lost world has ever known.

We are already beginning to reap the harvest of this injudicious haste on the part of well-meaning friends of the cause, and the end of it is not yet. The records of a "temperance movement" in more than one of our large villages and towns, show that town less advanced in Temperance sentiment and action than it was a decade ago, because the "evangelist" who conducted it "fell," became intoxicated, was dishonest, or in some way proved himself unworthy, and so brought dishonor on the cause he represented. The "reformed" element is, doubtless, a very valuable one in carrying on temperance work; but it is one which needs extreme care and discrimination in its employment, that the Scylla and Charybdis of injury to the individual, or to the public, may be safely passed by.

But so far Ernest Adler stood his new elevation very well. In the first place it was no great elevation to him. He was so far above his audiences in social condition, gifts, and culture, that the position of teacher was natural to him; he was by nature exactly adapted to his work, and enjoyed it intensely, and as flattery and adulation had surrounded his childhood and boyhood years, he was but breathing his native air when rounds of enthusiastic applause greeted his lively sallies and fervid exhortations, and when gray-headed philanthropists and warm-hearted, enthusiastic women pressed his hands and thanked God for having given him to their work. Moreover, as yet quite unselfish, the pure spring of grateful love for the Saviour who had rescued him was swelling up in the young man's soul, and urging him to the rescue of the other slaves who lay bound and helpless in the dungeons from which he had so happily escaped. For, although his wife's said New England family were doubtful as to the genuineness of a conversion which was not the happy result of a long preparatory process, and his own father looked upon unordained preaching as all but sacrilege, Ernest could not but know that he had found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write—found him all, and more than all, that He had been represented, and his glad "first love" for this Friend and Deliverer could not but pour itself out in words.

"In my days," said old Deacon Winthrop, Marion's father, "we used to hear much about 'law work'; a man was 'under concern' a long time, especially if he had been a great sinner, and then, when he 'indulged a hope,' it was always such a trembling one that he didn't dare to say much about it. I don't understand this easy way of getting into the kingdom."

"But you see how much Ernest has changed, father," said Marion; "he isn't the same man at all, and you always maintained that in the covenant of grace it did not make the least difference whether a man was a moralist or a murderer."

"Yes, yes, I know," said the old man, "we'll see; but I should have liked a more regular conversion."

"I am glad our scapegrace boy has come to his senses, as he says he has," said Professor Adler to his wife, "and renounced those rationalistic opinions. He was too carefully indoctrinated in Church teachings to hold them long. I hope, too, he'll keep to his resolutions and stop drinking, at least in an ungentlemanly way. But the boy must be mad to get up on platforms and speak, as they tell me he does, about re-

ligion too. Who authorized him to preach? It is one of those wretched American ideas, so subversive of all law and order, that laymen, and even worse, laywomen, can teach religion as well as those who have been regularly instructed for and trained to the work. I must write an essay for the *Quarterly Review* of our Church; even our own people are becoming infected by the popular heresy, and are opening Sunday-schools both here and at home."

But the poor little Professor's wife was too feeble to enter into controversy. The anxieties and sorrows of the past ten years had been too much for her, and she lay now on that couch which she should never, with her own volition, leave again. God alone knew the struggles and sufferings of those years—the weary heart-sinkings of apparently unanswered prayers, the mysterious mother and child sympathy with the conflicts, agonies, and degradation of her only boy which told so much upon her waning life forces and the bitter stabs of his ingratitude when impatient of her reiterated exhortations to repent; he ceased even to answer her letters. Through all she had prayed on in unflinching faith, though often with clouded hope, and when the glad news came, it was almost harder to bear than the sorrow had been.

She lay back quietly and happily upon her bed praising God for the answer to her life-long prayer, and Ernest's enthusiastic "testimony" received its first check in a summons to Harton, where he arrived, for the first time since his expulsion from college, just in time to join in his mother's prayers of thanksgiving, and to hear her say, with another of the aged saints:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

The meeting between the Professor and his son was cordial, and the bereaved old man needing consolation just then, it was sweet in the long-absent son to give it. But as the weeks wore on, it became evident that even the repentance of the present can not quite undo the work of the past; that is the saddest part of sin.

Ernest's late conversion, though the knowledge of it softened and sweetened the last hours of his mother, could not restore the lost life and vigor which, but for his evil doings, would have been hers; and to his father he was almost a complete stranger.

The man, broken and enfeebled by his excesses, intellect weakened, brilliancy dimmed, a few gray threads among his locks, and many wrinkles on his forehead, was not the boy of eighteen in whom were centered all his hopes of distinction, who had gone away from him in disgrace. He loved him, and was, of course, glad of his reformation if it were such; but he was not quite sure that it was. Had he not promised reformation again and again, especially at the time of his marriage, and what had come of it? Besides, there was something derogatory to the family dignity in the character of a "reformed man," which Ernest persisted in making prominent on every occasion; the total abstinence principles, and the zealous religiousness—fanaticism, the Professor called it—were constant jars to his taste and his old-world ideas of the fitness of things, and it soon became apparent that the Professor and his prodigal son would be happier and love each other better, if the latter, at least, continued to inhabit a moderately far country. So Professor Lawrence and his wife moved into the desolate house, the household wheels resumed the regularity of past years, and Ernest went back to B—, his family, and his chosen work.

John Lawrence believed fully in the happy conversion of his unfortunate brother-in-law. He had never been able to see how a long delay in accepting the proffered mercy of the Lord did honor to that mercy, nor in what way a protracted period spent in self-study and self-effort fitted any soul to receive that which is offered without money and without price. He had always felt that the one thing which such a nature as Ernest's needed to steady it and enable it to walk safely amid life's many temptations, was the omnipotent grace of God obtained and held by living faith. Accordingly, his first letter of congratulation had been warm and sincere, and each succeeding one had been joyful, sympathetic, and entirely devoid of the assumed superiority of advice-giving; so hard for young Christians, with as yet undeveloped grace, to

receive with due humility. Only once—in reply to a letter in which Ernest had asserted his complete emancipation from the power of his old enemy, and recounted instances in which he had followed some lost ones through their usual haunts and snatched them from before the very death-dealing bars themselves, feeling only a contemptuous loathing for the fascinating poison there displayed—he had said:

"Don't be quite so confident, Ernest; you are mortal and the tempter is still unchanged. Look unto Jesus, that you be not led into temptation, and remember the word of Inspiration: 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.'"

Ernest was puzzled by this letter. He could not be hurt by it, for he had known too long and thoroughly the manly, brotherly heart from which it came. But that he could need such a caution seemed incredible. Had he not "looked unto Jesus," and in answer to that look received pardon, peace, and a new manhood? Was not the old appetite as he believed utterly taken away? What cause could there be for fear now? He saw none and felt none. He was saved, blessed be God! and now he would turn his attention to the salvation of others.

One other loving heart believed thoroughly in Ernest, in spite of the many times she had believed in and been disappointed by him before. Marion's joy was unbounded, and the past wretched years all forgiven and forgotten; she was soon busy with plans and preparations for the happy life to come. Ernest had been fortunate in at once securing a situation where the work, light enough to suit his weakened powers and the salary sufficient to support another modest little home, he had still afternoon and evening hours at his disposal to give to the work to which he devoted his life. In this new home he soon established his wife and two little ones—the younger almost a stranger to "Papa," and the happy wife and mother did not grudge the long evening spent with her little ones, while her other self—was away upon his missions of mercy; like his Master, "going about doing good."

"God is awfully good to me," Ernest said to one of those who had been instrumental in his rescue, at the close of a meeting one night, "his little girl lay with her flushed cheek against his shoulder, her blue eyes closing sleepily, and her bright curls touching his beard. With one hand locked in his was a sturdy fellow, the very facsimile of the young professor who came to Harton, so long ago, and behind the group came the mother, in whose face new-born happiness was fast smoothing out the wrinkles, and brightening the eyes that had so nearly faded away with weeping."

"God is awfully good to me, the most unworthy of all his prodigals. I had all but starved to death on the husks, and lo! He hath given me the fatted calf, and the sound of music and dancing is perpetually within my home and my heart. What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me and mine?"

CHAPTER IX.—"HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH."

The writer would gladly close this true story with the last chapter. It would be pleasanter to those who read only for amusement, and would agree better with two prevalent theories—the one which teaches that such is the natural nobility of human nature, especially of those generous natures which are popularly supposed to accompany a proclivity for drink, that if the will can only be enlisted on the right side, it will certainly accomplish the work of reformation; the other—standing on a totally different basis—that, since the grace of God is omnipotent, it can destroy the appetite for liquor (whether inherited or acquired) by a word, so entirely, that its victim may be as careless concerning it henceforward as any other man in whom such an appetite has never existed. The first theory scarcely needs refutation at this advanced stage of public opinion. It begs the question, for it is the weakening or even total destruction of the will-power, where lies the extreme difficulty of reformation; and, moreover, if it be true that originally noble and generous natures are those which fall easiest prey to the temptations to excessive drinking, it is equally true that these qualities are soonest withered by the fiery breath of the drink-demon, and there is on