

NOT HIS MOTHER'S FACE.

BY MARY B. BALDWIN.

It was only a hospital groan! That was not anything unusual, and why should it be expected to attract particular attention, among the doctors and the nurses, in a place where the walls seemed designed to echo suffering sounds.

But this was a new groan. The surgeons had been busy with a fresh subject that morning, and had taken up their instruments and departed to other duties.

"It's a chance if that last subject pulls through," they had remarked, and one gentle-faced woman among the corps of nurses had h-and it, and her mild blue eyes had been dimmed for a moment at the thought of the suffering one who seemed little beyond boyhood.

She hovered near him all that day, and the sight of his face was pain to her. His right limb had been amputated. The surgeons had done their work well; hundreds of times right in the same room they had performed the same operation, upon patients who had gone away at last from the hospital seemingly as sound as ever, but for the lost limb. Then, why not expect the same from this last subject?

I will tell you. Jim Hurdie had kept no resources of strength in reserve, upon which he could count in a great physical emergency. He had, in fact, overdrawn; he had, through nights of dissipation, and days of reaction, undermined his constitution, so that any assault of disease would easily take the citadel of his life.

"It will be a quick consumption," the new doctor said to the new nurse. "Poor, poor fellow!"

The doctors usually did not have time to say much about hospital patients. Generally they hurried away after the fewest professional words possible.

The hospital really was a very unpleasant place, and why should they stay when other patients awaited in pleasanter homes their ministrations. Perhaps it was because this was a new doctor that he found time to say a word out of his regular professional line of duty—I cannot say as to that; and perhaps it was because the woman with the gentle face was a new nurse that she had a tear for the young man. I cannot tell that, either. But I can tell that about a week after the amputation, the new doctor, in his rounds, stopped several minutes at the bedside of the young man, and when he left, there were tears in his eyes, and he said to the nurse, "I was obliged to tell him that the chances are against him—that he cannot live. He would have the truth, but it is so hard to tell a young person that he must die! You had better talk with him, Miss Devine."

That very afternoon the nurse had her talk with him, and learned his story. "You see there are some things I want righted," he said, "and now that I know I can't live, I must ask some one else to try and right them. I've been a dreadful boy myself; I know it now. I've lost money and time and all through drink; but there's one thing—I've no family to disgrace. My father and mother and sisters are dead."

"My father was a gentleman; and my mother—if she had lived, I couldn't have gone wrong; I think; of course I couldn't expect other mothers to look after me, but I used to think, sometimes, if a woman who seemed something like what my own mother was, could have said a word to me, I could have been saved."

"But I didn't find many women, many mothers, that came up to my idea exactly. At last I had a friend and I loved him so much that sometimes it seemed I could have died to save him harm."

"I had begun to drink then, I don't think my friend knew it, and I said nothing at first, to lead him to suspect it, for I felt I could not do without him then—he was all to me!"

"But about his mother—I went there once, and as soon as I set my eyes upon her, I said she has a face as sweet and gentle as my mother's was."

"She was very kind to me, too; and I longed to tell her all my faults and temptations, so that I might get a word of help and comfort from her sweet, womanly lips, for I had no doubt she had them ready for me, she seemed so like my mother."

"It might have been a month after that night, that I had a night of intoxication—I, so young and so proud."

"I did not go to my place of business for

a week. I was very naturally discharged from my position. I don't blame them, I said to myself, they are men, they haven't woman's tenderness and pity!"

"Oh, how bitterly I thought of my folly, and repented in a way, too, and made resolutions to do better!"

"Oh, how I longed, then, to see my friend and tell him all."

"He did not come to me, he does not know where to find me, I argued, my worship for him made me reason that way."

"When I, at last, found a new position, I made up my mind that I would go to my friend's house, and even if I found him cold toward me, I felt sure the sweet-faced mother would interpose a word for me."

"I remember how excited I was as I rang the bell that night. The servant left me to wait in the parlor—my friend Ned wasn't home, but I had asked for his mother."

"Soon I heard footsteps, and the lady stood before me. But how was I shocked to see no look of love for me, no hand of welcome held out, but instead an expression of hardness, and almost of hatred."

"I am almost ashamed to tell how I pleaded to be taken back into the old friendship, how I begged for one word of pity and love, and received nothing but scorn from first to last."

"I ran down those steps and out into the street, not really in my right mind."

"Maddened by my disappointment at not receiving what my soul had day and night hungered for—cursing the woman; cursing my own folly that had led to it all—I vowed then to have vengeance."

"It was an awful oath—but I swore I would be revenged, through my friend. If I could not be allowed to go up to him, he should come down to me. I would not be separated from him! It should be heaven or hell for us both, which, I did not seem to care."

"It took months to accomplish my purpose, and then I had the satisfaction of being near my friend, of hearing his loved voice. Again and again we met at a saloon; we drank together, we smoked, we spent our evenings this way."

"Then, one night he was taken home, an intoxicated young man."

"I saw his mother once after that, and the change in her face told what the trial had been."

"They removed to another city soon after, and I was left to mourn my loss, and to sink deeper into sin, and this broken leg witnessed to my last drinking day, and you know all the rest."

"The eyes of the listener could not hold the tears that had long been welling up, and they dropped one by one, some falling upon the bright hair of the sick man."

"You are exhausted now," she whispered; "another day you can finish."

"But he shook his head."

"I must say all now; I may not stay long. I want to tell you that even before I came here and was free to think as I ought to about my life, and all, that I began to get terribly that I had led my friend into wrong, and his poor mother's face has haunted me. Many a time in my sober moments I said to myself, 'I will write to her and tell her how sorry I am.' But I would remember her look of scorn, and I had not courage. After I really began to take hold of the promises that you read to me, you seemed from the first to know just what I needed. I felt if only I could be sure Ned would believe too, that a dreadful sinner can be saved, I should be so happy; for somehow I've been thinking since his mother scorned me, that she might not know how to lead a sinner."

"I will write," said Miss Devine, as he finished. "I will write to her to-day."

Each morning for a week the rapidly-failing hospital patient asked with eager voice:

"Have you heard?"

At last a morning came so bright and beautiful that it could not seem that its day would carry death as well as life in its bosom.

The young man did not ask if there was news in the morning. He asked his loved nurse to read again the penitential psalm; and as she finished, he pressed her hand saying:

"You have helped me to die in peace."

Then his mind began to wander, and he seemed to be living over the past.

At last the light of reason shone again in his face. He lifted his head, and looked toward the door, as if expecting some one.

The door opened, two persons advanced to the bedside.

"Ned!" he cried, as he lifted his hands, and the words were almost a shout.

The mother of Ned pressed close to the dying one. He looked into her face but whether what he saw there, or whether a gentle voice calling to him from over the border, brought the answer, "Mother," to his lips none could tell.

And so he passed on to peace. And his friend Ned closed his eyes with the Christian's hope in his heart. But the woman, in losing a blessed opportunity, had lost for her own crown a soul that might have been the brightest jewel in it.

She had lost it because she neglected her opportunity, a blessed one, of using her mother tact, and love and pity, to save one of the many unfortunate ones to whom gates of interpenance are opening at every turn. What mother will find here a lesson—*Church and Home.*

BOYS AND GIRLS' TEMPERANCE TEXT-BOOK.

BY H. L. READE.

(National Temperance Society, New York.)
LESSON VII.—ALCOHOL AND THE HUMAN STOMACH.

Besides a sedative, what is an effect of alcohol when taken into the animal body?

A first effect of alcohol when taken into the animal body is, to produce what is called irritation.

What is irritation when applied to the animal body?

Irritation is an unusual action in any of its parts.

How is irritation in any part of an animal body caused?

Irritation in any part of the animal body is caused by contact with what is both disturbing and injurious.

How is it known that alcohol, when taken into the animal body, produces this irritation?

We know it from the character of alcohol itself, to which may be added the demonstration of universal experience. Suppose this irritation is continued by the frequent use of alcohol, what follows?

One of two things follows: either the mouth, and throat, and stomach lose sensibility, or irritation is followed by inflammation.

What is the consequence of the loss of sensibility in the stomach and in the organs leading to it?

Much of the natural pleasure that comes of taking common, healthy food and drink is at an end.

What is inflammation? Inflammation is the pain, redness, heat and swelling, caused by an irritation of any part of the animal body.

Does inflammation always follow irritation?

It does, unless the cause that produces the irritation is removed.

WHY THE BOOK-KEEPER STOLE.

He had a wife; his salary was \$2,500 per annum. But she complained; she wanted a better house, better clothes—nothing fit to go out in, no country cottage, no carriage, nor front pews, nor society; she coveted a place on the ragged edge of the select 500. She kept it up, night and day, and moaned and groaned and growled and wept.

He lacked style, also; as well as new clothes every six weeks, and various other things.

He knew how his employer made several hundred daily on the street; a thousand or so would not be missed for a few hours.

So he took it, went upon the street, and won, and she got her scalps. He took it, again, and lost; more to get that back, and lost; more yet, defalcation discovered; he wears the Penitentiary check—others are going to. Beware! If you lose, society will sit down on you.

Beware! Better is a modest room up two pairs of back stairs, than a cell in the Tombs; and a plain woollen jacket—rather than a pair of prison uniform pants on poor Charlie's legs.—*Graphic.*

IT ISN'T NIGHT YET.

Two ragged, hungry-looking, shelterless tramps lounged at sundown near an iron railing in the heart of a great city. They were overheard to wonder where they should spend the night. "Never mind," at length said one, "it isn't night yet."

Alas! the unnumbered needy, shelterless, hopeless souls abroad—prodigal wanderers from Father's home—who know, by dread forebodings, their coming hour of darkness and need, but who show no higher wisdom than this: "Never mind; time enough; it is not night yet." But isn't it high time to get ready for the night? For many a soul already the dark shadows begin to gather in the places where, for years, they have labored and laughed and sung in the sunlight. Whatever is to be done at all must be done quickly. The night cometh in which no man can work.—*Morning Star.*

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes.)

February 11.—Acts 4: 1-14.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. "The rejected stone." I have heard a story of one of the stones cut out for Solomon's Temple, that being of a curious and peculiar shape, it seemed to have no place in the building. They tried it one place and another, but it did not fit, and finally they threw it one side. During the years the temple was building it became covered with moss and rubbish, and was the laughing-stock of the workmen as they passed by. But when the temple was almost completed, and the multitudes were assembled to witness the dedication, enquiry was made for the top-stone, the crowning beauty of the whole. They found it in this despoiled and neglected stone; they lifted it to its place amid shouts of joy, and it became the crown and glory of the temple. So it was with Christ. So it will be with the doctrines and principles of Christ. So too the greatest heroes will be found, not on historic fields, but on the silent battle-fields of the heart. The truest martyrs are often those crucified on unseen crosses, and burned with invisible flames in our cottages and villages. But their crowns and white robes and golden harps will come at last.—P.

II. "Christ the power for salvation." Dr. Chalmers bears testimony that for years he preached morality in the village of Kilmenny, without any perceptible effect or reform in morals. He heard of no one made better or more honest. Yet he preached with all his masterly eloquence. After a time Chalmers was converted, and began to preach Jesus Christ; and immediately there followed all those moral reforms he had sought for in vain by the preaching of morality without Christ.—P.

PRACTICAL.

1. Verse 2. We must expect opposition from the enemies of Christ.
2. Verse 4. Persecution does not destroy but increases the converts, as the wind does not put out the fire, but makes it blaze brighter, and scatters the fire-brands far and wide.
3. Verse 8. Christ fulfills his promise to the letter.
4. Verse 10. Jesus Christ is the wisdom and power of God.
5. Salvation makes whole, entire, complete, what sin maims and destroys.
6. Verse 11. Whatever is true and right however despised and unpopular, will at length become a crown and a glory.

"Though night's forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne; Yet that scaffold sways the future, and within the dim unknown, Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."—LOWELL.

7. Verse 12. Salvation is only through Christ. No other has power to save.
8. Verse 13. True and deep religion gives courage and character—is an educating, elevating power.
9. If we belong to Christ it will appear in our lives and character.
10. We are changed into the likeness of Christ, by abiding with him.
11. Verse 14. The good effects of Christianity are the unspeakable argument.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Christ the power of God can be deeply impressed by this lesson. (1) We see his power in times of trouble and persecution, vers. 1-4, adding all the more to the Church; (2) we see his power in giving aid to his disciples, vers. 5-8, fulfilling the promise to Peter of courage and right words; (3) he is the power in the salvation of men, vers. 9-12, the only name by which men are saved for this world and the next; (4) power in changing character, vers. 13, 14, making his disciples like himself.

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