

THE SABBATH-SCHOOL.

THOSE DREADFUL BOYS.

BY MARY E. C. WYETH.

(Continued.)

"How did you get on?" asked the superintendent nervously, as the classes were filing out. The boys were near. They heard Mrs. Lyste's reply.

"Oh, we're skirmishing along the line. We'll fall in ranks pretty soon. We're bound to come out all right. We've a lot of enemies to conquer, but we mean to win the battle. This class is going to distinguish itself."

"Caesar!" whispered Rob Denslow, "I should say it had done that, if she did but know it."

And then they all got out upon the street and were a shade less dreadful than on the previous Sunday.

The next Sunday and the next found teacher and scholars coming into closer harmony. The class was invited to Mrs. Lyste's house for a jolly evening at the end of the first month. The boys never forgot the delights of that evening. Mrs. Lyste told stories, played games with them, sang old-fashioned songs, and at last proposed to boil molasses and make taffy.

"The cook is out, and so is the kitchen fire," she laughed, "but that's no matter where there are boys around. Come on, we'll find the kindlings and the molasses jug, and the fun will find itself, I'll engage."

They trooped beside her to the kitchen. Will Martin spied the hatchet at once, and made haste to split kindlings and build a fire. Rob measured out molasses, and the other boys, armed with hammers and hatchet and sad-irons made war on a pan of walnuts that Mrs. Lyste had provided. Willie Davis offered to watch and stir the molasses. Mrs. Lyste drew a chair up to the kitchen table and plied the nut-pick.

"It makes me think I am a boy again," she laughed as she took her place in the midst of the merry circle. "I never shall forget the day I first tried walking on stilts with my brother. We had such fun. I wonder if boys nowadays have as good times as they did when I was young. How do you boys amuse yourselves when you are off duty?"

And so she led them to tell of their sports, their base ball clubs, their excursions of one sort and another; and as she did not constitute herself a commenting critic, she had some very enlightening information given her on the habits and manners of her boys when left entirely to themselves.

It came out that they indulged sometimes in cider drinking—every one of them. Rob Denslow liked beer, and took a glass whenever he could get it. He acquired the liking for it when he was a little fellow visiting his German cousins in Cincinnati. Even the babies drank beer there. His folks had it on the table at every meal. Willie Davis thought beer poor stuff, but owned that he liked wine first-rate. Always had a glass when he dined with his uncle Joe. Two other Willies thought egg-nog just delicious. Three of the lads smoked cigarettes, and Rob Denslow generally smoked one cigar a day.

It all came out inadvertently, without a question or comment by the hostess, and the boys never suspected they were furnishing their teacher with an opportunity as they laughed and joked and pulled the ropes of flaky taffy, and drank the refreshing lemonade that their good friend had in readiness for them as they returned to the parlor, heated and thirsty after the kitchen fun. Yet when they had gone and the last echo of their cheery noisy chatter had died away on the street, Mrs. Lyste turned away from the door and, entering the deserted parlor, sat down with folded hands and thoughtful eyes and pondered upon what she had heard and seen.

"What danger they are in, poor lads," she murmured pityingly. And then she knelt and besought the Lord for the souls of those precious boys. To her they were never dreadful.

To earnest, well-directed effort little is denied. With heart and soul and mind and strength Mrs. Lyste entered upon the work of winning these boys from the power of evil for the service of the Lord she loved. Several Sabbaths later she surprised the class with an announcement.

"Boys," she said, as she took up the lesson papers, "there is a work for the Master

that needs to be done over in the B—Street neighborhood, and I've thought and prayed over it for weeks, and I've come to the conclusion that it is just our work—yours and mine. We've got to set about saving some of the boys over there who play ball about that soda and bottled beer stand on B—Street Square every Sunday afternoon. They are going to ruin. It wrings my heart to see it. We can save them if we will. We must save them."

"We?" chorused the class with wide eyes and questioning tones.

"We. This class," said Mrs. Lyste. "Are'n't we all on God's side, the side of honor and unselfish good-will to all? Who of us is against this? And are'n't we courageous enough to arm ourselves and go out to conquer an enemy when our Captain calls? We come here Sunday after Sunday to study God's Word because we believe in God and desire to know his will, don't we?"

"Yes'm," came promptly from every boy. "We don't understand all yet, but we're learning every day, and our Saviour has said that if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine. Now, we may as well commit ourselves here and now—we may never have another chance. We desire to make the most of ourselves and of our opportunities, don't we? We are honestly willing to own that Christian character is the best thing, and the thing that we desire for ours, and we are willing to strive hard to attain it. We are willing to be known as recruits for the grandest service the world has ever known, and to enlist under the banner of the cross with Jesus as our Captain, to go forth to do battle with all forces of evil, are'n't we? Then, when we're led right up to a battery of Satan, we have just one thing to do—take up our weapons, march on, and take it by storm."

"Now these B—Street boys. We can't go to them with clubs and swords and beat them off their ground, and haul them to the Sunday-school and put Bibles in their hands." The boys laughed out at the idea. "But we can go to them with another sort of weapon, and we can draw them from the play ground to the Sunday-school. If we determine to do it, we can do it. Shall we determine?"

"All right. Let's try it," said one. "But you'll have to tell us how," said another. "Boys won't read tracts, and those boys won't stand any foolin'."

"We sha'n't fool," said Mrs. Lyste. "neither will we ask them to read tracts. I've a plan thought out. I want you to approve it, however, and so I invite you to my house to-morrow evening, when we'll organize for action. Then I'll tell you of my plan, and then we'll set about work. You'll see. Some good will come of it, if we only set our minds to the work and seek God's blessing. Now for the lesson, and to-morrow for the practical application of it."

The boys were quite at home in Mrs. Lyste's parlor now. There had been a monthly reunion ever since the class had been hers. They had listened to good music, had examined curious objects from all parts of the world, had heard famous stories, had romped and eaten and drank and made merry many a time in those pleasant rooms. They would never miss a gathering, even though the idea of a personal responsibility hung over it, and promptly at the hour on Monday evening they were on hand.

"We are to have oysters and hot waffles at ten," Mrs. Lyste said, as she seated the boys around her library table, "so we want to get through the business of the evening in time for a little play-spell before supper, therefore we will proceed at once to the serious subject before us. We won't enter upon any work for God in our own unaided strength, we need the divine help. Let us kneel and seek it."

"Blessed Lord, our only helper," she prayed, "here we are, a little band of raw recruits, ready and willing for thy service; where thou leadest we will follow. We ask for thy Holy Spirit to animate and inspire us. We want to be thine own dear children and faithful servants. If we are not wholly consecrated to thee, then come thou now and consecrate us. We bring our hearts to thee just as they are, and we ask thee to take them and cleanse them and make them fit abodes for the indwelling of thy Spirit. We desire to do a work for thee. Help us, Lord, that we may help those about us, help us to win those boys, who play every Sunday on B—Street lot to a better way.

Give each of us good sense to know how to act, and a good-will that shall make our actions honest and true. May we do our part wisely and kindly, and wilt thou give us a victory? And as we set about the work for our dear Master, help us to purify ourselves even as He is pure. Bless our organization, and bless each one of us, for thy own name's sake. And in token of our earnest purpose, hear us together say—Amen."

And the boys' amen was prompt and hearty.

As they resumed their seats Mrs. Lyste drew from the table drawer a new blank book. On its first fair page was engrossed in large script:

OUR UNION.

Motto—We strive to conquer.

On the opposite page,

Our Bond and Pledge.

We the undersigned, do hereby bind ourselves in a Union that shall have for its aim any worthy work of love to God and good-will to man that our hands may find to do. And that we may prove ourselves worthy members of a pure Union, we pledge ourselves to use no profane language, and to abstain from the use of alcohol and tobacco in all their forms, and to maintain the cause of truth and justice always and everywhere, by the help of our Lord and King, Jesus Christ.

As Mrs. Lyste read aloud the written words, she took from the drawer a jewel casket which she opened, displaying to the view seven beautiful scarf pins of exquisite workmanship, the design being a golden cross set with a tiny opal.

(To be Continued.)

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes.)

Dec. 7.—Prov. 23 : 29-35.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Strong drink a foe. When drink, like a strong man armed, once gains entrance, its first concern is to overpower the watchmen on their towers;—caution, judgment, self-respect, natural affection, common sense; and the reserve force of justice, honesty, and religion. When these guardians of the fortress are killed or maimed, the powder magazine, as well as the rich spoils of man, lies open to the enemy's tender mercies which are cruelty.

"O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains!" —M. Briggs.

II. Warnings. A little steamer once shot the rapids at Niagara, and, though the captain declared, "The fact of my having gone through safely with my boat does not demonstrate to my satisfaction that the river is navigable," many men have been ambitious of testing it. Paul Boyton took the precaution of sending down some logs, and when he saw the heavy timbers come through, splintered and soaked, he left Niagara the same day. We have not forgotten the fate of Matthew Webb, another famous swimmer, who also looked long and intently upon the seething waters, and thought that he could go through.—M. Briggs.

III. The enchantress Circe, in Homer's Odyssey, is a good illustration of the power of intemperance. She invited the strangers to her marvellously beautiful palace, tempted them with her luxurious feasts, but those who partook thereof she turned into beasts. Only Ulysses, protected by a certain flower, was safe from her enchantments. That flower for us is Total Abstinence.

IV. The veiled prophet of Khorassan, in Moore's "Lalla Rookh," is an exact and vivid picture of this modern fiend. Over the features of this great chief, Mokanna, was hung a glittering silver veil to hide, as he said, his dazzling brow, too bright for man to look upon. His followers, each,

"Kneeling pale With pious awe before the silver veil, Believes the form to which he bends the knee, Some pure redeeming angel sent to free This fettered world from every bond and stain, And bring its primal glories back again." —On his white flag, Mokanna's most unfurled These words of sunshine, Freedom to the world."

Then he persuaded the beautiful, innocent Zelica to be his bride,—the elect of Paradise, the bride of Heaven.

"Together picturing to her mind and ear The glories of that heaven, her destined sphere Where all was pure, and every stain that lay Upon the spirit's light should pass away."

Under such promise, he hurried her to the

chapel house, and while the dead stood around them, and their blue lips echoed their vows, she pledged in a goblet of burning blood that she would be his, body and soul. Never would she leave him; and the wide charnel echoed, "Never, never." Then, too late for her, he revealed to her his soul.

"Ha, ha! and so, fond thing, thou thought'st all true, And that I love mankind—I do, I do!" As victims love them— "As the Nile bird loves the slime that gives That rank and venomous food on which she lives."

Then he drew away the silver veil that hid his maimed and monstrous features, exclaiming:

"Here judge if hell, with all its power to damn, Can add one curse to the foul thing I am."

That is almost word for word the picture of the wine cup. It promises all manner of joys; it sings of Paradise; it seems an angel of delight,

"Sent to free this fettered world from every bond and stain, And bring its primal glories back again."

It unfurls its banner, inscribed with "these words of sunshine: Freedom to the World." It persuades the young, the brilliant, the innocent to partake of its feasts and wed themselves to it. And when it has bound them by the chains of appetite, of habit, and of disease, irrevocably, then it bears its victims to the charnel house of the dead—of the millions of the dead whom it has slain, and they echo, "Never, never, never, shall we part." It casts off then its shining veil, and reveals its loathsome, monstrous features: it shows them the evil it has done to others and will do to them; it piles up its losses, its miseries, its remorse, its utter ruin before them, and well may exclaim:

"Here judge if hell, with all its power to damn, Can add one curse to the foul thing I am." —I.

PRACTICAL.

I. Summary of the evils of intemperance.

1. It injures the body.
2. It ruins the soul.
3. It disables the mind.
4. It unfits for daily life.
5. It brings poverty.
6. It leads into bad company.
7. It is opposed to religion and morality.
8. It injures family and friends.
9. It tempts others.
10. It leads to crime.
11. It fills poor-houses and prisons.

II. The Cure.

1. Don't begin.
2. Touch not, taste not, handle not.
3. Keep away from drinking places.
4. Keep away from the company of those who drink.
5. Sign the pledge.
6. First and chiefest, give yourself body and soul to the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Use all the helps of prayer and religion.
8. Work continually for temperance and religion.
9. Keep yourselves familiar with the arguments for temperance.
10. Prohibitory laws.
11. A temperance atmosphere.

Dec. 14.—Eccles. 2 : 1-13.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. "How was it?" I at length said (to the poet Robert Ferguson), "that you were the gayest in the party last night?" "I do not know that I can better answer you," he replied, "than by telling you a singular dream I had. I dreamed that I had suddenly quitted the world, and was journeying, by a long and dreary passage, to the place of final punishment. A blue, dismal light glimmered along the lower wall of the vault, and from the darkness above, where there flickered a thousand undefined shapes, I could hear deeply-drawn sighs, and hollow groans, and convulsive sobbings, and the prolonged moans of an unceasing anguish. I was aware, however, though I knew not how, that these were but the expressions of a lesser misery. I went on and on, and the vault widened; and the light increased, and the sounds changed. There were loud laughers, and shouts of triumph and exultation; and in brief, all the thousand mingled tones of a gay and joyous revel. 'Can these,' I exclaimed, 'be the sounds of misery when at the deepest?' 'Bethink thee,' said a shadowy form beside me—'bethink thee, if it be so on earth.' And as I remembered that it was so, and bethought me of the mad revels of shipwrecked seamen and of plague-stricken cities, I awoke." —Hugh Miller in Tales and Sketches, "Recollections of Robert Ferguson."