

moment's reflection changed this purpose. I could not give a large entertainment, and leave out my nearest friend and her family.

The pain and wild agitation of that moment were dreadful. I think all good spirits and angels that could get near my conscious life strove with me, for the sake of a soul in peril, to hold me back from taking another step in the way I was going; for it was not yet too late to abandon the party.

When, after the long struggle with right convictions, I resumed my work of filling up the cards of invitation, I had such a blinding headache that I could scarcely see the letters my pen was forming; and, when the task was done, I went to bed, unable to bear up against the double burden of intense bodily and mental anguish.

The cards went out, and the question of the party was settled beyond recall. But this did not soothe the disquietude of my spirit. I felt the perpetual burden of a great and troubling responsibility. Do what I would, there was for me no ease of mind. Waking or sleeping, the thought of Alfred Martindale and his mother haunted me continually.

At last the evening came, and our guests began to arrive in party dresses and party faces, richly attired, smiling and gracious. Among the earliest were Mr. and Mrs. Martindale, their son and daughter. The light in my friend's eyes, as we clasped hands and looked into each other's faces, did not conceal the shadows of anxious fear that rested on them. As I held Alfred's hand, and gazed at him for a moment, a pang shot through my breast. Would he go out as pure and manly as he had come in? Alas! no; for I had made provision for his fall.

The company was large and fashionable. I shall not attempt a description of the dresses, nor venture an estimate touching the value of diamonds. I have no heart for this. No doubt, the guests enjoyed themselves to the degree usual on such occasions. I cannot say as much for at least one of the hosts. In the supper-room stood a table the sight of which had smitten my eyes with pain. Its image was perpetually before me. All the evening, while my outward eyes looked into happy faces, my inward gaze rested gloomily on decanters of brandy and bottles of wine crowding the supper-table, to which it was soon to invite the young men—mere boys, some of them—and maidens whose glad voices filled the air of my drawing-rooms.

I tried to console myself by the argument that I was only doing as the rest did—following a social custom—and that society was responsible, not the individual. But this did not lift the weight of concern and self-condemnation that so heavily pressed me.

At last word came that all was ready in the supper-room. The hour was eleven. Our guests passed into where smoking viands, rich confectionery, and exhilarating draughts awaited them. We had prepared a liberal entertainment, a costly feast of all available delicacies. Almost the first sound that greeted my ears after entering the supper-room was the "pop" of a champagne cork. I looked in the direction from whence it came, and saw a bottle in the hands of Alfred Martindale. A little back from the young man stood his mother. Our eyes met. Oh! the pain and reproach in the glance of my friend! I could not bear it, but turned my face away.

(To be continued.)

For Girls and Boys.

DRUNK AT FOURTEEN.

Drunk in the streets! Oh! saddest sight,

A boy of fourteen years.
Some mother's darling fallen low;
In vain her falling tears.

A father's hopes were fondly raised
That his young son might grow
To be a bright and shining light,
And every virtue know.

But now upon them unawares
Has crept this deadly foe,
And brought to loving, trusting hearts
This awful weight of woe.

And sadly o'er their fallen boy
Most bitter tears are shed;
And loneliness comes o'er their hearts
As though 'twere for the dead.

No words can comfort in this hour.
We leave them to their grief,
But pray to God from curse of rum
To send us quick relief.

—Cousin Em. in Y. T. Banner.

WILLIE'S LESSON.

"In a minute." That was always Willie's answer when he was told to do anything, and the consequence was that he very often forgot to do it at all.

Not that he meant to be disobedient, for he always fully intended to do as he was told, but the minutes would slip away before he started to obey, and so he would either be too late to be of much use, or some one else, tired of waiting, would have done his work for him.

"Don't trust Willie to do it, for it will never be done," everybody said, if an important letter was to be sent to the post-office, or a message was to be delivered before a certain time, and so Willie acquired a very unenviable reputation for carelessness.

In vain mamma talked seriously with him, and urged him to overcome this bad habit of procrastination before it was too late. Willie would always promise to do better, and really intended to struggle against it, but he would soon forget all about his good resolutions and be as untrue as before.

"I am afraid you will have a hard lesson some day, Willie," said mamma, after one of these talks. "Something will happen that will teach you how dangerous this habit of putting off is."

One day her words came true.

"Willie," said his father one morning at breakfast, "here is a letter that I want you to post before school. It is an important letter, so you must be sure to remember it."

Willie put it in his pocket as he started for school, and walked along briskly, that he might have plenty of time to go down to the post-office without being late.

"I say, Willie," called a boy, as he went past the house where two of his schoolmates lived, "come in here and see my birthday present." Willie hesitated. He knew that if he went in he might not have time to mail the letter without being late for school, but he yielded to the temptation, saying to himself as he pushed open the gate.

"Well, I will only stay a minute, and then I can run all the way to the post-office to make up for it."

But he forgot all about his errand in admiring the beautiful silver watch that George proudly exhibited.

The ringing of the school bell reminded him that he would not have time to mail the letter without being very late for school. "Never mind," he thought to himself. "I can run down to the post-office at recess. It will only make a few hours' difference in the time the letter starts, and father won't know anything about it. I can't be late for school, anyway. I shall lose all chance of the prize if I am late once more."

By the time recess came, Willie had forgotten all about the letter, which was snugly hidden away in the depths of his pocket, and not until that evening did he remember it. He was sitting by the table, preparing his lessons for the next day, when his father glanced up from the paper he was reading, and asked, "Well, Willie, did you remember to mail that letter?"

Willie's face grew very red, and he put his hand in his pocket.

There was the letter, and he drew it out and laid it on the table.

"I forgot all about it," he said rather faintly. "I will mail it in the morning, father."

"No, you need not mail it now," answered his father, quietly. "It is only your loss that the letter did not go. It is an order for a little printing press that I intended to give you the day after tomorrow, for a birthday present, but it is too late now. The agent to whom I wrote for it starts for New York to-night, and I don't know his address there."

"Oh, father, can't I have it?" exclaimed Willie, starting from his seat, his eyes filling with tears.

"No," answered his father, gravely. "Now, Willie, I hope this will be a lesson that you will remember. It is just as easy to do a thing when you are told as 'in a minute,' if you would only think so. I know this is a hard lesson for you, but if it breaks you of your habit of putting off, I shall not be sorry that it happened."

A printing press had been the great desire of Willie's heart for months so that it was a hard trial to him to realize that he had lost it through his own carelessness. He began in earnest to try to break himself of this bad habit, and this time he did not forget to ask God's help in conquering himself, so I think before long he will have entirely overcome his habit of procrastination.—Minnie E. Kenney, in Churchman.