

now to drink, and you make shipwreck of your dearest hopes. It is only for this once. *Yield, yield!*"

But a moment, and then courage, God-like, came to the front.

Steadily, yet modestly, his dark eyes met those of Mr. Wellington, in which an ominous, half-angry light had gathered. The attention of all at table was on the two, and in their midst there was a brief silence. On that silence the young man's voice fell, low and firm.

"Mr. Wellington, when I was a boy too young to write, my mother took me to the old Methodist church in our village, and putting a pen in my little hand, guided it with her own, and so signed my name to a temperance pledge. That pledge I have never broken. Shall I break it to-night?"

Over the face of Mr. Wellington a wave of emotion swept. "Give me your hand, Merrill. Why, my boy, I had rather lose all I am worth than to see you break that pledge. Far better go to your grave," were the first words his lips could frame. "Truly, truly, Merrill, you have proved yourself a hero!" were the next, and they were spoken with misty eyes.—*Selected.*

THE FIRST FRUIT.

A little girl was once made the owner of some grapes upon a large vine in her father's yard. Very anxious was she that the fruit should ripen and be fit to eat. The time came.

"Now for a feast," said her brother to her one morning, as he pulled some beautiful ones for her to eat.

"Yes," said she, "but they are the first ripe fruit."

"Well, what of that?"

"Dear father told me that he used to give God the first fruit out of all the money he made, and then always felt happier in spending the rest; and I wish to give the first of my grapes to God, too.

"Ah, but," said her brother, "how can you give your grapes to God? And if you were able to do such a thing he would not care for them."

"Oh, I have found out the way," she said, "Jesus said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me;' and I mean to go with them to Mrs. Martin's sick child, who never sees grapes, because her mother is too poor to buy them."

And away ran this little child with a large basket of the "first fruit" of the vine, and other good things all beautifully arranged, to the couch of the sick child.

"I have brought Mary some ripe fruit," she said to Mrs. Martin.

"Dearest child, may God bless you a thousand-fold for your gift! Here, Mary, see what a basket of good things has been brought to you!

The sick one was almost overcome with emotion as she clasped the hand of her young benefactress and expressed her sincere thanks.—*Selected.*

A WORD FOR THE BOYS.

Take care of yourselves, boys, in all matters pertaining to personal cleanliness. When you were little fellows somebody did this for you; mother, or older sister, or nurse, saw that you had clean bodies, clean hands and nails, and well-brushed hair, at least three times a day; and I have known of nice mothers who made it four times, because, no matter how soiled the children became in their play, they would never let a dirty child be put into a nice clean bed. That's not a bad plan either, because boys are sometimes in a hurry just before meals, and are apt to shirk a little in washing, but there is always time enough to go properly to bed. Some people think that children take naturally to dirt, and I have known people so absurd as to say dirt was good for children. It is good not to be afraid of dirt, so that one shrinks from anything that one ought to do on that account, and we would let children play in the dirt and dig as many holes and make as many mud pies as ever they like, but they should do this for love of the play and not for love of the mud. "Don't be afraid of soiling your hands," we say to dainty boys, and we ought to add, also, "don't be afraid of washing them after they are soiled." Of one thing be afraid, and that is, of not knowing or caring whether they are soiled or not.

There seems to be in juvenile humanity a natural disposition to escape the trouble of doing little things. I know boys who will

be quite heroic in the way of hard work or of sacrifice, who will not brush their teeth without being told, and who say, when reminded of soiled finger-nails, "Oh, its too much bother, if I do it now I'll have to do it again, just the same." That's just it, you will certainly have to do such things again and again as long as you live, and the only way to take the hardship out of them is to make up your mind, once for all, that you are going right on being clean just *forever*. Stop thinking how to shirk, and half the "bother," as you call it, is taken out of the task. Walk up to the washbasin like a hero and go at once. Don't make *believe* be clean and leave a rim of dirt round the rim of the ear and up under the hair and across the knuckles.

And one great help in all this will be to have your own combs, and your own towels and soap and brushes, for hair and nails. If you have the care of your clothes—and it will never hurt you to have that—you want your own clothes brush and shoeblackening, and brush, and a bottle of some nice preparation for taking away spots of grease or dirt, and your own sponge for applying it. And not only must you have these of your own—and, sooner or later, any boy can get them all, but you must have a place of your own to keep them in and keep them where they belong. I know one little fellow, the son of a working man, who also works with his hands, who has no better place than an old soap-box which he got at a grocer's, and some paper boxes that hold his comb and brush, and the soap box slips under the foot of his bed. He never has to neglect himself because he cannot find his things. Think about it, boys! The difference between being dirty and clean is often the difference between being agreeable or disagreeable to the rest of your little world. You cannot be unwashed and have nobody know it. If people do not see the dirt they smell it, which is more unpleasant. It is meant that human beings should be sweet and wholesome, and it is not necessary to be rich or to wear fine clothes in order to be clean. It is only necessary to like to be so and to go on being so until you would as soon think of coming to the table with your hat on as of coming with a row of dirt under your finger nails. Big boys can do a good deal to help younger brothers to form these habits of neatness, and some older person can always be found to help a lad choose his brushes, and to teach him, if he does not know, the best methods of bathing and caring for himself and his clothes. But most boys do know, and could tell us older people about the best way, almost as well as we could tell them. Let us see who will be the most eager to practice his knowledge.—*Tutor John, in American Reformer.*

THE PLEDGES.

THE TEETOTALER'S PLEDGE.

A pledge I make no wine to take;
Nor brandy red that turns the head;
Nor whisky hot that makes the sot;
Nor fiery rum that ruins home.

Nor will I sin by drinking gin;
Hard cider, too, will never do;
Nor brewer's beer my heart to cheer;
Nor sparkling ale my face to pale.

To quench my thirst I'll always bring
Cold water from the well or spring;
So here I pledge perpetual hate
To all that can intoxicate.

THE TRIPLE PLEDGE.

We will not buy, we will not make,
We will not use, we will not take
Wine, cider, beer, rum, whisky, gin;
Because they lead mankind to sin.

We will not smoke the smoker's pets,
Those little things called cigarettes.
We will not chew, we will not snuff,
Or waste our time in playing puff.

We will not curse, though many dare
Open their lips to curse and swear.
Our words shall be both pure and plain;
We will not take God's name in vain.

—*Official Organ.*