

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

A SAD STORY.

Looking over the daily papers not long since, this heading appeared among the local items, "A Sad Story." It was a short, concise story, printed in ten lines of the column devoted to items of a local nature:—"Frank Talbot, a young man twenty-six years old, died in jail last night of consumption. He had been committed for drunkenness the week before. When he was told he could not live long, he gave his story to the physician. He had been living in the city under an assumed name for a year, because he did not wish to disgrace his friends. His family did not know where he was, although they had always been kind to him, and tried to do all they could to save him. But liquor had made a complete slave of him. He had a good position in his native town, but lost it, because his head was not kept level enough to fill the responsibilities. He would have his spree. Being naturally of a delicate constitution, the exposures incident to a vagrant, drunkard's life, had told upon him. His friends were notified of his illness, but he had passed away before their arrival."

A sad, sad story indeed! But the boy who heard it read said "He needn't have been a drunkard; he might have behaved himself."

Yes, yes, he might have been somebody of whom his friends would have been proud, but instead of that he was a source of sorrow to them. That young man had good parents and good Christian teachings, but liquor was his master. Once he was a temperate, happy boy, but some time he took a first drink, and that was the beginning of all his ruin and shame. You boys may not have as yet been tempted by this form of evil, but the temptation is sure to come to you, as it has to others. Many a boy as bright, as well beloved, as well brought up and cared for as you have been, has become a drunkard. Older tempters have argued with him that a man who cannot drink as much as he thinks good for him, and no more, is not a very strong character. But let me tell you, my boys, the only safety from being overcome by strong drink is to let it entirely alone. No argument for or against will be necessary then. The power of the habit of liquor drinking once formed is sometimes very hard to be overcome.

In the police reports of a daily paper a few weeks since the arrest of a middle-aged man for a serious crime was mentioned. His crime, and two-thirds of all the crimes committed, were due to the same cause—strong drink. Following the notice was this statement made by the prisoner:

"Drink was the cause of my ruin. Nobody knows the power of such an appetite but the man who has suffered from it. Years ago I took my dying mother's hand and promised her I would never drink another drop. I meant just what I said. I tried hard to keep my

promise, but the terrible thirst for liquor overcame me, and in a few weeks I was drinking as hard as ever. Two years ago my little girl died. She begged me on her death-bed to stop drinking, and I promised her I would. I called upon God to witness the promise. I wanted to keep it, but after my little girl had gone, the terrible thirst for liquor came again. I fought against it but it overpowered me. Drink had destroyed my will-power. I loved my child, but chains were forged about me that I could not break."

So you see, boys, how very hard it is to reform, after one has formed the habit of drinking. The problem of rescuing the country from this terrible cause is agitating the wisest heads. They feel that it must be driven out; but what is the best way to do it? That is the question. You boys can solve the problem, as far as you are individually concerned, by being determined that you will never take even one drink. If every boy would make that resolution, and keep it, old King Alcohol's head would soon tumble off, and roll into the bottomless abyss.

This is a very serious matter, and in view of the ruined lives. I beg that you will consider this momentous subject, and pledge yourselves to do all you can, in the name and with the help of the Lord, to exterminate 'the Serpent of the Still.'—Susan Teall Perry, in the Evangelist.

'Tis a mercy to have that taken from us which takes us from God.—Venning



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