

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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SECRET THOUGHTS.

HOLD it true that Thoughts are Things—
Endowed with being, breath, and wings,
And that we send them forth to fill
The world with good results or ill.

That which we call our "secret thought"
Speeds to the earth's remotest spot
And leaves its blessings of its woes
Like tracks behind it, as it goes.

It is God's law. Remember it
In your still chamber as you sit
With thoughts you would not dare have
known,
And yet make comrades, when alone.

These thoughts have life, and they will fly
And leave their impress, by-and-bye,
Like some marsh breeze, whose poisoned
breath
Breathes into homes its fevered death

And, after you have quite forgot
Or all outgrown some vanished thought,
Back to your mind to make its home,
A dove or raven, it will come.

Then let your secret thoughts be fair;
They have a vital part and share
In shaping worlds and moulding fate—
God's system is so intricate!

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

THE FISHERMAN'S BOY.

WHAT a sweet ingenuous face, and what pathetic eyes this boy has—as if the shadow of a great sorrow were hanging over his young life. The fishermen and their families along the stormy coast of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland suffer great privations and hardships, and are exposed to great danger. Sometimes a storm will spring up when a whole fleet of fishing boats is far from shore, and it often happens that some of them never get back to the land again, and their friends have not even the poor satisfaction of burying their bodies and weeping at their graves—the wide deep rolling sea has become their sepulchre. This boy's face is sad enough to make one think he must have suffered such a bereavement. If that ugly oilskin sou'wester were only off, we should see, I think, a noble handsome brow. He doubtless has often been out with the boats, and pulled the oar and hauled the line with the best. God bless and keep all fishermen and fishermen's lads from the dangers of the stormy deep. The following pathetic verses by the Rev. Charles Kingsley bring vividly before us the perils of a fisherman's life, and the sorrows of a fisherman's family:—

Three fishers went sailing out into the west,
Out into the west as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who lov'd him
best,

And the children stood watching them out
of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,

And there's little to earn and many to keep;
Tho' the harbour bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the light-house tower,
And they trimm'd the lamps as the sun
went down,
They look'd at the squall, and they look'd at
the shower
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged
and brown!

But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbour bar be moaning

Three corpses lay out on the morning sands,
In the twilight gleam as the tide went down,

SEVEN HUNDRED MILLIONS.

THIS is a large number of dollars to fool away. If we see a man throw one greenback dollar into the river or into the fire we should call him a foolish fellow for deliberately parting with his money without getting anything to show for it. But if we saw a procession of seven hundred million men each with a dollar in his hand walk up to a furnace and throw their dollars in, we would say the whole lot were crazy.

laws to stop such insane proceedings. Well, this seven hundred million business is just what is going on every year in our enlightened and Christian country; for our fifty millions of people are spending seven hundred millions of dollars for strong drink. It is worse than if they simply threw all their money away; for the strong drink brings wounds, and burnings, and poverty, and misery of many kinds. Much of this misery cannot be counted by dollars nor estimated in cash. The degradation, decay, and death which result from our immense national liquor-bill find no place in the nation's census; for it is beyond the power of the census-taker to reach them. But every one who walks the world with his eyes open can see for himself at least a part of the mischief that is done. Our criminal record tells it. The wail which goes up from the poverty-stricken and disease-eaten homes of drunkards tell it. The dreadful death-record cries aloud about it; for, as in the days of Pharaoh, there is not a house in which one has not been smitten by the plague.

What a blessed thing it would be for this country if not one dollar were spent to curse it with strong drink; if the seven hundred million dollars now worse than wasted were spent on things to give families happy and honest homes, and to make people pure, and sober, and noble! We cannot accomplish the change all at once, but we may work for it, and hope for it, and pray for it, in the assurance that the present foolish and wicked state of things cannot go on forever.—*Youth's Temperance Banner.*

THE WORK OF A MOMENT.

DID you ever write a letter, and just as you were finishing it let your pen fall on it, or a blot of ink mar the fair page? It was the work of a moment, but the evil could not be effectually effaced. Did you never cut yourself unexpectedly and quickly? It took days or weeks to heal the wound, and even then a scar remained. It is related of Lord Brougham, a celebrated English nobleman, that one day he occupied a conspicuous place in a group to have his daguerreotype taken. But at an unfortunate moment he moved. The picture was taken, but his face was blurred.

Do you ask what application we would make of these facts? Just this: "It takes a life-time to build a character; it only takes one moment to destroy it." "Watch and pray," therefore, "that ye enter not into temptation." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."



THE FISHERMAN'S BOY.

And the women are weeping and wringing
their hands
For those who will never come back to
the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner its over, the sooner the sleep,
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

THE man whose soul is in his work
finds his best reward in the work itself.
The joy of achievement is vastly be-
yond the joy of reward.

THEY who have experienced sorrow
are the most capable of appreciating
joy; so, those only who have been
sick, feel the full value of health.

Now suppose that, instead of walking away with no further damage than the loss of the dollar, each of these seven hundred millions of men should be damaged by tongues of flame darting forth from the mouth of the furnace into which so much money was tossed. One man would come away with hair and eyebrows singed off; another would lose half of his beard, leaving the remaining half to give him a very odd appearance; another would have his nose permanently reddened, while others would have their eyes bleared and their faces blackened for life. Surely somebody would call aloud for