

THE INFIDEL BANKER.

A story, which shows even infidels do not believe their own sneers about the Bible, and that they know that Christianity makes people better, is told in *Fireside Readings* :—

"A Virginia banker, who was the chairman of a noted infidel club, was once travelling through Kentucky, having with him bank bills to the amount of \$25,000. When he came to a lonely forest, where robberies and murders were said to be frequent, he was soon lost, through taking the wrong road. The darkness of the night came quickly over him, and how to escape from the threatened danger he knew not.

"In his alarm he suddenly espied in the distance a dim light, and, urging his horse onward, he at length came to a wretched-looking cabin. He knocked; the door was opened by a woman who said that her husband was out hunting, but would soon return, and she was sure he would cheerfully give him shelter for the night. The gentleman put up his horse and entered the cabin, but with feelings that can better be imagined than described. Here he was with a large sum of money, and perhaps in the house of the robber whose name was a terror to the country.

"In a short time the man of the house returned. He had on a deer-skin shirt, a bear-skin cap, and seemed much fatigued, and in no talking mood. All this boded the infidel no good. He felt for his pistols in his pockets, and placed them so as to be ready for instant use. The man asked the stranger to retire to bed, but he declined, saying he would sit by the fire all night. The man urged, but the more he urged the more the infidel was alarmed. He felt assured that it was his last night on earth, but he determined to sell his life as dearly as he could. His infidel principles gave him no comfort. His fear grew into a perfect agony. What was to be done?

"At length the backwoodsman arose, and reaching to a wooden shelf, took down an old book and said:

"Well, stranger, if you won't go to bed, I will; but it is always my custom to read a chapter of the Holy Scripture before I go to bed.

"What a change did these words produce! Alarm was at once removed from the skeptic's mind. And, though an avowed infidel, he had now more confidence in the Bible. He felt safe. He felt that a man who kept an old Bible in his house, and read it, and bent his knees in prayer, was no robber or murderer. He listened to the simple prayer of the good man, and at once dismissed his fears, and laid down and slept as calmly in that cabin as he did under his father's roof. From that night

he ceased to revile the good old Bible. He became a sincere Christian, and often related the story of his eventful journey to prevent the folly of infidelity."

A TEMPERANCE BOY.

Two grave, quiet-looking men stood on the steps of a big house in Washington some years ago. They were watching four bright children get into a cart and drive down the street, throwing back kisses and "goodbyes" to "papa" and "papa's friend, the General."

The younger man, and the father, was General Phil Sheridan, "Fighting Phil," as he was called in those days. Another general, an old friend, said: "Phil, how do you manage your little army of four?"

"Don't manage; they are mischievous soldiers, but what good comrades! All the good there is in me they bring out! Their little mother is a most wonderful woman, and worth a regiment of officers! John, I often think what pitfalls are in waiting for my small, brave soldiers, all through life. I wish I could always help them over."

"Phil, if you would choose for your little son, from all the temptations which will beset him, the one most to be feared, what would it be?"

General Sheridan leaned his head against the doorway, and said, soberly: "It would be the curse of strong drink! Boys are not saints. We are all self-willed, strong-willed, maybe full of courage and thrift and push and kindness and charity, but woe be to the man or boy who becomes a slave to liquor. Oh I had rather see my little son die to-day than see him carried in to his mother *drunk*."

"One of my brave soldier-boys, on the field, said just before a battle, when he gave me his message to his mother, if he should be killed: 'Tell her I have kept my promise to her. Not one "drink" have I ever tasted.' The boy was killed. I carried the message with my own lips to his mother. She said: 'General, that is more glory for my boy than if he had taken a city.'"

General Sheridan and the other brave man lie in historic Arlington. A great white monument marks the place.

The "little brave soldier, Phil Junior," is growing tall every year. He, with his mother and three pretty sisters, keep their soldier's grave beautiful with sweet flowers, and still more beautiful is the character of the small soldier, who scorns "strong drink" and declares himself to be a "temperance boy—*Temperance Banner*."