

The Vanished Choir.

Once more, after years, in the quaint old church

To the choir I bent my ear,
But vainly through it made listening search
For the voices once held so dear.
No lack of melodious art was there,
Still grand were the chords of praise,
Yet I missed with a pang the familiar air
Of the choir of my boyhood's days.

The sweet pure flood of my sister's voice
Of my brother's full toned and clear,
And of yet a dearer, whose accents choice
Made my pulses stir to hear;
And of friend and neighbour, each quite distinct,
In the symphony—where were they?
Gone, vanished and mute—a chain dislinked,
An accord that had died away!

I mourned their loss; and then vague and dim
Grew the notes of the later choir;
And there seemed to swell on the air a hymn
Rich and strong with the old-time fire.
With a thrill ecstatic I recognized
Each tone in remembrance kept,
While that one dear voice, than of all more prized,
My innermost heart-strings swept.

So real it was that I turned my head
To the singers as if to see
The prayerful eyes of my beautiful dead
Looking down, as of old, on me;
When the spell was dissolved I recalled no face,
No glance, the new choir among,
And the dream-hymn fading, gave gradual place
To the psalm that was being sung.

Sad and sedate through the Gothic door
I passed with the goodly throng,
And the quaint little church was hushed once more,
So to rest for a whole week long;
But for days and days in recesses grey
Of memory long locked fast,
A phantom choir held sovereign sway
With the anthems of the past.

No Harm in a Little.

BY THE REV. J. C. SEYMOUR.

If there was a plank thrown across a gulf fifty feet high that would bear a man weighing one hundred and fifty pounds, and you weigh one hundred and twenty, it might be a safe plank for you to walk over. But here stands a man who weighs two hundred pounds, and he sees you walking frequently over that plank in safety. He says that plank is safe. I will cross over, too. So on he goes until he sets his foot on the centre, and crash goes the plank, and the man is dashed down to destruction. The example of moderate drinkers is leading thousands to destruction in just the same way.

At a certain town-meeting, the question came up whether any person should be licensed to sell rum; those were the days when even church-going people and many ministers saw no great harm in temperate drinking, as they called it. The physician of the place, the leading deacon of the church, and the clergyman, were all favourable to granting the license, only one man in the meeting spoke against it. The question was about to be put, when there arose from one corner of the room a miserable-looking woman. She was very thinly clad, and her appearance indicated the utmost wretchedness, and that her mortal career was almost ended. After a moment's silence, and as all eyes were fixed upon her, she lifted up her wasted body to its full height, and stretched out her long, bony arms, and raised her voice to a shrill pitch.

"Look upon me," she cried, "and then hear me. All that the last speaker has said about temperate drinking being the father of drunkenness is true. Look upon me. You all know

me, or you once did. You all know that I was the mistress of the best farm in this place. You all know, too, that I had one of the best husbands. You all know I had fine, noble-hearted, industrious boys. Where are they now? Doctor, where are they now? You all know. You all know they lie in a row, side by side, in yonder churchyard. All—every one of them filling the drunkard's grave! They were all taught to believe temperate drinking was safe—that excess alone ought to be avoided; and they never acknowledged that they went to excess. They quoted you, and you, and you (pointing with her bony finger to the minister, deacon, and doctor), as their authority that it was all right. They thought themselves safe under such teachers. But I saw the gradual change coming over my family, and I saw it with dismay and horror. I felt we were all to be overwhelmed in one common ruin. I tried to ward off the blow. I begged, I prayed, but it was of no use. The minister said the poison that was destroying my husband and my boys, was a good creature of God—the deacon there sold them rum, and took our farm to pay for the rum bills. The doctor said that a little was good, and it was only excess that was to be avoided. My poor husband and my dear boys fell into the snare, and they could not escape, and one after another they were conveyed to the sorrowful grave of the drunkard. Now look at me again. You probably see me for the last time. My sands have almost run. I have dragged my exhausted frame from my present home—your poor-house—to warn you all—to warn you, deacon! to warn you, false teacher of God's word!" And with her arms flung high, and her tall form stretched to its utmost, and her voice raised to an unearthly pitch, she exclaimed: "I shall soon stand before the judgment-seat of God. I shall meet you there, false guides, and be a witness against you all!"

The miserable woman vanished. A dead silence pervaded the assembly. The minister, the deacon, and the physician hung their heads; and when the President of the meeting put the question, "Shall any licenses be granted for the sale of spirituous liquors?" the unanimous response was "No!"—*The Temperance Battle-field.*

Drinking Does Not Pay.

Go with me to every jail and prison throughout our land, from ocean to ocean, and ascertain how large a portion of those crimes and misdemeanors that have taken men from their families and lodged them there in prison walls has resulted from intoxication; and the answer from every jail and prison comes to us to-night that "drinking does not pay." Visit the poor-houses, which the charities of mankind provide for those who from competency have been reduced to destitution, and learn there the sad lesson, how many of them have ceased to become useful and valuable members of society, and dependent upon the taxes by which we support the poor, in consequence of yielding to the intoxicating bowl; and every poor-house answers, "Drinking does not pay." Examine the statistics of the gallows, and learn how many of its victims were induced to take the downward road thither by that intoxicating cup which turned

their brain and nerved their arm for the blow which sent them to the gallows; and the gallows tells you that "drinking does not pay." Read history, and learn from it how many of the great and the gifted in other lands as well as our own have commenced at wine drinking and ended in ruin, mental and physical; and history tells you that "drinking does not pay." Nay, more, read the papers of the day, and from every quarter you hear, morning after morning, and evening after evening, of the thousands who, once having pledged at the altar a lifetime of devotion and affection to their brides, reel home from a drunken debauch, to treat with brutality and violence those who should be as dear to them as their heart's blood; and this army of wome than widowed wives, whose woes no one but themselves can realize, tells you most sadly and impressively that "drinking does not pay."

It has been well said, "It is the first step that costs." Young men stepping out upon the threshold of life, with everything bright and hopeful in the future, let me adjure you, above all things else next to devotion to that religion which is to smooth your pathway to the tomb, avoid taking that solid rock of sobriety, as well as of safety, and then you may know that, so far as intemperance is concerned, its waves can dash against you, but they will dash in vain.—*Hon. Schuyler Colfax.*

What Shall we do With our Boys?

BY MRS. HELEN H. S. THOMPSON.

FOR six or seven years, as a boy frolics in the nursery, and on the playground, with his sisters, in picturesque jackets and short pants, it is comparatively easy to get along with him. But by and by the soft hands grow rough, the pockets swell with nails, sticks, and old knives, the knees wear out in "marble time," skates are polished with handkerchiefs, which are found in rusty wads in overcoat pockets, the kite-tails are manufactured with bran-new strips of ruffling. Then, too, he keeps your heart in your mouth, as he responds to your call from the top of a fruit-tree, or leaps from a roof, or slides down the banisters.

While his sisters are behaving like ladies, with dolls and books and toys, he grows noisy and rude every day. His childish beauty is usurped by a weather-beaten, freckled face, seldom clean, and surmounted by a head of hair that always "needs cutting," or has just been "cut too short." His wrists and ankles will make unsightly exhibitions of themselves, unless a father's purse can meet a frequent tailor's bill. His voice grows harsh, and manners ungainly; he will brag of "licking big boys," and blush like a peach when asked to sit down to the table with a guest. Unless he can whistle, pound, whittle, wrestle, and kick he is miserable.

What shall be done with him? Send him to school, and there's the long vacation! Give him the barn to play in, and ten chances to one that he will break his neck from the hay-mow, or set the latter on fire, learning to smoke! He can't fish and hunt all of the time; neither make garden or pile wood all day. He must have home and love and a fireside. The more energetic,

robust, and active the boy becomes, the more annoying to all about him. He is in his sister's way. It puzzles his father, busy with money-making, to manage him. He is angry at the antics and follies of which he himself was guilty at the same age, and is both ashamed and proud of his boy.

The Devil improves this time to entice the boy to places where he will have a hearty welcome, and full play for his energies. He has books of obscenity and reckless adventure, which he is taught to hide in chest or secret drawer, or out in the barn; companions and vicious amusements, suited to every nature, where none shall remind him that he is "always in the way;" where his awkward movements and boisterous manners pass unrebuked, or are greeted with coarse laughter.

The divine Father foresaw all this, when He placed mankind in families, and gave the ungainly lads into the hands of a mother, filling her with a love with which He compares His own infinite love. This unfathomable heart has God prepared for a sacred resting place for the dear boys. Hers will not be weaned by his waywardness, or heedlessness, or later sins. She delights in his rugged growth. She can go with her undiminished love, and the sweet grace of her motherhood, into that secret chamber where none other but the holy Christ could enter. She is the only one to speak the gentle word of apology to the father and friends for the boy ways,—the vigorous outgrowth of early follies.

When he takes advantage of her wondrous love, and acts the boor, she passes it by, knowing that the remembrance of her unspeakable tenderness and forbearance will bring him back to her side. Ah, with prayer, watching, and patience, the wise mother can defy the world for her boy! Of all earthly undertakings, none pays better than the brooding of an awkward boy.

"What shall be done with him?" Why, bear with him and brood him, as none but a mother can. His destiny is in your hands. Take an interest in his boyish affairs. Win his confidence, and then respect it! Go to his bedside at night, with a kiss and a blessing. Don't mind if the baby and younger children do call lustily for "mamma," your boy needs you most. Tuck him in and chat with him; above all, sometimes kneel and pray with him. If you don't know how, learn. Never mind if your heart does fly and leap into your mouth. Kneel at his bedside, and though he should pretend slumber, he will tell his wife of it, years after!

When your boy sees that you are less offended with his rudeness than grieved with his want of integrity,—that you are proud of him, and in true sympathy with him,—he will make his mother's great heart of love a sure resting-place. He will never go far astray, because he cannot forget whose idol and pride he was, when he was in every one else's way, and who was patient with him when every one else blamed.

If the mothers of our land must fill the professions, engage in politics, or live in social life, God help our boys! They are friendless indeed. They have lost the only earthly beings capable of steering their bark safely through the quicksands, rocks, and shoals that lie between the dim shores of boyhood and a virtuous and beautiful manhood.—*S. S. Times.*