

RALPH VINCENT'S FIRST PATIENT.

Ralph Vincent had just returned home after an absence of three years, during which time he had completed his "college course," as the phrase goes, though not as the majority of college boys finish their course, but as a few do, who dig and delve deep in the mines of science and literature, and store away precious jewels that shall sparkle and shine with grand light and beauty through-out their after lives. Bravely he had met, grappled with, and conquered every obstacle that had risen in his pathway, and he had come home with more exalted ideas of his duty to mankind, and a great longing in his heart to do something to benefit society; and he sighed as he thought how really limited his knowledge was, as compared with what remained for him to learn. As he stood by the window musing thus, the door of his room opened softly, and he sprang with joy to meet and fold in his arms the darling sister from whom he had been separated so long; but he looked with surprise upon the pale, delicate girl who stood before him.

"Why, Nellie, what is the matter?" he said. "Have you been ill, and did not let me know of it?"

"No, Ralph, I have not been ill, yet I have not been really well for some time," she said, as she laid her head languidly upon his shoulder.

"Now, my dear sister, there is surely some cause for this, and as the wise men have seen fit to bestow upon your humble brother the title of M.D., you shall be the first patient, and give a strict account of your self."

Then followed a kind catechism in regard to her life since he left her; and as he heard the story of fashionable dissipation, of balls, full-dress parties, &c., in which his young sister had mingled, the look of surprise left his face, and one of pain and annoyance took its place, and he said:

"Nellie, I am disappointed in you. The other girls have grown up in the round of fashion and gayety, and have married fashionable men, and are even now, though yet young, faded women; but you always seemed to care so little for such things, and when I left home a rosy, prettier maiden could be found than my little 'Rosebud,' as I called her. And I tell you, Nellie, that vision has done much to help me in my hard work, it was so bright and restful. But what do I find on my return home? A tall, slender girl of eighteen, with eyes that show only too plainly the dark circles, with cheeks upon which only artificial roses bloom, lips pale and spiritless, and a brow already lined just a little with sorrow."

"Oh, do not say anything more, Ralph. A despicable picture you make of me surely. Am I to blame that I cannot retain the freshness and health of my young girlhood? Surely I regret their loss as much as you can; but I cannot help it."

Passing his arm tenderly around the wasp-like waist he said:

"Nellie, supposing when those beautiful ever-green trees were young and tender, we had encircled and covered them with a network of iron, where would now be their beautiful branches and well proportioned limbs?"

"I guess they would be either dead, or present a very curious appearance," said Nellie, laughing.

"Or supposing you should gather one of the hardiest of those lovely blossoms, and hold it tightly in your hand for one day, do you think that at night it would lift its head as proudly and as brilliantly as now?"

"Why, Ralph, what an absurd question. You know that I could not press it in my hand for one hour, without its withering and dying from the heat and pressure of my palm."

"Equally absurd, no doubt, would you think me, if I should walk to yonder clock, and grasp its pendulum firmly in my hand, and hold it still, then wonder why the clock did not tick forth the minutes as when left to its own devices. Yet, Nellie, you do think it strange that a bright, healthy, blooming young girl should be shut up in a hot-bed of luxury, should be constantly deprived of her natural rest, should eat late suppers, should dance in heated ball-rooms, or read light, trashy novels until the small hours of early morn, and should confine herself in darkened rooms for fear of getting sun-browned and coarse, and yet should not be just as bright and gay as when out in the

bright sunlight, free as the air she breathed. You think it strange that the wonderful life-clock that ticks forth our minutes and seconds, should not beat just so regularly and truly with the cruel hand of dissipation laid heavily upon it as when nothing hindered its strokes to and fro. You think it strange that the soft, dimpled limbs and rounded form of early girlhood should not retain their fair proportions, even when encased in a net-work of steel braces, whalebones, and laces; and when the latter are drawn so tightly that all the delicate and wonderful mechanism of the tender, youthful form is pushed and crowded out of order, until the chest, lungs and heart are overburdened, and the digestive organs cannot accomplish their mission, which is to help the others in their work; and yet you deem it strange that the young life gets to be a burden to itself and others. A sin is committed, which may show its effects through many years to come; for many of these fashion-maddened maidens become wives and mothers, and transmit to their offsprings their weak and disordered natures."

"Why, Ralph, I never thought of it in this light before. I really do not enjoy this round of gayety, and if you can help me back to the freedom and joyousness of the dear old days, I will gladly avail myself of any prescription you may offer."

"That is spoken like my brave little Nell, and now for the prescription. First, you must discard entirely the use of a corset. If stays must be used, purchase some firm drilling, and make a neat fitting waist, with small light whalebones, if necessary, but be very careful to have it quite loose. Then get your riding-habit ready, and we will away with the morning breeze for a gallop over the hills. We will ride and walk, boat and skate; we will bathe in the waters of the sea; we will, in fact, drink in all the fresh air and sunlight we can, bidding defiance to Dame Fashion, save when her decrees coincide with our health and comfort. And we will see if, when the rose-buds come again, my own dear sister will not be the fairest and sweetest among them."

We will not follow Ralph and Nellie in their gay rambles; still we have a curiosity to know the results of his first prescription, so we will visit them after the lapse of three years. Ralph is an established physician in his own town; he has married a gifted and noble lady, who is too proud to bend her neck to the cruel yoke of fashion, and too humble and loving to turn a deaf ear to any cry for help from the poorest of her husband's patients. And Nellie, what of her? If we open the paragon door (situated very near her brother's house), we shall see her flitting to and fro; and although but a few short months have passed since the orange blossoms sparkled upon her brow, still her husband (one of Ralph's college friends, and an earnest working minister of the Gospel), declares her to be a helpmeet indeed in his pastoral work. Under the dispensation of plenty of fresh air, sunlight, and healthful exercise, she has blossomed into what her early girlhood gave promise of, a grand and beautiful womanhood. She often says that she does not "wonder" at Ralph's rapidly increasing practice and popularity, if all his patients improve as rapidly under his treatment as did the first one three years ago.—Mrs. Ettie H. Davis, in *Phreological Journal*.

BOYS AND GIRLS' TEMPERANCE TEXT-BOOK.

BY H. L. READE.

(National Temperance Society, New York)

LESSON X.—ALCOHOL AND THE HUMAN BRAIN.—Continued.

What is the distinctive office of the brain? The brain is the organ of the mind.

What is the mind? The mind is that part of us which thinks, and reasons, and feels.

How may the mind be further described? The mind is the highest and noblest part of man, that which distinguishes us from, and elevates us above the brutes, and in which is our special likeness to our Creator, God.

What is the greatest calamity that can befall a human being? The greatest calamity that can befall a human being is, to have the mind unbalanced or impaired, or destroyed.

What is the first effect of alcohol on the mind? The first effect of alcohol on the mind is to unbalance it.

How is the mind unbalanced by alcohol? By irritation, and thus exciting some portions of the brain to great and unhealthy activity.

What portions of the brain are thus, usually, first irritated and excited? Those portions of the brain are first irritated and excited which lie in the lower part of the head, although the coverings of the brain become highly irritated also.

Why are these portions soonest irritated and excited? Because here the veins are largest and the blood finds its readiest and completest flow.

What part of the mind has its seat in this lower part of the brain? The appetites and passions, which need to be kept in perpetual restraint.

What is the common effect of this unnatural excitement? The common effect of this unnatural excitement is vicious excesses of all kinds—sensuality, bad temper, quarrelling, fighting, cruelty, murder.

If drinking alcohol becomes a confirmed habit, what is its next effect upon the mind? It impairs it, weakens it, makes it both unwilling and unfit for work, and takes from it the power to do its best.

What is the final effect of the continued and increasing drinking of alcohol on the mind? The continued and immoderate drinking of alcohol impairs the mind hopelessly and for ever, and the poor drunkard often becomes a mindless animal.

What, then, is the general effect of alcohol on the immortal and godlike part of man? The general effect of alcohol on the mind, is injurious always when used at all; injurious greatly when used habitually; injurious to ruin when the drinking habit is fixed, the will paralyzed, and the insatiate appetite made supreme.

And what does all this mean? It means not only the loss of the life which ends here, but the loss of the life which never ends.

Where is the only safety? The only safety is, in letting it wholly alone.

PLEDGING TEACHERS.

The day has gone by when a Sunday-school teacher could look upon Sunday-school teaching as a matter of minor importance—to be attended to if convenient, and to be slighted when other things were more tempting. It is now understood that a Sunday-school teacher is in a certain sense a pastor, and that the pastor must be in his place on Sunday, either personally or by an approved substitute; and that he must be there well prepared for his special work and prove faithful in it. A pledge to preparation, to punctuality, and to faithfulness, is now implied in the very acceptance of the post of a Sunday-school teacher.

There are Sunday-schools which formally install their teachers into office. There are others which require of them the formal signing of a pledge of fidelity. Whether there be any form of pledge or not, the teachers are morally bound to be faithful; and this fact ought not to be lost sight of by them. The failure of a teacher to be faithful gives sufficient ground for the removal of that teacher; and to make the bounds of faithfulness more apparent, there is a gain in some form of pledge or agreement on the teacher's part.

An illustration of the form of pledge sometimes employed in good schools is here given, as recently adopted in a Baptist school in Boston:

TEACHER'S PLEDGE

Believing that our work in the Sunday-school is for the greatest and best of Masters, and that the eternal interests of our scholars demand the best possible preparation for teaching and the most untiring effort, I agree to be responsible for the instruction of my class every Sunday, until the first of July next. If necessarily absent I will send a substitute, if possible; or, if unable to do this, will notify the superintendent. A failure to do this for two consecutive Sundays shall be considered equivalent to my resignation of the office.

I agree to attend the teachers' meetings, unless prevented by circumstances beyond control.

The pledge in this instance expires by limitation on the first of July. We presume that the intention is to have it renewed at that time, if it is then deemed desirable by both school and teacher.

In sending this form of pledge to his teachers, the superintendent wisely said, in his circular letter:

"This form of compact was adopted by vote, and every teacher is requested to sign and return the same to the superintendent or secretary of the school within one week, as the election of teachers will take place at the next church meeting. It is hoped no one will think that more than is absolutely necessary is required, nor, indeed, more than will be gladly done. The word which we teach tells us that it is required that a steward 'be faithful.' Souls to be led to Christ and trained for service are committed to our care. Let us be careful lest while we are 'busy here and there' they be gone. The example of the master is set before us, and we are exhorted to 'consider him,' that we be not 'weary and faint.'"

Surely no one can say that a Sunday-school ought to be free from a sense of obligation to do all that this form of pledge requires.—S. S. Times.

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From *Volubel's Select Notes.*)

April 22.—Acts 9: 19-31.

ILLUSTRATION.

I. "Letting down Paul in a basket." As I stood with a friend, says a recent traveller, who resided at Damascus, looking at the place referred to, a couple of men came to the top of the wall with a broad flat basket full of rubbish, which they emptied over the wall. Such a basket, said my friend, the people use here for almost every sort of thing. If they are digging a well, and wish to send a man down into it, they put him into such a basket; and that those who aided Paul's escape should have used such a basket for the purpose, was entirely natural according to the present custom of the country.

Pilgrims are admitted into the monastery at Mount Sinai in a similar manner.—*Prof. Hackett.*

II. Note God's various ways of converting men: The eunuch, Paul, the galilean, the centurion; and Luther, Bunyan, Baxter.

III. God's transformations are marvellous: The soil into beautiful flowers; charcoal into the diamond; the most glowing colors from petroleum; the most delicious odors from the parings of horses' hoofs and the refuse of the street.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 19-22. The signs of a new heart, as shown by Paul. (1) Choosing Christ's servants as companions; (2) telling others about Christ; (3) seeking in solitude to know more of Christ; (4) suffering for Christ's sake. Can these signs be seen in us?—*Stock.*

2. As soon as we know Christ we should begin to tell others what a Saviour we have found.

3. God prepares us for his work: (1) By working; (2) by study and communion with God; (3) by trials; (4) by intercourse with other Christians.

4. Ver. 23. Earnestness and power on the part of Christians often awaken opposition in the hearts of the wicked.

5. Ver. 25. God saves his servants, not always by miracles, but usually by ordinary human means.

6. Ver. 26. How hard it is to believe in the reality of God's wonderful changes of men's character.

7. Ver. 29. Wherever we are we should be about our Master's business.

8. Ver. 29 and chap. 22: 18. God's commands and his providences often lead the same way.

9. Ver. 31. Rest is not quitting the busy career; rest is the fitting of self to its sphere.—*John Dwight.*

10. Churches are built up: (1) By holy living; and (2) by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

11. The two needs of our churches: (1) To be edified; (2) to be multiplied.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We have here some excellent helps for the young convert. We see him: (1) Beginning to work for Christ, ver. 19-21. When they should begin. What they should do.

(2) Increasing in strength, ver. 22, 23. (a) By working; (b) by study and retirement; (c) by communion with other Christians. (3) Enduring trials, ver. 23-25. (4) At home, ver. 26-30. The most difficult and needful Christian duties are at home. (5) At rest, ver. 31. What is rest? What two things all Christians need? The effects?