

For Girls and Boys.

THE BRIDGE PLEDGE.

BY HELEN E. BROWN.

"Do you see that, Cousin Ernest?" And Doris held a written paper across the table. "I wrote that for you all myself."

Ernest looked. The words were written in a fair school-girl's hand on a dainty sheet of note-paper. Autumn leaves were in one corner, the date, November 18, was in the opposite; and then followed words which Ernest didn't stop to read. He had caught sight of one—pledge—and that was enough. He frowned and turned away.

"I don't want any of your silly nonsense," said he; you can keep your pledge for somebody else. Good-by."

"Don't go," cried Doris in distress; "stop a minute, do, Ernest. I want you to see what kind of a pledge this is. It's something new; it's a Bridge pledge."

"A Bridge pledge! what's that?" with a contemptuous laugh. "I never did see such a little goose as you are, Doris, in all my life. You're always getting notions in your head. Your brain's a deal more kinky than your hair is; the kinks are all inside, that's the trouble. There's not another girl like you in all this city."

"Yes, there are, plenty of them: Mary Lathrop, and Annie Duncan, and May Lindsley, and lots more; and we've all resolved, and made up our minds strong, to present this pledge to every brother and cousin and boy we know, and get them all to sign it before Thanksgiving. Now listen; don't be in such a hurry: "We, the undersigned, do promise not to drink, or ask others to drink, any wine, cider, whisky, beer, egg-nog, or anything that can intoxicate, from this day, November 18, to January 18, 1883." Miss Saunders, our Sunday-school teacher, found this pledge the other day in a magazine, and she thought it so nice she asked us if we didn't want to copy it, and see how many signers we could get. For you know, Ernest, holiday time is a very dangerous time. It is like a rough, ugly river we have to cross, and we can't get over without a bridge. That's the reason this is called the Bridge pledge; it's to help the boys—"

"And girls, too. I've seen plenty of girls drinking egg-nog and brandy punch."

"Yes, girls too; we all need help over the holidays, don't you see?"

"Well, when we cross the bridge and get over the river, what then?"

"Why, then you'll be in the beautiful Temperance Land; and you'll like it so well you'll want to stay."

"Aha! guess not," said Ernest. "Besides, it's disgraceful to sign a pledge; didn't you know that, Doris? You're so nice, and refined, and stylish, and all that, I wonder you hadn't thought of that."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you want me to put my name down there, and then you'll go and ask Hal Brooks, and Sam Donahoe, and all the unwashed; and I don't like to be in such a rabble, I don't. And I shouldn't think you'd want me to be, either."

Doris was nonplussed; she hardly knew what to say. But another moment and a thought came to her. "You're in better company if you sign than if you don't," said she. "It's the real drunkards that won't sign; and if you don't, why you'll stand on their side. I'd rather be on the side of temperance boys, if they are poor, and if they did drink before—for now they are clean, and well-dressed, and all right—than to be with the intemperate folks, with their red faces, and swelled noses, and shabby clothes. Come, now, choose your company, sir. It's better on the pledge than off it."

Ernest was nonplussed now. "Well, it's silly any way," he protested. "Just as though I couldn't keep from drinking, if I wanted to, without putting my name down. If I promise it's just as well."

"A promise in black and white is more easily remembered," urged Doris.

"And it's just like putting a fellow into a strait-jacket, too. No; I like my liberty too well to sign it away, you'd better believe."

"Liberty! What's the liberty you are so anxious to keep, I'd like to know? Just the liberty to do wrong, that's all. Who wants that kind? Come now, Ernest, put your name down. A pledge is just like a fence dividing the good from the bad. If you sign it

you'll be on the side with good folks, and if you don't you'll be on the side with all the wicked people, the toppers and tipplers. And there temptations, and snares, and traps will be spread all around and you'll be almost sure to fall into them. On our side we don't have any traps and snares; we have plain paths for our feet. You'd better come over."

Doris did not plead in vain. Her putting of the case was like a picture to Ernest. It had never been presented so clearly to him before. He saw himself on the one side or the other, in good or bad company, in safety or in peril, just as she had presented it; and came to the conclusion it was better to be on the safe, clean, respectable side. So he signed, and he was never sorry for it. When January came he told Doris he "liked her Temperance Land so well he was going to stay there as long as he lived."—*Y. T. Banner*

TALENTS WASTED.—I know to-day of several young men who possessed fine talents, and had they been improved would have made their mark in the world and adorned society. I will briefly map out the life of a young married man, who to-day is casting about with his prospects destroyed, shiftless, and living on his friends. Ten years ago this young man was at the head of a large manufacturing establishment, honest, respected, and above want. He owned a snug little cottage, a wife and two children added to his comforts, and happiness reigned supreme. His prospects were flattering, and many prophesied that, in a few years, a fortune would be at his disposal. But who can tell what a few years will bring forth? Success was too much for this man. He formed associates that only lived to gratify their own appetites. Step by step, he went down, down, till he lost his situation, and drank up all the money he had put in his house. Worse still, his young son, a manly youth, followed in his footsteps, and became even worse than the father. The wife and daughter are now obliged to earn their own living, each looking for self, all separated, and a miserable future is before them, all because this father would not use the talent God had given him in his business, but abused his talent and splendid opportunity, caused his family to suffer in his behalf, and pulled them down to his own level.

God grant that some young men who read this truthful sketch may rise above their appetites, and live with the determination of doing good to others. True happiness consists not only in living good lives, but in making others happy. Use your talents, that others may be given to you, and the world will be better for your living in it.—*E. r.*

A BOY'S SPEECH.

Who'll step within a grog-shop
A harmless glass to try
Of lemonade or soda?
Not I, oh! no, not I.
I'll go to better places
When I've a dime to spend,
Or when I seek for pleasure,
Or wish to meet a friend.

His meat or bread or clothing
Or school-books who will buy
From any liquor bondsman?
Not I, indeed not I.
I'd rather help my neighbor
Who comes with you and me
To fight the liquor-traffic
And set the country free.

And when we boys are voters,
(We shall be by and by.)
Who'll vote for liquor taxes
Or license laws? Not I.
I'll go for Prohibition
And home protection strong;
I'll give my time and money
To help the cause along.

— *Our State Union.*