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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XIV.]

TORONTO, MARCH 10, 1894.

[No. 10.]

THE TWO PATHS.

Look at the picture very closely and you will see the two paths of life faithfully portrayed. See what a lovely boy at the top of the picture, then look at the different periods of life as they are portrayed on the right hand. What manly faces, showing temperance and purity of life. Then look down the left side of the cut. You see wickedness portrayed in every face, and at the last a miserable old age. Look at the picture and then decide to live right and do right. Take God's word as your guide, and the pathway of life will be bright, but if you take the downward road, it will be dark and miserable.

WHY A BOY SHOULD BE A CHRISTIAN.

BY REV. H. W. POPE.

"A boy will hunt, and a boy will fish,
Or play baseball all day;
But a boy won't think, and a boy won't
work,
Because he ain't made that way."

WHOEVER wrote that did not really understand boys, for I know and you know that a boy does think, and I am going to ask you to do a little thinking right here now, as you and I consider some reasons why a boy should be a Christian.

Now, when people think over a thing in good shape they put their reasons in order, and we will do the same, making the reasons "one," "two," "three," and so on.

Reason one.—You need the help of Christ. You are in the world and you must pass through it. You will have questions to settle which you won't quite know how to decide if you are left alone to yourself. You will be tempted to do wrong. You will have more or less trouble, and no one can help you in all these things so well as Jesus Christ.

Besides this, you have a character to form. Life is not all for fun, even for boys. Jesus is the only one who ever lived a perfect life. He is, therefore, the best teacher you can have. But more than that, he will come into your heart and live with you if you will let him, for he says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man (or boy) hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." You know how it is when you are with a very good man. You come to think as he thinks, and do as he does, and it is easy to be good in his presence. Much more will you find it easy to be good if you will let Christ come into your heart, and direct your life.

Then, too, Jesus is the only one who can forgive sin, and, my dear boy, you are a sinner, for the Bible says so, and you know it. Do you not therefore need a Saviour?

Reason two.—Jesus needs your help. He has a place for you in his kingdom and a work for you to do. He needs you in your school and on the playground to show how brave and manly and true a Christian boy can be. He needs you in your home to brighten it by a happy life, as he brightened his home when a boy. He needs you everywhere to live for him and talk for him, and to win other boys to himself, for God wants the boys.

And what a grand thing it is that Jesus does need you. You would be sorry to think that he had no use for you, and that the world would go along just as well with-

out you. You need not think so, for there is plenty of work that will not be done unless you do it. Respond to his call. Come up to his help, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Reason three.—His requirements are reasonable. All that he asks of you is to do right. He does not expect you to be a Christian man, but a Christian boy, with all a boy's love of fun and frolic. He expects you to run and romp, and shout as loud as ever, but never to forget that you are one

God has said "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Reason four.—As we think about the future, the outlook is very bright for a Christian boy. The same Jesus whom he has loved and served in life will be with him in the hour of death, and will usher him into the gates of the Eternal City. Eternity is a long time, my boy, an awful long time if spent apart from Jesus, but a blessed long time if spent in his company. He who can say, "For me to

p'an was to spend the night on the mountain. Seated around the camp fire, they sang college songs and told stories all the evening. At length young Garfield took a Testament out of his pocket and said, "Boys, it is my custom to read a chapter in the Bible and have a prayer before going to bed. Shall we have it all together?" And they did. That is the kind of a boy that you and I admire; one who serves the Lord, and isn't afraid to say so. That is the kind of a boy I hope that you will be; a boy who can say from his heart,

"I will go where you want me to go,
Lord,
Over mountain or valley or sea;
I will say what you want me to say,
Lord,
I will be what you want me to be."

JACK TAR.

BY J. M'NAIR WRIGHT.

"WELL, well! Who'd have thought ever to see you in such a state as this! Rags, dirt, pale, thin; why, you used to be as trim and ship-shape a salt as ever trod a United States vessel! Here, let me add you up. Pockets empty, health gone, courage gone, nothing to do; self-respect gone. What did it? Whiskey! You needn't tell me. I know all about it; you have taken to drink, and the drink has taken the man out of you."

"And what is left isn't worth saving," said Ben Hicks. "I was just on my way to pitch myself over into the river, and end my miseries."

"Or begin them—which? You can't drown in the East River, Ben. Your body may, but somewhere else the you must live on, and how? Tell me that."

Ben Hicks shook his head. "It's a bad lookout for me, Jack. You can't understand it, because you have had luck. That's a boatswain's whistle I see around your neck; you are spick and span; you're rising; I'm down."

"But I can feel for you, for all that. Don't I know that only for the grace of God I'd be down with the lowest myself. Yes, this is a boatswain's whistle; temperance got it for me. Cast out the whiskey devil, Ben, and come, rise."

"I can't cast him out, Jack, he's too strong for me."

"Get the good Lord to do it for you then, my hearty. Do you mind the man he found running naked among the tombs, with devils in him called Legion? He cast them out, and what do you find next? Why, that same man, sitting clothed and in his right mind at the good Master's feet."

"But nowadays when a man's down it is so hard to get a start. Why, look at me! I have not a dime; I haven't a place to sleep to-night, or a penny to buy me a loaf of bread. Even the liquor men who have my last cent kick me out."

"Oh, that of course! That is to be expected. The wages of sin is death; the devil is a proper hard taskmaster, and when he has ruined a man he scorns him. But look you, Ben, my Master bids me lend a hand for his sake; so come along. I'll fill you with supper, and then I'll get you a bath and a shave, and a suit of clothes, and I'll take you to my lieutenant, and ask him to give you a try. What say? I'll stand



THE TWO PATHS.—(SEE LESSON FOR MARCH 18.)

of Christ's boys. Christianity does not consist of sermons and prayer-meetings, but of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is doing right because it pleases Jesus, being happy because you are doing right, and living at peace with all around you. Boys sometimes think that they can "sow wild oats," as they call it, for a few years, and repent later on, but they forget that a life once stained with sin can never be just the same again. The sin may be forgiven, but the scar will remain forever. Whoever sows wild oats must reap his own harvest, for

live is Christ," can also say, "To die is gain."

Reason five.—You ought to be a Christian and you know it. Christ died for you. He loves you and he longs for your love, and it is a burning shame for you not to love him and try to please him. Won't you begin to-day, my boy, by asking him to forgive your sins and enroll you as one of his followers? The manliest thing a boy can do is to stand up for Jesus. When President Garfield was a boy at Williams College, he climbed Mount Greylock one day with a lot of his companions. Their

by you if you'll stand by yourself! Come along; it is written that 'he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and prevent a multitude of sins.'

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 10, 1894.

THE GOOD SEED.

BY REV. MARK GUY PEARSE.

"A sower went forth to sow his seed."—LUKE 8: 5; See MARK 4: 14-20.

The seed is the Word of God—the lessons you learn from the Bible; and those who teach are the sowers. But what are the fields? Well, you are the fields.

THE HARD FIELD.

"Ah," says the farmer, with a sigh, "I can do nothing with this field, the ground is so hard;" and as he strikes it with his stick, it rings as if it were a stone. "And yet you don't know what trouble I have taken with it. It is so hard that I can get nothing into it: more like a road than a field."

Ah, boys and girls, I think you know that field. In the Sunday-school, and in the house of God, and in the home, I have often seen that field. Lesson after lesson is sown, and all sorts of good seed, but nothing seems to go in. The love of God, the story of Jesus, the wickedness of sin, all seems to be lost. The heart is so dreadfully hard that no seed can get under the surface.

This is very sad. "Will it always be so hard, farmer?" you ask, wondering. And now listen to what the farmer says: "No, no; I hope not. You remember what David says in the sixty-fifth psalm—'Thou makest it soft with showers.' Only the rain from heaven can loosen the hard-baked earth, and open the ground so that the seed can get in and live. We must ask our Father in heaven to send that." So there is a cure for the hard field of our hearts. He will send upon us his Holy Spirit, then the hardness is gone. The hard field becomes the good ground, and brings forth much fruit.

Leaving this field, we pass on until we come to a gate, and stop to look at the next field. "Now," says the farmer, "this is my

WEEDY FIELD."

There is no mistake about that; weedy enough, indeed. As we come along by the hedge, our finger is stung by a tall nettle; and as we get out of the way of that, we are pricked by a sharp-leaved fellow with his gay red cap on his head—this thistle. They have no business there, and they prevent the good seed from coming up.

"You would scarcely believe how much seed I have put into this field," the farmer tells us. "And now look at it! Why, if I had never sown a grain it could scarcely have been worse."

Ah! who does not know the weedy fields? Boys and girls who have been carefully taught and anxiously looked after, and yet there came nothing but weeds. These boys, with the good seed sown in them, began to quarrel afterwards; so there came nettles and thorns, instead of good fruit. This girl has the good seed in her heart, but she begins to think unkind thoughts, and perhaps to say spiteful things; so comes a prickly thistle instead of good seed.

And these flowers—they were weeds because they were in the wrong place. Very good in a garden, but here, where they choked much good seed, they were very bad. Laughing is a good thing, but laughing in the wrong place is a weed. Talking is a good thing, and nothing is more foolish than to think that children should be seen and not heard.

Passing from that field, the farmer says in a low whisper, "Now if you go quietly, and cross this lane, and up the bank to the next gate, you will see a strange sight. This is

THE BIRD FIELD."

Directly our heads appear, up fly all sorts of birds. There are swift wood-pigeons, that go flying into the distance; there are lazy rooks, wheeling into the air, and flapping out of danger with a "caw," "caw," as much as to say, "We are not caught yet." How many boys and girls there are in whom all the good seed is eaten up by the fowls of the air; and who does not know the names of many of these birds?

A busy, bold little bird that steals much good seed on all sides, is called "inattention." Then there is the "chattering magpie," a great thief; busy whispering here and there, and humming and buzzing; a very destructive bird is this.

One day as I was going through the fields I meet a little sharp-eyed fellow standing by the stile as if he were very glad to see anybody in that lonely place. In his hands he held two pieces of stick that he kept knocking together with a loud noise. "Click-clack, click-clack," went the little fellow. "What are you doing, my boy?" I asked. He was making such a noise that he could not hear what I said. He stopped, and then I asked him again what he was doing that for. "Why, I'm scaring the birds, sir," he cried out. And as a rook settled at the end of the field he ran away after it with a click-clack, click-clack, that soon sent it flying. That is what we must all do. We must all scare away birds that eat the good seed.

Now we have come to the last field. "Here," says the farmer, "is my bit of

GOOD GROUND."

We wonder that it is so different from the rest. But the farmer tells us how the rain from heaven softened it, and how they cleared the weeds and sowed the seed, and scared the birds; and here now is this rich harvest. The seed fell into good ground, and brought forth much fruit.

And now, dear children, thank God that we can all be good ground. God can take away the stone out of our hearts, and by his Holy Spirit he can create within us the good ground. Let us kneel down and ask our heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, to make us good ground. "The good ground are they which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

"Create in me a clean heart, O God!"

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.

"How much further is it, Gertrude?"

"One mile, dearest. Are you tired?"

"Very," answered the beautiful child, with a sigh which sounded almost like a sob to the sister's ears,—so faint it was, and yet so sad! It told not only of tired feet, but of a tired heart and a weary soul as well.

For she was a drunkard's child, and this knowledge stung the motherless girl in all its bitterness. She was no stranger to want and suffering. Harsh words and cruel blows she had long been accustomed to; and the saddest part was that they came from him who of all the world should have loved her most. At last illness had fallen upon her and life seemed very hard to bear.

"It grieves me," murmured the child in the same sad strain, "that you must work so hard to buy medicine for me."

"Don't you wish," she continued after a pause, "that papa had never tasted the cruel poison which sets his brains on fire and causes him to beat us so?"

"God knows I do, sweet Evelyn," answered the sister fervently, tenderly kissing the trembling lips. "But I shall take care of you, dear," she added reassuringly, clasping the slender hand still closer within her own, and leading her gently onward. Tenderly she lifted her over the steep and stony places, telling her sweet stories and singing pretty songs to while the time away. Very strong and devoted was the love between the sisters.

At last the market-place was reached, and the produce disposed of. Eagerly Gertrude deposited the few shillings in her purse and hastened to the doctor's office. The doctor shook his head and looked very grave, remarking that the child's cough was worse. Two great tears rolled down Gertrude's cheeks. Mechanically placing the medicine within her basket, she took Evelyn's hand, and left the office with a heavy heart. That was the last time the sisters should ever walk together on earth.

Three weeks later there was a weeping in the drunkard's home. Evelyn was dying; and never before had she appeared so beautiful and fair. By the bedside knelt Gertrude in unutterable anguish, feeling that the only joy of her life was going out. Long she wrestled with the great sorrow which stood in its giant strength, waiting to crush her to the earth. A faint voice roused her.

"Gertrude."

"What is it, darling?"

"Please tell me that beautiful story again. I must hear it once more before I die!"

She stretched forth her little hand in an entreating manner toward the sister. Gertrude clasped it within her own, and, as she had so often done before, told her the story of the cross,—the sweet story which Evelyn loved so well. The large blue eyes grew bright even in death, as she listened, and when Gertrude had finished, she pointed heavenward, and with one imploring look toward her father, whispered: "Behold the Lamb of God." One faint struggle, and her eyes closed forever, until she should open them in that blessed home where all tears are wiped away.

"Earth to earth," was spoken above the little grave; still the drunkard lingered. And when all were gone, he knelt in the solemn hush of the churchyard and sobbed: "Oh Evelyn! in thy death have I received eternal and everlasting life. How great and wonderful are the mercies of God's Providence!"

He arose from the ground,—no longer the drunkard, for he had indeed beheld "The Lamb of God."—*Young Disciple.*

"THE NILLENNIUM."

"See here," said Dilly to Freddie Burr, as she pushed the toes of a pair of stout new shoes through the fence.

"Where did you get 'em?" asked Freddie.

"And see here!" continued Dilly, bobbing up for an instant to show the pretty hood that covered her yellow hair, and touched it significantly with her finger.

"Where did you get 'em?" repeated Freddie.

"My pa worked and bought 'em and brought 'em home; an' they didn't get into nobody's barrel, either," explained Dilly with great pride and little regard for grammar, pressing her face close against the fence for a prolonged interview.

"You see, Freddie Burr," began Dilly, "the Nillennium has come to our house."

"The Nillennium!"

"It's a pretty long word," explained Dilly, complacently, "but it means good times. Anyhow, that's what ma called it, and I guess she knows. It was just this way, Freddie Burr. When you told me Mr. Barney had all our good things down to his store in his rum barrels, I just went down there right off and asked for 'em—me and Toddles."

"You didn't!" exclaimed horrified Freddie.

"Did too!" declared Dilly, with an em-

phatic nod. "Well, he wouldn't give us one of them, and he was just as cross as anything. So then pa got up from behind the stove and walked home with us. He didn't scold a bit, but he just sat down before the fire this way, and thanked and thanked. At last he put his hands in one pocket, but there was nothing there; then he put it in his other pocket and found ten cents, and he went out and bought some meat for supper. When ma got home he talked to her and they both cried: I didn't know what for, 'less it was because we didn't get the things out of the barrel. And ma begged me 'most to death that night and kissed me lots, she did. Well, my pa got some work the next day, and brought some money, and he said his little boy and girl shall have things like other boys and girls. So now you know what the Nillennium means, Freddie, when anybody asks you; and you can tell that Dilly Keene splaned it to you."

You'll Have to Avoid the Saloon.

You stand on the threshold of youth, boys,
Your future lies out in the years;
You're learning your parts for life's work,
boys;
You're planning your future careers.
You'll have to fill places of trust, boys;
Your fathers will pass away soon;
And if you'd be trustworthy men, boys,
You'll have to avoid the saloon.

If you would be honoured in life, boys,
If joy and contentment you'd know;
If you would have plenty of cash, boys,
And bask in prosperity's glow;
If you would enjoy robust health, boys,
That priceless but much abused boon;
If God's benediction you'd have, boys,
You'll have to avoid the saloon.

You'll have to avoid the saloon, boys,
Or sorrow and shame you will share,
And poverty's crust you will eat, boys,
And poverty's rags you will wear.
Your future will end in disgrace, boys,
Your life be cut off at its noon;
Both body and soul will be lost, boys,
Unless you avoid the saloon.

—Our Companion.

STORY OF A HANDKERCHIEF.

ON the occasion of Mr. John B. Gough's funeral at Hillside, a little handkerchief was placed over the back of his chair, the latter being placed at the head of his coffin. The story of that handkerchief was told by Mr. Gough in an address on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the National Temperance Society in May, 1870. We find it in the *Gough Memorial Pamphlet* just issued by the society. Mr. Gough said:

"I have in my home a small handkerchief not worth three cents to you, but you could not buy it from me. A woman brought it and said to my wife, 'I am very poor, I would give him a thousand pounds if I had them, but I brought this. I married with the fairest prospects before me; but my husband took to drinking and everything went. The pianoforte my mother gave me and everything else was sold, until at last I found myself in a miserable room. My husband lay drunk in a corner: my child that was lying across my knee was restless; I sang, 'The Light of Other Days is Faded,' and wet my handkerchief with tears. My husband,' said she, 'met yours. He spoke a few words and gave a grasp of the hand, and now for six years my husband has been to me all that a husband can be to a wife, and we are getting our household goods together again. I have brought your husband the very handkerchief I wet through that night with tears, and I want him to remember when he is speaking that he has wiped away those tears from me, I trust God, forever. These are the trophies that make men glad.'"

"I AM afraid, Bobby," said his mother, "that when I tell your papa what a naughty boy you've been to-day he will punish you." "Have you got to tell him?" asked Bobby anxiously. "Oh, yes; I shall tell him immediately after dinner." The look of concern upon Bobby's face deepened, until a bright thought struck him. "Well, ma," he said, "give him a better dinner than usual. I might do that much for ma."

How the Holland Town was Taken.

BY THE REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

DAY after day the battle roars
Around the Holland town;
Its flag defies the Spanish hosts
That strive to tear it down.

One night, the moon shines large and white
Far up the blue, blue sky.
Do townfolk cry: "Oh, moon, we sleep,
And trust your watchful eye"?

Then see, oh, moon, beneath the wall
That Spanish soldier prowls!
The moon? 'Tis dumb as Trappist monk
Beneath his silent cowl.

That spy has found a crevice small!
With eager hands and brown
He tears on this side, then on that,
And peeps inside the town.

He slips his snakish body in;
He softly steals around!
So still it is! No sentinel
Slow strides the moon-white ground.

He wriggles back—now moon on high,
That muffling cowl throw down!
Loud shout, "To arms!" ere he can bring
A host to take the town!

Alas! that traitor moon is dumb!
A host of burglars creep
Unchallenged through the broken wall
While weary townfolk sleep.

Soon, hear that startling cry, "To arms!"
And what a deadly strife!
The townfolk fight, but all in vain,
For country and for life.

Do you that sleepy town upbraid?
Temptation is the hole
Through which, on tiptoes, steals the foe
That will lay waste your soul.

In Prison and Out.

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER X.—BLACKETT'S THREATS.

A PARISH coffin and a pauper's grave were all the country had to give to the dead mother, whose son, in the ignorance and recklessness of boyhood, had broken the laws twice, and been each time visited with a harsh penalty. "That servant which knew his lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." There is Christ's rule. Do we, who sometimes pride ourselves as being the most Christian nation on the face of the earth, abide by that rule?

The mother was buried; and what was to become of Bess? No one was bound to take any care of her. She was old enough to see after herself. There was the workhouse open to her, if she chose to apply for admission; but, if she entered it, it would be to be sent out to service, as a workhouse girl, in the course of a few weeks or months, untrained and untaught, fit only for the miserable drudgery of the lowest service. There was not strength enough in her slight, ill-fed frame to enable her to keep body and soul together at laundry-work, which was the only work she knew anything of. There was no home, however wretched, to give her shelter, if she continued to sell water cresses in the streets. True, Blackett offered her the refuge of his lodgings, and Roger urged her eagerly to avail herself of his father's kindness; but Bess shrank away with terror from the mere thought of it. Blackett had been the object of her daily dread ever since her childhood, and no change in his manner towards her could inspire her with confidence.

When she came back from following her mother's coffin to its pauper's grave, she stole past Blackett's door into the empty room beyond, and sat down, worn out with grief and weariness, on the bedstead where her mother's corpse had been lying for the last three days. She had lived in the room alone with it, and she felt more lonely now that it was gone. Silent and motionless as it had been, with its half-closed eyelids, and the ashy whiteness of its face gleaming even in the dusk, it had been a companion to her, and she had not been afraid of it. Now it was gone, she was indeed alone.

There was not a single article of furniture left in the room, except this low, rough pallet-bedstead, with the dingy sacking, bare of bed and bedclothes. Everything else was gone. There was now no candlestick left, no teapot or cup, no flat-iron or poker,—not one of the small household goods of the poor. Bess had

carried all the few possessions left to her, in a miscellaneous lot to get what she could for them at the marine stores. She would have carried off the bedsteads if they had not been too heavy for her, or if her mother's corpse had not been lying there.

Euclid, her only friend, had not been near her these three days. The truth is that the poor old man was passing through a great and severe struggle, and it was not over yet. He had grown in a measure fond of Bess, and his heart was grieved to the very core for her. But what was he to do? he continually asked himself. What could a poor old man like him do? He was terribly afraid of taking any additional weight upon his over-burdened shoulders, especially now he was in sight of the goal. For the last year or two, as he felt the infirmities of age growing heavier, an unspeakable dread lodged in his inmost soul, lest, after all, he should fail in his life's aim. Could he endure to see Victoria buried as Mrs. Fell was? He had lurked in a dark corner of the staircase, and watched the rough and reckless way in which the rude, slight box, that could hardly be called a coffin, was bundled out of the house, and carried off along the street, followed by Bess alone as the only mourner for the dead. It had given a sharp and poignant prick to his hidden fears. How could he burden himself with the care of Bess while there was any chance of such an ending to his career, or, worse still, to Victoria's? If Victoria had been buried in her own coffin, as his wife and the other children had been, he might have taken up with Bess. But she seemed no nearer the grave than at the beginning of the winter: her health, or rather her complaint, whatever it was, remained stationary. No: he must not sacrifice Victoria to Bess.

Poor Bess! But as she was sitting alone in the gathering twilight, bewildered with her sorrow, she heard the door softly opened, and as softly closed again. It was Victoria who had come in, after crawling feebly down the long flights of stairs, which she had mounted four months ago, in the autumn, for the last time as she thought. She could not speak yet, and she sat down breathless and silent beside the desolate girl. There was a mournful stillness as of death in the room, though all around were echoing the busy, jarring noises of common life.

"I don't know much," said Victoria at last in her low, weak voice; "but I've dreams sometimes, lyin' up there alone all day, and I seem to see quite plain some place where the sun is always shinin', and folks are happy, and there mother is. I saw it last night, betwixt sleepin' and wakin', as plain as I see you. And your mother was there, Bess; and someone, I couldn't see his face, was leadin' her to where the sun was warm and bright, and choosin' a good place for her to rest in; and he looked as if he was watchin' for any little bit o' stone in the way, for fear she'd hurt her feet, like we might do wi' a little, little child, just learnin' to go alone. And, O Bess! your mother turned so as I could see her face; and it was very pale, but very peaceful. There wasn't any more pain in it."

"Is it true?" sobbed Bess.

"I don't know much," repeated Victoria. "I never went to school; for father couldn't pay for my schoolin', and there wasn't any law to make him. He'd have done it gladly; but watercresses isn't much for a family to live on, and die on. But I think it must be true; or how could I see it? I told father what I'm tellin' you; and I said to him, 'Father, it don't matter very much about bein' buried in our own coffins, if we get to a place like that after all.'"

"And what did he say?" asked Bess.

"He made a noise like 'Umph!' and went off," answered Victoria.

But Bess was thinking no longer of Victoria's dreams. Her thoughts had gone in again, brooding over their own sorrow; and she moaned with a very deep and bitter moaning.

"Oh! what shall I do?" she cried. "What shall I do?"

"I came to fetch you upstairs to live with us," answered Victoria very softly. "Father'll be glad enough when it's done. You'd be as good as another daughter to father if I was gone; and nobody knows how soon that may be. He's a bit shy and queer just now; but that'll be gone when it's all settled. You shall help me upstairs again, Bess; and when father comes he'll get somebody to help him carry these bedsteads up for you and me to sleep on. It'll be better for me than sleepin' on the floor, you know."

"When Euclid reached home an hour later, he paused before going upstairs, and knocked at the door of Mrs. Fell's room; but there was no answer. He tried to open it; but it was locked. Where could little Bess be? he asked himself in sudden terror. She must be come back from the funeral by this time. Was it possible that she had taken shelter with Blackett? The old man's withered face tingled, and his frame shook as with ague, as

the thought flashed across him. Whose fault would it be? It was he who had forsaken Bess in her misery, the fatherless, motherless, brotherless girl.

He stood outside the closed and locked door, thinking of her light footstep and pretty face, tripping along at his side every morning for the last two months. He had not known how closely she had crept to his heart until now the dread was beating against him that she was gone to Blackett. The old man's gray and grim face grew grayer and grimmer. His conscience smote him sharply. And now what must he do? What did he dare to do? It would be like braving a lion in his den to face Blackett at his own fireside. Yet probably Bess was there.

"God help this old tongue o' mine!" said Euclid half aloud, as, after some minutes of hesitation, he turned with desperate courage to knock at Blackett's door.

"Come in!" shouted Blackett with a surly snarl.

Euclid opened the door, and stood humbly on the threshold. It was a room less bare, but more squalid with dirt, than any other in the house. The woman who had been the mother of Blackett's three sons, had long ago disappeared; and what little cleanliness and comfort had once been known there, had gone with her. The air was stifling with the fumes of tobacco and spirits, and Blackett was smoking over a fireplace choked up with ashes. Roger, who was bound hand and foot with strong cords, had rolled himself out of easy reach of his father's kicks, and was lying in a corner with an expression of terror and hatred on his face. But Bess was nowhere to be seen.

"Come in, and shut the door!" shouted Blackett.

"Mr. Blackett," said Euclid, shutting the door behind him, with the long-sleeping courage of manhood stirring in his old heart, "have you seen aught of Mrs. Fell's little Bess?"

"Ay, have I!" growled Blackett with an oath. "Victoria's been and fetched her up to your rat-hole; and now I give you fair warning, old fellow, if you go to harbour that girl, I'll make this place too hot for you. I'll keep a eye on you going out and coming in, and you'll repent it sore. Get out o' this like a shot, or I'll begin on it at once."

But Euclid was off like a shot before Blackett had finished his threats, and was mounting to his garret with a suddenly gladdened heart. "Thank God! thank God!" he repeated to himself, step after step up the long staircase. He had hardly heeded Blackett's menaces, though they lodged themselves unconsciously in his mind, and came back to his memory when his first gladness was over. Bess had fallen asleep for sorrow on Victoria's bed; and he stooped over her, and laid his hard brown hand gently on her head, as if to welcome her to her new home. "God bless her!" he murmured.

"I sha'n't care if you can't bury me in my own coffin," whispered Victoria, "not a bit."

"We'll see about that, Victoria, my dear," he answered with tears of mingled joy and fear glittering in his eyes. "Please God, he'll let me do as much as that!"

(To be continued.)

BLACK VALLEY RAILWAY.

BY MRS. WILBUR F. CRAFTS.

I HAVE lately been taking a trip to the far Northwest, and I have drawn a sketch of some of the scenery along the way. Certainly as often as every five minutes I saw some of this "scenery" as I looked out of the car window. If you should take a journey to the Yellowstone Park you would be shown the wonderful Obsidian Cliffs, mountains of glass, produced by volcanic action; you would wonder at the greatness of God as you should look at them.

But as I rode along on the train I wondered at the meanness of man as I looked at the glass bottles lying all along the way, with the labels "Lager Beer" on them, and the corks all gone, because they had been emptied of their contents. What a row of cliffs those same bottles would make if they should all be gathered into heaps. I believe they would rival in height those Obsidian Cliffs in the Yellowstone Park. What a monument they would make to the drunkards, thousands of them who die in our country every year.

As I looked out of the car window I was reminded of the Black Valley Railroad. Perhaps you have never heard of it, so I will tell you the names of some of the stations: Weepington, Wailingville, Tear River, Foolsport, Slaughterfield, Wallowditch. More and more I thought about

this Black Valley Railroad, and felt myself to be riding on it, as the train filled with firemen on their way to a tournament. They threw cards about. They spit tobacco juice on the floor, so that the car was filthy. They drank from whiskey-bottles, which they had in their pockets. Their jokes were so vile that I filled my ears with paper. They staggered up and down the aisles, not actually drunk, but just to show how they would do when they would come home on "Friday night." I said to the conductor, "This is no place for a lady." He replied, "It is just the same in all the cars in the train."

NO LIQUORS SOLD WHILE PASSING THROUGH NORTH AND SOUTH DAKOTA.

At another time on my journey I saw this card hung up in the car. No mistaking that railroad for the Black Valley Railroad. There were no stations along the way with the sign "Saloon," to remind one of Foolsport, Wailington, etc. It might have been named the "Happy Valley Railroad." I looked out of the window; the glass bottles were not to be seen. I thought of a story I had heard about a woman who was seen almost constantly on the street picking up something, and putting it into her apron. When asked what she was doing, she replied that she was "picking up bits of glass to save the little children's feet," the little ones that have to go barefooted, you know. I thought of this, and I said to myself, How much suffering and sorrow these States that will not allow liquor to be sold in their borders are going to save their boys and girls.—*Youth's Temperance Banner.*

JUNIOR LEAGUE.

HOW OLD MUST I BE TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

THE League assembled, put the question, "How old were you when you first loved your parents?"

Bring out the answer: "Always;" "Four years old;" "Six years old," etc. How many now love their parents? Hands up!

How old did you have to be to trust your parents? How many do? Hands up!

How many obey your parents? Hands up! Then you can be Christians. To love, trust, and obey God is to be a Christian.

How many will try to be Christians?

Sing: "Come to Jesus just now,
He will save you just now."

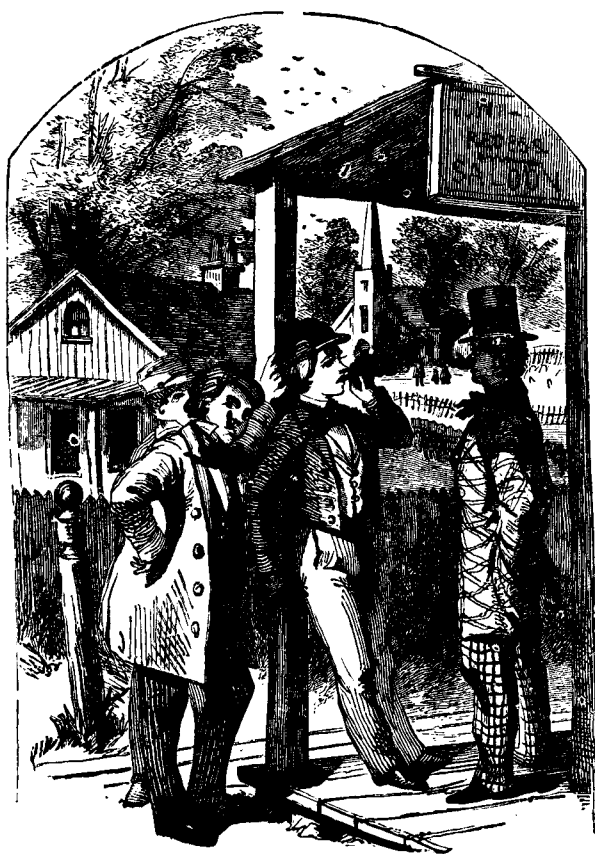
BIBLE LESSONS.

- "One thing is needful."—Luke 10. 42.
- "One thing thou lackest."—Mark 10. 21.
- "One thing I know."—John 9. 25.
- "One thing I do."—Phil. 3. 13.
- "One thing have I desired."—Psalm 27. 14.
- "Who was the first man?"—Gen. 2. 7, 19.
- "Who was the oldest man?"—Gen. 5. 27.
- "Who was the meekest man?"—Num. 13. 3.
- "Who was the strongest man?"—Judg. 16. 6.
- "Who was the wisest man?"—1 Kings 3. 5, 11-14.
- "Who was the most patient man?"—Job. 1. 22.
- "Who was the Son of man?"—Luke 19. 10.

Each one of the above can be made the subject of a ten-minutes' talk in department of Spiritual Work.

NOT SO BAD AS DRINKING.

DR. B. W. RICHARDSON has the last word in the Idler's Club Symposium on the subject of smoking. It is not, he considers, so bad as drinking, but it is radically bad. It disturbs the circulation; it often impedes digestion; it interferes with the fine adjustments of the senses, and sometimes it impairs the lenses of vision altogether. Moreover, it generates a craving for itself in the nervous organism, always an evil sign, and indirectly it calls up, not infrequently, hereditary evils, like cancer, which would lie latent if left alone. "Think of this when you smoke tobacco," says this authority, "and say is the habit not one more honoured in the breach than in the observance? Without either malice or uncharitableness my vote is emphatically against that practice."



THE PROPHECY.

BY MARY DWINELL CHELLIS.

"HALLO there, Bill! What are you doing?"

"Smoking."

"Don't it make you sick?"

"Not a bit of it. I'm too old a stager for that."

"You ain't as old as I am, and I think I am young. I tried smoking once, and that was enough for me. I thought I was going to die, I was so sick."

"Han't you tried it again?"

"No, sir; and what is more, I sha'n't."

"When was it?"

"The next day after Cross came here. I was fool enough to think it would be smart to do as he did; but, as grandpa says, I saw the folly of it before it was too late, and there was no great harm done."

"Well, I began the very day you did, and I don't believe you were sicker than I was. But when I make up my mind to do a thing I do it; and to tell the truth, it has taken me all this time to get so I can smoke and enjoy it. Now I'm all right."

"According to my way of thinking, you are all wrong. Father says he wouldn't have me learn to smoke for five thousand dollars. He says I should be so much out of pocket. It costs a good deal to smoke in style. He says he knew a man who used to spend a dollar a day for cigars right along. I would rather invest money in some other way."

"Pshaw! most every man smokes, and when I grow up I want to do like the rest. I should feel pretty flat if I happened to be with a lot of fellows that were smoking and I couldn't take a cigar without making myself sick. You won't catch me in such a scrape as that. Cross can smoke half a day right along."

"He would stop long enough to drink a glass of beer now and then. Cold water tastes pretty flat when a fellow's mouth is all burnt up with tobacco."

"That's a fact, but Cross has money enough to pay for all the beer he wants. He says he began to smoke when he was eight years old."

"He looks like it: he isn't half-grown. Three years older than I am, and only up to my shoulders! I thought you wanted to be tall and large."

"I do, and I expect to be."

"So do I. I don't calculate to lose a foot or two in height, and spoil my teeth, and muddle my brain, for the sake of being ready to smoke with some fellows I may happen to meet ten years from now. I sha'n't do it, and you'd better not. The next thing, you will be drinking beer; then something stronger, and more of it, until you won't care what else comes to you if you can only get all the rum and tobacco you want."

"That's hard talk, Joe—rather more than I can stand. If I was in the habit of fighting I should call you to account. When a man gets so he don't care for anything but rum and tobacco he is a drunkard. You don't think I shall ever be a drunkard, do you?"

"I hope not; but you are only twelve years old, and if you have got a taste for beer and tobacco you have taken the first step. I never thought so much about it until father talked to me, the night after I tried smoking, but he said a young boy couldn't expect to make the best of himself in any way if he used tobacco. It will drain his pocket of small change, weaken his body, and dull his brains. Some men get so used to having a quid rolling round in their mouths they can't talk without it. They stutter and stammer, as though they had lost a part of their tongues. I hope you won't chew as well as smoke. One is bad enough, but take them together they are too bad to be tolerated. As for me, I will have none of the filthy stuff."

The two boys who talked thus with each other were schoolmates, and their parents neighbours, so that seldom a day passed when they were not together; but from the time when one decided not to use tobacco and the other resolved to smoke like "an old stager" their paths in life diverged.

Less than a score of years have gone by since then; yet the prophecy, counted so severe, has been literally fulfilled, as Bill acknowledges, with bitter regrets that he had not heeded the warning of his old-time friend. He is a besotted drunkard, without hope of reform, replying to all exhortations: "As long as I use tobacco I must drink liquor; and I would rather die than give up tobacco."

LESSON NOTES.

B.C. 1000.] LESSON XI. [March 18.

WINE A MOCKER.

Prov. 20. 1-7. Memory verses, 1-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whoever is deceived thereby is not wise.—Prov. 20-1.

OUTLINE.

1. Folly, v. 1-4.
2. Wisdom, v. 5-7.

EXPLANATIONS.

"Wine is a mocker"—"Wine is a sneerer"; a frivolous, impudent person. "Strong drink is raging"—Or, "any sort of intoxicant is clamour and tumult." "Is not wise"—Cannot become wise. Strong drink is an enemy to wisdom in every sphere of life. "The fear of a king"—"King" here stands for all governmental authority. The criminal is as much afraid of a policeman as a Congo negro is of a lion. "Sinneth against his own soul"—Forfeits his life. This is true not only when capital punishment is incurred. A very large share of people are living diminished lives because of the knowledge that some act of theirs, if generally known, would "provoke to anger" that most despotic of all kings, Public Opinion. "Cease from"—Keep apart from. "Will be meddling"—Better, "pushes recklessly on;" "gets angry." "Will not plough, by reason of the cold"—The smallest difficulty deters a lazy man from most needed work. "Therefore shall he beg in harvest"—He who neglects work will suffer loss, and this is as true in the spiritual as in the natural world. "Counsel in the heart"—Unspoken plans. "Like deep water"—Hard to be fathomed. "A man of understanding will draw it out"—A shrewd man can find out most secrets. "Most men"—Most people proclaim what virtue they have. An unobtrusive, pious man is hard to find. "The just man" etc.—A righteous ancestry is one of the greatest of blessings.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson are we warned—

1. Against liquor drinking?
2. Against laziness?
3. Against overweening self-esteem.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What is said in the Golden Text about wine and wine-drinkers? "Wine is a mocker," etc. 2. What are we taught concerning quarrels? "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife." 3. What is said about the sluggard who will not work? "He shall beg, and have nothing." 4. What is said of the just man? "He walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The folly of sin.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

How is Christ a priest?

On earth he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins; and in heaven he presents himself to God for us, makes continual intercession on our behalf, and sends down upon us his blessing.

Stop and Think.

BY E. E. REXFORD.

My boy, when they ask you to drink,

Stop and think.

Just think of the danger ahead:

Of the hearts that in sorrow have bled
O'er hopes that were drown'd in the bowl
Filled with death for the body and soul.

When you hear a man asking for drink,

Stop and think.

The draught that he drinks will destroy

High hopes and ambitions, my boy!

And the man who the leader might be

Is a slave that no man's hand can free.

Of this terrible demon of drink!

Stop and think.

Of the graves where the victims have laid,

Of the ruin and woe it has made,

Of the wives and the mother who pray

For the curse to be taken away.

Yes, when you are tempted to drink,

Stop and think

Of the danger that lurks in the bowl,

The death that it brings to the soul,

The harvest of sin and of woe,

And spurn back the tempter with "No."

"STEER STRAIGHT FOR ME."

A FISHERMAN, who habitually drank to excess, used to sail from a small cove on the Scotch coast to the fishing grounds, several miles out in the ocean. There was no lighthouse to guide him, not even a beacon-light, and the channel was intricate. When the fisherman had taken a drop too much and night had fallen, it was dangerous work entering that cove.

His little son used to watch for his father's coming, and as soon as he saw him he would run down to the point, and cry out:

"Steer straight for me, father, and you'll get safe home!"

The boy died; and one evening the father was sitting at his lonely fireside. His conscience troubled him, for he had been thinking over the sins of his life. As he night settled down he thought he heard the voice of his boy ring out through the darkness:

"Steer straight for me, father, and you'll get safe home!"

Springing to his feet, he called out:

"You're right this time, my son!"

From that moment he was a changed man; he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and served him until he was taken to heaven to join his little son whom he had so much loved.

THE SURETY.

THOMAS NOLAN had been turned out of Sabbath-school. He had become so bad that it seemed impossible to bear with him any longer, and his influence over the other pupils was so bad, that for their sake it was thought best to expel him. But his parents brought him to the school again, begging the superintendent to take him back, and give him one more trial.

"I should be very glad to do so, if I could feel sure of his good conduct. But it is a sad thing for such a big boy to set such a bad example. However, I will see," and the superintendent went into the school-room.



WINE IS A MOCKER.

"Boys," said he, "Thomas Nolan wants to come back to the Sabbath-school, and if someone will become security for his good conduct, I will gladly receive him into the school again."

There was silence for a few minutes. The larger boys shook their heads, for they knew him of old. Then one of the smallest boys said, "Please, sir, I will."

"You!" said the superintendent, "you become security for a boy twice as large as you! Willie, do you understand what it means to become security for any one?"

"Yes, sir; it means that when he is bad, I am to be punished instead of him," was Willie's reply.

The superintendent then went out and told Mr. Nolan that they would receive Thomas into the school again, as Willie Graham had become security for his good conduct.

Tom's heart was touched; and as he followed the superintendent into the school-room he made a mental resolve that little Willie Graham should never have to be punished for his misconduct.

"You ought to acquire the faculty of being at home in the best society," said a fashionable aunt to an honest nephew. "I manage that easily enough," responded the nephew, "by staying at home with my wife and children."

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