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THE

BRANDY DROPS;

OR,

CHARLIE'S PLEDGE.

A Temperance Story.

BY AUNT JULIA.

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SMITHSON. INSTITUTION 7562

New-York:
PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & PORTER,
SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.
1858

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by
CARLTON & PORTER,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New-York.

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THE BRANDY DROPS.

CHAPTER I.

THE DRUNKEN WOMAN.

SCHOOL was out. It was half an hour later than usual, and Mrs. Martin was standing at the front door, looking for her little boys. Soon one of them, a sprightly lad of ten, came running up with his satchel of books. He had spied his mother, and hastened his steps to meet her.

"You are late home, my boy," was the mother's greeting.

Charlie raised his manly face to meet his mother's eye, with such a pleasant, truth-telling look, that she could not doubt his word as he replied:

"Yes, mother, the teacher kept us half an hour to teach us a new song."

"But I thought," said the mother, "that I saw you loitering down the street; and here comes Eddie, who stood there even longer than you."

As she spoke a delicate little boy, two years younger than Charlie, came up and put his hand into that of the lady, and all three went into the house together.

"Indeed, mother," said Eddie, as they pulled off their caps, and came into the family parlor, "I did not think I was stopping there so long; we were just looking at a poor woman that was going by on a cart. Did you see her, mother? O she did look so bad! She had on no bonnet or shawl, and her hair was all down around her face."

"Yes, and she tried to get up," said Charlie; "she reached out her hand, and raised herself a little, and then she fell back; and her face was all swollen up so that she could not more than half open her eyes. What was the matter with her, mother? I never saw anybody look so bad before!"

"I suppose, my child, that she had

been drinking," replied Mrs. Martin, slowly.

"What! was she drunk?" exclaimed both the boys at once. "Well, if I had known that she was only a drunkard," added Charlie, "I should not have minded her."

"I think," said Eddie, "that she was not a drunkard; she was a woman, and she must have been sick, or may be she had been hurt in some way."

"Eddie, what makes people drunk?" inquired the mother.

"Why, drinking wine, and rum, and brandy, or some such thing, I suppose," was Eddie's reply.

"Well, then, if a woman drinks those things, what is to prevent her becoming a drunkard?"

"But, mother, women never do drink such things, do they?"

"Sometimes they do, Eddie."

"Well, it is only wicked women that do so," said Charlie.

"Perhaps they were good once," replied the mother; "they might have begun by

taking a little because they thought it would do them good. If I should do so too when I feel sick or tired, perhaps I might one day appear as badly as the woman on the cart did."

"O mother, you never will do that, will you?" said Eddie in a tone of deep concern. "What would we do if you should?"

"And what do you suppose that poor woman's children do?" replied Mrs. Martin.

"Has she any children?" asked Charlie.

"I do not know, Charlie; she may have children that require a mother's care quite as much as my little boys do."

"But you never do drink any such thing, I know; do you, mother?" inquired Charlie.

"Why not?" responded the mother.

"But you won't for our sakes, mother; say you won't," pleaded the child; and the tears rolled down his cheeks as he hid his face in his mother's lap, and his whole frame shook with emotion as he added: "I never could bear to see my mother looking so!"

Little Eddie cried too, and Mrs. Martin herself was deeply moved. She raised her little Charlie, and wiping away his tears, said:

"No, my son, I think you need not be afraid; your mother has promised never to drink any such thing. She signed the pledge some years ago, and so did your father, and grandfather, and Uncle George, and sister Amelia; and I want you and Eddie to sign it too, by and by."

"What is the pledge, mother?" asked Eddie.

"It is promising never to drink anything that can make you drunk, and writing it down on a piece of paper, and signing your name to it."

"O mother," said Charlie, "we shall never drink anything to make us drunk!"

"Yes," chimed in Eddie, "I'd promise that very quick."

"Then we will make arrangements to have you both sign the pledge, if you wish to," was Mrs. Martin's reply. She thought it best for them to understand its meaning and something of its importance,

before they made such a promise. And she was right, for they would be much more likely to keep it, and feel it binding upon them.

"Why all so sober?" cried Mr. Martin coming in just at this time.

The boys both ran to meet their father, and soon they were seated one on each knee, telling all they had seen and heard, while their mother went to bring little Winslow from the nursery. He was the baby, a cunning little fellow just running alone, and answering to the call of "Winnie." When the father came home late in the afternoon, Winnie was always brought down from the nursery, and the whole family were together for the evening meal.

"Papa, papa!" cried the little fellow, and the two older brothers cheerfully jumped down, and lifted the little one into papa's lap, while they drew up chairs to his side.

"So," said Mr. Martin after all was arranged, "you have been promising never to drink anything that will intoxicate."

"*Intoxicate!* what is that, father?" inquired Eddie.

"It means to make drunk, my son. Any liquor that makes people drunk or tipsy intoxicates them, and is called an intoxicating drink. So when people take the pledge, they promise not to drink anything that will intoxicate. Then if they keep their promise they never became drunk or tipsy."

"O father!" said Charlie, "I think it would be a good thing for that woman to sign the pledge. I wish I knew where she lives, and I would try to get her to sign it. It would do her children so much good."

"True," said Mr. Martin, "it would be a good thing for her and a great many others like her to sign the pledge. But it would be very difficult for them to keep it, because they have learned to love strong drink. The best way is for people to promise while young never to drink, and then they will not learn to love it. Shall I tell you of a little sailor boy who took the pledge from his mother's lips once?"

"O yes, do!" said both the boys, at once.

"Well, this little boy lived among the green hills of Vermont. Who can tell me where Vermont is?"

"It is one of the New-England states, and is nearly north of here," replied Charlie.

"And how much sea-shore has it?"

Charlie thought it had about eighteen miles, but Eddie, who had just been studying about it, and had a very good memory, was sure it had none.

"Eddie is right this time," said the father; "and although this little boy was a long way from the ocean, he took it into his head that it would be the nicest thing in the world to be a sailor. Nothing else would satisfy him. His father and mother were poor, and he their only child. It was hard parting, but they could not deny him what he wished so much. Besides, too, he had so many plans in his head for helping them by and by, when he should have earned a great deal of money, and come back to them. His little bundle of clothing was made up, and on a bright spring morning he stood

there by the cottage-door, with his hand in that of his mother, and the big tears were in his eyes as she gave him the parting kiss.

"'My son, said she, 'I have never seen the ocean, but they tell me that the great temptation of the sailor is strong drink. Now promise me, my son, that you never will touch it.'

"He did promise. He went to sea. He passed through sunshine, storm, and shipwreck. He sailed the broad world over; to Calcutta, to the Mediterranean, and to the northern and the southern oceans, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to

San Francisco. He saw his fellow-sailors drink and they seemed to enjoy it, and they offered it to him; but in all his travels, wherever he saw the glass of liquor, his mother's form at the door of his home would seem to come up before him, and he never touched it, never once tasted it. And when at the age of sixty he said, 'I can say that my lips are innocent of the taste of strong drink.'

"He is now rich and a captain; while his parents lived he sent back money enough to make them comfortable."

"That was good of him, father; don't you think so?" said Charlie.

"I do, my child. But that was not all. He was once on a ship where a sailor came on board drunk. Every one else kicked the poor fellow around, but our captain took him into his own cabin, and kept him there until he had slept off the intoxication. Then he asked him if he had a mother. The poor man said that she died when he was very small. So the captain told him of his mother, and the promise that he made her at the cottage

door. The story so affected the poor sailor that he gave up drinking. That was some years ago. A few days since this sailor called on the captain, and told him that he was still a sober man, and had become master of one of the finest packets that sails out of New-York.

That man, it seems, learned to break off his bad habit; but the best way is to keep clear of it, as the Vermont boy did. Now if you sign the pledge while you are boys, before you have ever touched it, then you can have it to say, like the captain, "I know not even how it tastes!"

Charlie and Eddie both thought they would like to do so, and their mother proposed that father should bring home some cards with the pledge on them the next day, some pretty ones that would be worth keeping.

You may be sure that both the boys were much pleased with this arrangement, and after supper they went up stairs to their own little room. There they had each a table and stool, and a set of shelves where they kept all their books. Charlie

said he would put his pledge away in the table-drawer, but Eddie thought the nicest place would be on the top of the shelves, where he could look at it every time he came into the room. This was a fine idea, but Charlie made sport of it, saying, "Just as if a body were afraid of breaking it! Why, do you suppose there is any danger of my being a drunkard?"

CHAPTER II.

THE POWER OF RIDICULE.

THE next morning on their way to school they overtook Clifford Nash, a school-mate, some two or three years older than Charlie. He was a boy that had a very high opinion of himself and of his father's purse, and did not hesitate to laugh at anything that did not suit him. Now Charlie had one serious fault. He may have had several, for aught I know, but this one was worse than any other: he was afraid of being laughed at. He would have preferred that Clifford should not know anything about their signing the pledge. But just as soon as they were within hearing Eddie sung out: "Say, Cliff, we are going to sign the temperance pledge! Father is going to get us some nice copies of one."

"The what!" exclaimed Clifford, turn-

ing on his heel, and stopping short before them with an air of surprise.

"Why, the temperance pledge!" continued Eddie in his simplicity. "We are going to promise never to taste anything that would make anybody drunk, just as the little sailor boy did; are we not, Charlie?"

"O, nonsense! what of it?" exclaimed Charlie in a pet. "Why can you never hold your tongue?"

"Vinegar and pepper!" cried Clifford. "What is the matter? Been taking a little drop too much, I suppose, and father has found it out, and is afraid his son will learn to dissipate, so he wants him to take the pledge, eh?" and he gave Charlie a nudge with his elbow.

Charlie was too much surprised to reply at once, and he stood looking at him in silence. This was answered by a taunting laugh from the young lad, who added, "Wonder, how I found it out, eh?"

"It is no such thing?" returned Charlie indignantly. "There is not a word of truth in it."

"O no, of course not!" retorted Clifford. "He wants you to take the pledge just for nothing. But you need not be so huffy about it. A plagued bit do I care when I am found out. And my pop knows better than to try to get me to sign the pledge, for I'd break it every day. Do you suppose I would go without my wine after dinner?" said he, drawing himself up pompously. "Perhaps you never tasted of wine. Don't have it at your table, do you?"

"No, indeed!" replied Eddie, speaking up bravely, "and I hope we never shall."

"You!" said Clifford with a sneer. "What do you know about it? Just wait till you get off your frocks, won't you?"

"I know that wine and brandy do a great deal of mischief in the world, but I do not mean they shall ever hurt me," replied the boy.

"Quite a preacher to be sure!" was the reply. But Eddie cared very little for his sneers. A good thing it is for man or boy if he dare say and do what is right, without being moved by ridicule.

By this time they were in the school-room, and the bold, bad boy, Clifford, cried out:

"Halloo, boys! want to see the elephant? Here are two little chaps so far gone that they have to turn teetotalers and take the pledge; ha! ha! ha!" and the rude fellow laughed at his own insolence.

Just now the teacher entered, and the noise was somewhat hushed; but some of the scholars gathered around the three boys. Clifford went on with his nonsense, but Charlie turned away in a pet, without answering any of their questions.

"What is it, Eddie?" inquired Jamie Williams.

"Why, I told Cliff that Charlie and I were going to sign the pledge, and he is making a great fuss about it, and says that it is because we have been getting tipsy; but it's no such thing."

"Well, then, what do you want to take the pledge for?" asked Jamie.

"Why, you see, it is just a promise that we never will drink anything to make

us tipsy," replied Eddie. "Father told us last night about a sailor boy that promised his mother, before he went away, that he never would drink. And he never did; and by and by he got to be a captain."

"Tell me all about it," said Jamie.

So Eddie told him what he could remember of the story. "And now," said he, "I'd like to have it to say when I'm sixty years old, that I have never tasted liquor."

"Haven't you tasted it already?" asked Jamie.

"Why, no!" said Eddie, looking quite surprised, as if the thing was impossible.

"Then all I have to say is, that you do not know how good it is."

"Why, have you ever drank any?" inquired Eddie in his turn.

"Yes, indeed; I have drank lager beer, and it is first-rate. To be sure it tastes quite bitter at first, but then I thought it must be good, for you know so many men drink it, and I like it now. It is first-rate."

"Does your father know that you take it?"

"No, he don't know anything about it; but then he takes a little himself now and then."

"Your father drink!" exclaimed Eddie.

"Yes, he takes brandy, or porter, or something nice; but it is all the same, and it is just as good for me as for him. He takes it when he comes in from the shop at night, just for medicine, he says. You see that is enough to show that he thinks it is good, and I'm bound I'll have some too."

"How can you get it? Does your father give it to you?"

"He? Not a drop of it. I 'spect he would lick me if he knew that I took it. It is when mother sends me to the corner grocery that I get it. When the men drink off their beer there is almost always some left in the mugs, and so I drink it up; and once or twice Peter gave me a glass all to myself."

The signal for silence was now heard, and it found quite a number of boys in

that school-room thinking about the subject of Temperance, and many of them came to the conclusion that Charlie and Eddie did quite right in signing the pledge. At recess Clifford tried to get up a nickname for the two boys. He called them cold-water boys, but it did not go very well. Very few of the boys really liked Clifford, and besides they had learned by this time that Charlie and Eddie had not been getting tipsy. So there was very little said on the subject, though the most that was said was on the wrong side. It is a bad way of doing things, I know, but somehow it is a fact, that good boys are not as bold to talk out for the right, as bad boys are for the wrong. I wish it were not so; but I do not know how it can be helped, unless good boys will talk right out what they feel, and not be afraid. And I am sure they have not half so much to be afraid of as bad boys have. The very feeling that they are right ought to be enough for them.

Charlie was very ill-natured all day.

It was very unwise in him to be so, for many of the boys would have taken his part if he had shown a little more lovable temper about it. You may depend upon it that it is very poor policy to be ill-natured. Smiles are cheap; they make the one who smiles happy, and win him a great many friends. But it is hard work to be cross; it makes one feel so tired and uncomfortable!

Charlie was in no mood to be pleased with the pretty cards which his father brought home that evening. He did not venture so far as to speak crossly about them, but he paid the least possible attention to them, and said nothing.

Eddie was delighted with them, as well he might be. They were each larger than his two hands, with red and blue and green letters on them, and read thus:

"We do hereby pledge ourselves to abstain entirely from the purchase, sale, and use of intoxicating drinks, except for mechanical or medicinal purposes. We also pledge ourselves not to offer them to our

friends, excepting for these purposes; and we will by all suitable means exert our influence against their use as a beverage, in the nation and in the world."

"And here is a place for the name!" said Eddie joyously. "O, father, how very kind you are!"

"But what is the matter with you, Charlie?" inquired Mr. Martin. "Don't you like your pledge, my son?"

Charlie looked confused. He did not know what answer to make to this kind appeal. But it so happened that he was not obliged to say anything, for just then there was a loud ring at the door, and in another moment their sister Amelia bounded into the room, followed more leisurely by their Uncle George. She was very glad to see father, and mother, and her little brothers; and they in turn were very glad to see her.

She had been away from home two months, visiting at Uncle George's. She did not expect to remain so long, but she had found her dear grandmother in poor

health, and very glad of her company; so she had remained, with the consent of her parents. She would read to the dear old lady, talk with her, sing to her, and take her out in little walks around the yard, and accompany her in her morning drives. It is delightful to see the young giving up their own pleasure, and spending their time in comforting the lonely homes of the aged.

As the fall advanced and the weather became cooler, grandmamma's health was better, and it was thought best that Amelia should come home and go to school. So home she came, and Uncle George with her. And what a time they did have talking about the good folks at home, the little cousins, the favorite pony, and I know not what all!

At any rate the pledges were forgotten for that night, only Eddie took the precaution to put his up in the bookcase. Charlie carelessly laid his down on the table. While they were all so busily talking with Uncle George and sister Amelia, little Winnie, who was just tall

enough to pull things off the table, reached up his chubby little hand and made a prize of the colored card. Then he sat down just under the table to look it all over with his baby eyes, and drool on it, and poke it over with his wet baby fingers; and O how pretty he did think it was! And nobody saw him, at least no one said anything about it, or took it away from him; but I think that Charlie felt a little guilty when he went to bed that night, and it was some time before he went to sleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRANDY DROPS.

It was late when Charlie awoke the next morning, but he had not slept off the ill-nature of the day before. The remembrance of its events hung gloomily over his young heart, that ought to have been rejoicing like a lark in the bright sunshine of that happy morning. The breakfast bell rang before he was half dressed, and when he ran down stairs, his ill-humor was in no way appeased by learning that his Uncle George had already left in the early train. He came near being sent away from the table for making his sister a short answer.

What can be the matter with the usually amiable Charlie? Ah, he is not his own master; he has not the manly independence that dares to do right. He does not exactly wish to do wrong, but he is afraid

of being laughed at if he does right. This man-fearing spirit will make Charlie a great deal of trouble through life, if he does not get rid of it.

After prayers Eddie ran to get his temperance pledge to show it to his sister. In passing through the room to the bookcase, what should he see but his brother's card on the carpet, torn and soiled. On his return he brought it to Charlie, saying:

"See here, I found your card all torn, under the table."

"Why, what does that mean?" inquired his mother.

"I put it on the table, and I suppose Winnie got hold of it," was Charlie's reply, but his face turned red.

"Well, that is a pity, certainly; but you should not have put it there," was the kind mother's remark. "Your father will not be pleased with your carelessness, nor very willing to get you another one."

Charlie ventured no reply, but in his wicked little heart he thought that would just suit him.

As the day passed on he could not get

rid of the feeling that he had not acted a truthful part that morning toward his mother. It was in vain he tried to persuade himself that he did not tell a lie. He did tell her that he supposed Winnie had done it. But did he suppose any such thing? No; he *knew* that Winnie did it; he tried to deceive his mother by making her think that he knew nothing about it. That was, to all effects and purposes, telling a lie; he had done wrong, and he knew it. I do not wonder that he felt bad.

At recess that day a boy named Jefferson Townley, one of Clifford's friends, came up to Charlie and said tauntingly, "So you have been signing the pledge! How do you feel after it, eh?" and more talk of the same kind, until Charlie was quite out of patience, and broke out with a denial of signing the pledge altogether. Upon this Clifford called him a liar, and referred to Eddie to prove his signing the pledge. But Eddie was not to be found, and Charlie finished by declaring again that he had not signed the pledge, and

what was more, he did not intend to. He had torn it up, and that was the end of it

"Well," said Clifford, "you are a tee totaler any how; you told me so yesterday."

"It is no such thing!" was Charlie's short reply. "I did not say anything about signing the pledge, or being a teetotaler either."

"Well, Eddie said so if you did not."

"I have nothing to do with what Eddie said. He can answer for himself."

"Come, now, you need not be so crusty about it. I dare say you would not take a drop if your life depended on it. For my part I think it is really mean to be obliged to promise not to take a drop, just as if you were afraid to trust yourself. Now I've learned to take just enough and know when to stop," said the little big man with an important air.

"I am just as free to drink as you are," was Charlie's boastful answer.

"I dare you to do it," said Jefferson. "You would not even venture to eat a brandy drop."

"Just try me," said Charles. Poor boy! He had forgotten the petition, "Lead us not into temptation." He thought he would just take enough to show them that he was not afraid to do it. But there was no moral courage about that; he would have shown much more if he had boldly stood up for his temperance principles.

Jefferson ran for the candies, and when he came back reached out a handful to Charlie, who offered to pick up one. Clifford seeing this, burst into a loud laugh, saying: "I told you so. See! the fellow is afraid of them. Take a lot of them, boy."

So he took them, and the others took some also, to show their bravery. When he had eaten those, he must needs take more, for they were just as ready to laugh at him now as at the first. Truly, the fear of ridicule is a very hard master. They all watched him and kept him eating until the school-bell rang, which put an end to their sport, or I do not know but they would have killed the poor little coward.

After Charlie returned to his seat, he began to feel very bad. He knew that he had been doing very wrong. What would his father and mother say if they found it out? He hoped they would never know anything about it. He was glad that Eddie did not see him eat them. But suppose some of the boys should tell Eddie, and he was quite sure they would. He looked toward Clifford, and his glance was met with a teasing smile, and a motion toward the cheeks. Charlie put up his hands and found them burning hot. His head seemed heavy and ready to burst, and now a faint suspicion crossed his mind that this was the effect of the brandy. But he could not think much about anything. The room seemed full of strange sounds, and the teacher a great way off. Some of the boys looked as big as horses, and appeared to be making faces at him, and finally all seemed to fade quite away.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLIE'S REPENTANCE.

When Charlie next knew anything of what was going on about him it was evening, and he found himself in bed at home. His head ached dreadfully, and he felt so tired that he could hardly stir. He tried to think what had happened, but only remembered some one teasing and trying to waken him. He felt very miserable and very thirsty. He rolled up his aching eyes and saw his mother sitting near the head of the bed.

"Mother," he said faintly, "I would like some water."

It was given him and he drank eagerly. How cooling it was to his burning frame.

"Mother, what has happened? How did I come here?"

"Don't you know, my son, anything about it?"

"No, mother, I do not."

"Well, think about it a little, and perhaps you will remember."

He closed his eyes wearily and turned his face toward the wall. The bad feeling in his stomach soon reminded him that he had been eating something. Slowly the facts came up before his mind one by one—Clifford teasing him about the pledge, the brandy drops that he had eaten, his bad feelings afterward. Was it possible that he had been *drunk?* Did his parents know what was the matter with him? And his teacher and schoolmates must all have known about it, for he remembered that it came on in the school-room. And this, too, after all his talk about temperance, and his repeated assertion that there was no danger in his case.

Then came up before his mind the picture of the woman on the cart. Was it possible that he had come home to his mother looking and acting like her? and that, too, after what had been said about it. What would they all think of him.

How could he look them in the face again. Such were the bitter thoughts that ran through his mind.

By and by the door opened, and he knew his father's step. Mr. Martin came to the bedside, and said, "Charles, my son," and O how full of grief was the sound of his voice. Charles looked up for a moment, and then his eyes dropped, and he hid his face in the bed-clothing. He had nothing to say. A half-suppressed groan escaped the father, and after a few minutes he left the room.

Then came his mother and brushed back the heavy masses of hair, and bathed his forehead in ice-water, and as her cool fingers rested on his burning temples, he felt, O how sorry, that he had ever grieved such a kind mother.

"My mother, my dear mother!" he murmured, throwing his arms around her neck; "I am so sorry! I did not mean to do so, indeed I did not," and then came a gush of tears.

He felt the kiss of forgiveness on his cheek, and he felt also the warm tear-

drops fall, and he knew that his mother was weeping for him.

"Now, my son," said the quiet voice of his mother, "you are sick, and must rest. Think no more of this till you are better."

"But, mother, suppose I should die. You will forgive me, now won't you, mother? I have been so naughty; and I never, never will grieve you so again, if I should live to be a hundred years old."

"Well, then, my son, let me know how it all happened."

So in sorrowful words and broken sentences Charlie related all that he could remember of the occurrences of the day.

"And who was the one mostly to blame in all this?" inquired the mother.

"It was I, mother. I know it was all my own fault; but I did not dream of such a thing as this." He faltered, and again he burst into tears.

"No, my son," said his mother soothingly; "I do not suppose that you had any such purpose. But do you not see that it all results from fear of being

laughed at? You had no wish to be really on the side of wrong, and yet you had not the courage to come out and declare yourself on the side of right. That is just what ruins so many persons. They cannot boldly say No! when asked to take a drink. So that my dear boy has really taken the same first step that has made so many drunkards."

"O mamma, I am not going to be a drunkard," sobbed Charlie.

"I hope not, my son; and yet how can I be sure of it, if you are so much afraid of ridicule?"

The little boy made no reply to this for some minutes. At last he said:

"Well, mother, I will try and not care what they say, so long as I know that I am in the right."

"That is just what I wish, my child," said the mother, caressing him tenderly; "and you have my entire forgiveness."

"Can I not see father now?" inquired Charlie.

His mother left the room, and after a few moments returned with his father.

The latter had a short talk with his little boy, which ended by his saying:

"Yes, my son, I freely forgive you the past, but I shall wait with some anxiety to see whether your conduct will show that I can fully trust your promises for the future. But you must not forget that you have sinned against God, that you must ask his forgiveness, and that you must not undertake to do any good thing in your own strength."

The father left the bedside, and the son closed his eyes in prayer.

The next day, which was Friday, Charlie was much better, but did not leave the house. They were all very kind to him, his parents, Amelia, and Eddie; but not a word was said about the doings of the day before. Charlie was sober and thoughtful, and spent most of the day in reading, or amusing his little baby brother. Toward night his father came in, and sitting down he drew Charlie gently between his knees and folded his arms around him. What a nice, quiet place that was!

"How does my son feel to-night?" inquired the father gently.

"A great deal better, father," was the reply.

Finally, after a long pause, Charlie said:

"Father."

"What is it, my son?"

"I was thinking if I could only always have your arms around me so, how very easy it would be never to do wrong."

"And what else did you think?"

"O, I know that you cannot always be with me."

"No; and what follows then?"

"I suppose I must learn to take care of myself."

"That is it, my child. I may be able to do very much for you now, but the time will come when you must altogether take care of yourself. You must learn to judge for yourself, and act for yourself, or you will be always getting into trouble."

"Yes, father; and I have been thinking all day how foolish I was to care at all for what the boys said, so long as I knew that I was in the right."

"True, my child; and how could you, when you knew that your heavenly Father was watching over you, and willing to keep you, whose arms, if you would permit, would be thrown about you all the day, and encircle you much more closely even than mine do now."

"O father, I would like to be kept so; but how can I? I want to do right, but just so soon as I think that anybody is looking at me, and making sport of me, I forget all about doing right."

"You must go to God, my child, and tell him all about it. He sees all your trouble, and knows how to pity and help you. Then all through the day you must remember that God is close by you, and you must try to please him. You must watch yourself carefully, and try to think more about God than about those that are laughing at you."

"I will try to do so, father. But what did my mother mean last night when she said that I had taken the same first step that made so many drunkards?"

"I suppose she meant that you had

yielded the first time through fear of being laughed at."

"Is that the way with everybody?"

"Not with everybody. But people commence drinking in that way, perhaps, more frequently than in any other. Shall I tell you a story of such a case?"

"Yes, father, do if you please."

"Some years ago, in the city of Glasgow, in Scotland, there were some young people out on a holiday excursion. It was the birthday of Queen Victoria. These young people were going on a sailing excursion. It was a very bright, pleasant morning, and as some of them stood there talking on the deck in the best of spirits, one of the young men brought along a bottle of whisky and a glass.

"'Here, my pretty miss, is a glass to drink your health,' said he to one of them.

"'O no,' she replied. 'I have signed the pledge.'

"'Beg your pardon,' said he, turning around; 'I hope this other lady is not a teetotaler.'

"'Not at all,' replied the young man

that was with her. 'Sally and I both know how to drink just enough to do us good, without taking too much; and that is the way to do it, I think.'

"As he said this the young stranger raised the full glass to Sally's lips. She just tasted it, and was turning away, when her companion said, 'Tut, Sally, you are not afraid of one glass, surely; one will not

hurt you.' She really did not like to do it, but she yielded to their persuasions, and drank it off. She was afraid of being laughed at and called a teetotaler.

"After a month Sally and her young friend were married, and by and by her husband found that she began to love the vile stuff that he had once coaxed her to drink. Drunkenness in a woman is not so common as among men, but it seems even more horrible. It was in vain that her husband tried to dissuade her. She had drank to please him, and now she would drink to please herself. He signed the pledge hoping that she would do the same. But no; she grew worse and worse, and at last she died.

"The other girl and her companion were also married. They kept to their temperance principles, and tried to win others to their opinions, till finally the husband became a temperance lecturer. His house was the very picture of peace and happiness. Now, which way do you think was the best?"

"O, the last of course, a great deal.

But did the pledge help them to do all that, father?" inquired Charlie.

"Yes, my boy."

"And do you suppose the pledge would really do me any good?"

"I think so."

"How, father?"

"Would you have ventured to take even one of those brandy drops, if you had promised to abstain from everything that would intoxicate?"

"I suppose not."

"You see, too, that would be sufficient excuse for all who might be asked to take any such thing. They have signed the pledge, that is enough."

"Then, father, I'd like to sign the pledge. I did not see before how it would be of any use to me. I thought it was only for men that could not stop drinking without making a promise not to touch it. That was what the boys said."

"If you would pay more attention to what father and mother say, and not mind the boys, you would generally find

yourself in the safest path. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, father, and I'd like to sign the pledge, if you will get me another instead of that one which was torn up."

"You shall have it to-morrow. But hark, there is the tea-bell."

"Wait, papa," said Charles, hanging back.

"What is it, my son?"

"I was very naughty about that card you brought me the other day. I saw Winnie when he tore it up, and I might have taken it away from him as well as not."

"Well, why did you not?"

"I was vexed about it, father, because Eddie had told at school that you were going to get the pledges for us, and the boys laughed at me."

"O my son!" said Mr. Martin, with great concern, "I am afraid you will be ruined, both for time and eternity, by that fear of ridicule."

With tears Charles resolved to master that cowardly feeling, and he had the

satisfaction that evening of receiving the assurances of forgiveness from both his parents for the deception he had practiced. A great load was taken off his heart. But he felt chastened and subdued. His indiscretions had taught him a very good and sound lesson, through the after care and kindness of his parents; but I would not advise any of my young friends to learn in the same way, for it is very painful. Besides, we are taught in the good Book that we are not to do evil that good may come.

CHAPTER V.

TO SCHOOL AGAIN.

CHARLIE was no longer like the little boy that looked upon and admired the deadly serpent. He did not think it

courageous to stand by and watch it. He saw that true safety was found in fleeing from temptation. So when he went to school again on Monday morning, he had no more vain and boastful threats to deal

out. He made up his mind that if asked whether he had yet signed the pledge, he should tell them truly that he had. He felt as if he did not care if the whole world knew it. He expected they would all laugh at him, and if they had done so he would have been ready for them. But temptations do not often come in just the manner in which we look for them. So Charlie found it.

The boys said nothing to him about the affair, though some of them eyed him quite curiously. Charlie did not suspect the true reason of their silence; but the fact was, they were afraid that Mr. Martin would go to the teachers and school-officers and have them punished, perhaps dismissed from the school. So Charlie's courage had time to cool. After a few days, when they found that nothing was said about it, they came down on Charlie quite unexpectedly.

"Signed the pledge yet?" inquired Clifford. But Charlie was not entirely off his guard, and he answered: "Yes, I have."

"Should think it was about time," was the taunting rejoinder.

"Mean to keep it now, I suppose?"

"Indeed I do," replied Charlie.

"How does it feel to get drunk?" was the next insulting inquiry.

No reply.

"Won't you take some more of the same sort?" inquired Jeff, as he offered a handful of the obnoxious drops.

"No, I thank you," was Charlie's polite reply, as he started for the school-room.

"Dear me, how stiff," exclaimed Clifford with a rough word. "See, boys, he is just like the monkey that got tipsy."

"How was that?" asked two or three in a breath.

"Why, you see, the monkey must always do as he sees his master do; and one day he saw him, with some friends, drinking brandy; so he must drink some too, and he took off half a glass, a pretty good dose to begin on. Poor coot! Didn't he cut such monkey-shines there for an hour as never a monkey cut before! It

made great sport for the fellows, and the next morning they wanted to see it tried over again. But Jack put up his hands to his head to show that it ached. O! say, Charlie, did you have the headache?"

Charlie said nothing, but he did remember well how severely his head ached, and now he knew that the pain was caused by the brandy.

"Go on! go on!" exclaimed two or three of the boys impatiently, and Clifford proceeded:

"His master ordered him to drink, and then he jumped for the window, and was up on the roof in a minute. He did not care for the whip, and when they pointed a gun at him he jumped into the chimney."

"Turned chimney-sweep," echoed some of the boys.

"Are you going to jump into the chimney?" inquired Clifford.

Charlie had been standing just ready to go into the house, but he knew if he did so it would only raise a laugh at his expense. Just as Clifford asked the question, he happened to think that it was

only through fear of being laughed at that he stood there. He remembered that he was on the side of right, and that his heavenly Father was looking at him to see if he would do right. So, looking up boldly at Cliff, he replied:

"Better jump into the chimney than make a fool of one's self."

This was an unexpected reply, and under cover of it Charlie walked quietly into the house.

"That monkey was not so big a fool after all," said Jeff. "I'll be hanged if I'd be made tipsy to cut capers for other folks."

"All your nonsense don't amount to much, Cliff," said George Barker, one of the bigger boys. "Charlie has the best of it, and if he sticks to his pledge, and you stick to your brandy-drops, you will see a difference by and by."

With this sage remark came the call of the school-bell, and they all went into the house.

CHAPTER VI.

JEFFERSON TOWNLEY.

JEFFERSON TOWNLEY was a witty, merry-making, cheerful lad of about twelve summers. He was a well-meaning boy, but he was so fond of sport that he sometimes fell into mischief, as we have seen in the case of the brandy drops. Besides, he was an orphan. If he had been under the care of a father like Mr. Martin, who would have watched over him and cultivated his mind and heart, he might never have been led to do so bad an act as tempting little Charlie. Those children who have the care of kind parents ought to look with charity on those whose parents death has taken away, for they are not likely to have such good advice or such kind care.

But Jeff, as he was called by the boys, had his thoughtful moments. Away back

in the past he remembered his mother laying her gentle hand upon his head, while he heard, in the low tones of her sweet voice: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." There, too, was the good pastor, who had watched over him after the death of his mother, (for of his father he had no recollection,) and had talked with him of his future prospects, and how he hoped one day to see him a worthy, noble man. But the country pastor was not able to take the poor lone boy entirely into his own little fold, which was already pretty well filled with hungry lambs. Still, there he remained, until a merchant from the city, who was visiting in the vicinity, and was pleased with the boy's appearance, proposed to take him into his family. Here he was to be cared for and educated till he was fifteen, and then he was to enter the gentleman's store as a clerk.

This merchant's name was Arthur. He was a frank, good-hearted man, but very much engaged in business. He did not seem to think that the young lad wanted

paternal advice with regard to his associates, and if he knew that he associated with Clifford Nash, I suppose he would have thought it all well enough. Mr. Nash was a rich merchant, and in no bad repute, and Mr. Arthur inquired no further.

But it is not riches alone that makes either the boy or the man. Clifford Nash was a spoiled child, puffed up with ideas of his own importance, and bent on the indulgence of his own appetites and wishes at any cost. His papa had but one thought, and that was to make money; while his gay and indulgent mamma was bent on spending money and killing time. Clifford was her pet, and nothing that he wanted must be denied him, however injurious.

Mrs. Nash had taught her son from infancy to love the wine cup that made its daily appearance on the dinner table. At first it was sweetened and fed to him with a spoon. Of course he learned to love it, and as he grew older he would have more, and was admitted to a share of his father's morn-

ing glass. His father thought it rather cunning to see a little boy drink so boldly, and the mother's weak remonstrances were of little avail, and her frequent repetitions of, "It will certainly make you tipsy," only familiarized the boy with the word till he no longer dreaded "being tipsy." The next step was to get tipsy just a little, to spend his pocket money for drink when he could not get it at home, and of course he smoked cigars too, and altogether he considered himself quite

a fast young man, though not yet out of short jackets. But what do you think of him, boys? I don't believe you would care to imitate his example, especially if you could see him about ten years hence, supposing he lives so long. Fast boys and fast young men go fast to an early and dishonorable grave, and Bible-reading boys cannot help seeing that they go quite too fast into the presence of an angry God.

But what kind of a lad was this Clifford Nash to associate with the well-meaning Jefferson Townley? Jeff knew very well what kind of a lad he was, but he had not stopped to think of the consequences of being so intimate with him. George Barker's words had arrested his attention: "You will see a difference by and by." What would that difference be? "Now, I know," said he to himself, "that if there is going to be much difference, it is Charlie Martin that will be the man if he sticks to his pledge. He is getting over his fear of being laughed at, and I like him better than I ever did before. It was really

mean of me to offer him those brandy drops." Here the train of Jeff's thoughts was broken off by a call to recitation, and in another hour school was dismissed.

"Say, Jeff," hallooed Clifford, as they were leaving the school; "I thought you were going with me to-night."

"Going where?" shouted Jeff in return, well knowing that Cliff would not answer at that distance, in the presence of the teacher; for it was to a very low place of public amusement that Clifford had been proposing to go.

And indeed before the latter had made up his mind what answer to make, Jeff was out of sight; and he muttered with a rough word some wonder at "what was in the wind now, that Jeff should be tagging after that silly Charlie Martin."

But so it was; and before the brothers were half way home Charlie was surprised by a hearty slap and a pull on the shoulder, and Jeff, all out of breath with running, stopped at his side.

Charlie shrank from this new trial, as he feared it was, for though he was thank-

ful for having passed one storm so safely, he was not at all prepared for another that night. Imagine his surprise, then, as Jeff sung out:

"Well, Charlie, you did first-rate to-day, did you not? shut up Cliff completely!"

Charlie's blue eyes opened wide in amazement, for he had thought Jeff quite as bad as Cliff.

"Don't wonder you are surprised, Charlie. It was too bad in me to offer you those brandy drops. I've been thinking about it ever since, and I know that you are in the right, and Cliff is in the wrong; and I'm afraid he'll turn out bad some day. But there is no danger of you, if you stick to the pledge."

"Why," said Charlie, "what do you mean by Cliff's turning out bad?"

"Because he likes wine and brandy so well now that he cannot let them alone; how much worse will it be when he gets to be older, and can get as much of them as he likes?"

"Do you think Cliff will be a drunkard?" asked Charlie seriously.

"Of course I do. How can he help it if he goes on so?"

"You won't, will you, Jeff?" said Charlie, with a sudden confidence inspired by the young lad's conversation.

"No," replied Jeff; "I am going to sign the pledge."

"You!" exclaimed Charlie.

"Yes, I; do you suppose I want to be a drunkard."

What a moment was that for Charlie! Only to think that Jeff was coming over to his side; to have it acknowledged by one he had considered an enemy, that he was right, and that Clifford, from whose presence he had been almost willing to creep, through the power of ridicule, that Clifford was wrong. And here too was one of the first scholars in school following his example and taking the pledge. So absorbed was he in these thoughts that he did not see that he had reached home, till Eddie pulled his hand, saying:

"Come, Charlie, why don't you come in?"

"Wait a minute," said Jeff; "where did you get your pledge?"

"I don't know where it came from; pa got it for me."

"Will you ask him, and let me know to-morrow? I want to get one that talks it out about right, and one that I can keep, too."

"Yes, I'll ask him," replied Charlie; and so with a merry "good-by," a hop and a skip, Jeff ran off.

CHAPTER VII.

DEALING WITH TEMPERANCE MEN.

After the whole story of Jeff had been talked over that evening at the table, and the good effects of right example pointed out, Eddie spoke up:

"Yes, and there's Jamie Williams! He said, last Friday, when Charley was at home, sick, that he was half a mind to sign the pledge if Charlie did. He said he liked lager beer first-rate, but if his father knew that he drank it he would lick him. He did not know but he would half kill him."

"Why, my son, do you use such language," exclaimed Mrs. Martin.

"That is just what Jamie said, mother."

"Very possibly; still we do not want it repeated here. We shall talk no better than others if we repeat all that they say."

"Where does Jamie get his lager beer, Eddie?" inquired Mr. Martin.

"He gets it at the corner, where his mother sends him for groceries. He sometimes goes two or three times a day, and gets a little almost every time. And twice the grocer gave him half a glass to himself."

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Martin, to his wife, "you see the danger of patronizing groceries where spirituous liquors are kept."

"I did not suppose there was so much danger," replied the lady. "I would not wish to expose even a servant to such temptations, nor would I have encouraged such dealers, nor helped them by my custom, if I had known them to be so unprincipled. I have excused myself for doing so occasionally when in a hurry, because it was so much further to the temperance grocery."

"Well, papa," said Amelia, "I have heard it said that prices are usually much higher at temperance groceries. I wonder if that is so."

"Perhaps it may be so, sometimes, but we must remember that the liquor-dealer

depends on his liquors for the most of his profits. If we get his groceries cheaper on this account we become a partaker in his evil deeds, and a sharer in the profits of his abominable traffic. But setting aside this view of the case, I presume that your mother would not risk the safety of any under her care by sending them to any place of danger."

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Martin; 'our principles are against it. You remember that when we lived in the country we made it a point to deal with none but temperance merchants, and I think we had better return to our old landmarks, if it is a little more trouble."

"Father," said Charlie, "I have heard that lager beer will not make any one drunk."

"I have heard such statements too, my son, and I have taken pains to inquire into their truth. In return, I was assured by an intelligent druggist that it certainly does contain large quantities of alcohol, and has a very stupefying effect. The Germans, who drink it mostly, are not so

easily affected by it as some others, but if they drink enough of it they will get drunk on it, and they frequently do so. It is said to be less poisonous than many other alcoholic drinks."

"Why, papa, how are they poisonous," inquired Amelia.

"If they were pure, my child, they would be quite expensive, and they would yield but small profits, and secure but small sales. So the dealers add water to increase the amount; but as this would make them too weak, they must put in something to restore the taste and appearance. Among these substances used, are arsenic, burned sugar, logwood, alcohol, sugar of lead, nux vomica, and many many other poisonous substances. A large part of the so called wine sold in our city is supposed not to contain a single drop of the juice of the grape. Indeed, there is not so much of some kinds of wine made in the world as they pretend to sell in the city of New-York. It is almost impossible to get it pure, even for medicinal purposes. All these poisons have a horri-

ble effect on those who drink them freely. They die off very quickly, sometimes in a few months, and suffer the most horrible agonies."

The next day Mr. Martin sent an invitation by Charlie for Jefferson to call in the evening. He did so; and Mr. Martin told him that, having heard of his intention to sign the pledge, he wished the privilege of presenting him with a copy. Jefferson thanked the gentleman with his best bow. Mr. Martin soon made him at ease by his kind encouraging manner, and drew him out into a conversation, in which the young lad showed his good sense.

"Will you be so kind, sir," said Jeff, when there was a convenient pause, "as to explain to me one thing about this matter?"

"With pleasure," replied Mr. Martin, "if I am able to do so."

"Well, I was thinking over to-day the meaning of the word temperance, and I went to the dictionary. There I found that it meant moderation, and was used with

regard to eating as well as drinking. Now if it only means moderation in eating and drinking, I do not see how it prevents our eating and drinking moderately of whatever we choose. So will you please, sir, to tell me how temperance in drinking means letting liquors entirely alone."

"Your criticism is quite correct, my young friend," returned Mr. Martin. "The temperance reform was commenced by trying to induce people to use moderation in drinking, and so prevent the evils of intemperance. But the most of those who once commenced drinking, could never find the right place for stopping. So to effect the object of the temperance reform, they found that a promise must be made not to drink at all. The effort still went by the same name, and it is very nearly right, for true temperance certainly requires us not to drink at all of anything that will harm us. In Great Britain the name of total abstinence, or teetotalism is more generally used, and those who take the pledge are called teetotalers or abstainers."

"I am very much obliged for the explanation," returned Jeff.

"Why, my boy, do you not wish to take the total abstinence pledge?"

"O yes, sir, by all means; but I wanted to understand how the name and the thing agreed, so that I might know what I was about."

"That is right, my lad. You will keep clear of many difficulties in the world by that course. I suppose you will study that pledge, too, before you sign it."

"I will try to do so. Good evening, sir."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIBLE ON TEMPERANCE.

"MOTHER, mother!" cried Charlie, a few minutes afterward, as he ran to the nursery. No mother was there. So he ran toward her bed-room.

"Mother!" he cried again.

"Mother is not here," said a gentle voice. It was that of his sister Amelia. "Mother is in the parlor with company. My manly little brother ought to wait till he can get to the room, and not go all about the house calling for some one that is busy."

"That is so!" exclaimed Charlie, throwing his arms around her neck, and imprinting a kiss on her cheek. "My good sister is always telling me something that would make me better, if I would only attend to it. But what are you and Eddie talking about here so busy?"

"O," replied Eddie eagerly, "sister is telling me all the verses in the Bible about temperance, and you can't think how many there are. It seems as if there was something in the Bible about all the good things in the world."

"Yes; but, Master Eddie, you need not think you are going to have all these good

things to yourself," said Charlie, throwing himself down on the carpet.

"We shall be very glad to have you share them with us," replied Amelia. "I was just reading in Proverbs, where Solomon is telling his son not to drink wine."

"Well, sister, did not Christ drink wine when he was on the earth, and did he not once turn water into wine?"

"True; but I heard our Sunday-school teacher say that was new wine, just the fresh juice of the grape, which was common drink in that country. It would not make anybody drunk. But when it stood a long time and fermented it had alcohol in it, and then it made people drunk, and then it would sparkle and look bright in the cup just as it says here."

"Well, read on, sister; I won't interrupt you again."

So Amelia read from the twenty-third chapter of Proverbs:

"'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

"'Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women; and thine heart shall utter perverse things.'"

"There," said Amelia, "I guess that is all about that. O no, it is not. This is telling how he acts: 'Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth on the top of a mast. They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.'"

"Why, how true that is!" said Charlie, "even to the quarreling, for drunkards are famous for that, you know."

"Then, too, I suppose that about the ship means that they reel about like a ship on the water."

"Well, sister, does the Bible say anything about temperance; that is, about the drunkard?"

"Certainly," was the reply. "Don't

you remember when Paul was before Felix, and reasoned of righteousness, *temperance*, and a judgment to come, Felix trembled?"

"O yes!" exclaimed Charlie; "then Paul was a temperance lecturer, was he not? Well, that is worth all the rest. I wonder if that is all the temperance lecture that he ever gave."

"No; I think there were several others. There is one place, I know, where he says, 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.'"

Charlie now caught a glimpse of his mother coming in, and he jumped up and ran to meet her.

"O mother!" he said, "I am so glad that Jeff Townley is going to sign the pledge!"

"So am I," replied his mother; "for your sake as well as his own. It shows you the influence of one boy that dares to do right. And I am happy to see you in such good spirits; quite like yourself again," and the mother's fond kiss brought the tears to his eyes as he thought how

he had injured her feelings, and how fully she had forgiven him.

"What are you thinking of, Charlie?" inquired Mr. Martin the next morning after breakfast.

"I have been trying to think what could have started Jeff to sign the pledge. I would like to know of what use he thinks it will be to him."

"I thought you were glad that he had signed the pledge."

"So I am; but I'd like to know what he thinks about it, and if he supposes it will do him much good."

"I can tell of some good that it would have done somebody if he had signed it some days ago."

Charlie looked up inquiringly, and his father continued:

"He would not have given you those brandy drops, my son."

"Why not, father?" inquired Charlie, looking a little confused at this allusion.

"Don't you remember what your pledge says? I think you had better read it again."

Charlie ran to get it, and soon exclaimed:

"O yes, I see! he would have promised not to offer it to his friends, and that is a good idea, for if one promises not to touch it himself, he ought not to offer it to his friends. But then, father, I was thinking how small a chance there was that so good a fellow as Jeff, one that knows so much, and is so well-behaved, should ever become a drunkard."

"Very true; he might never become a drunkard; yet there is no surety of that. Some of the most intellectual men have given themselves up to drink, and it has ruined them; and sometimes they have sunk as low as the vilest street drunkards. Besides, wine often works mischief when it does not make drunkards. Do you know who was the last sovereign of France before Louis Napoleon?"

"It was Louis Philippe, was it not?"

"Yes; and his eldest son was called the Duke of Orleans. This young man was looked upon as the heir of his father's throne, and his excellent qualities made

him very much beloved and deservedly popular. He was handsome, intellectual, and noble. No one thought that he would fall a victim to wine; indeed he never became intoxicated. But on one joyous occasion he drank one glass too much; just one glass too much. On leaving the company he entered his carriage, and had not gone far when his horses took fright and ran. If he had been quite sober, he would have kept his seat, which is the safest course at such times; but he jumped out. If he had not drunk too much wine he would have alighted on his feet; as it was his head struck the pavement and he was killed. Ah, my son, you may be sure that the only safe way is not to touch it. If a promise will help us to avoid it, give the promise freely. And besides, I think it a noble thing for every one, man, woman, and child, to vow eternal hatred to the stuff that does so much mischief in the world."

CHAPTER IX.

JAMIE WILLIAMS.

Let us visit the home of Jamie Williams. It is a pleasant place, clean and tidy; the mother a notable housekeeper, the father a hard-working mechanic. It is up two flights of stairs, but no matter for that; people in the city learn to climb stairs. To be sure the coal must be carried up, but that is soon done; and the water makes them no trouble, for the Croton carries itself up and down.

There are three children, of whom Jamie is the oldest; after him Sister Nell, and then comes little Richard, who goes by the name of Dickie. The latter, poor, tired little fellow, has been running the street all day in this truly cold autumn weather, and is now fast asleep on two chairs. The mother is bustling about getting supper, and Jamie and Nell, one on each side of

the stove in the chimney corner, are getting their lessons for the morrow.

Soon in comes the husband and father, bringing company for a variety. It proves to be a shopmate, who is to go with him up to the Crystal Palace in the evening to examine some machinery.

The company is left in the neat little keeping room, which is dignified by the name of front parlor, while Mr. Williams just steps for a moment into the back room, that answers at once for kitchen and dining-room; a few words with his good-hearted wife explain the nature of his visit. "Put on another plate, Mary; perhaps Mr. Price won't disdain a humble cup of tea with us."

Then going to the closet, he reached down a decanter partly filled with brandy, and putting it with two glasses on a small waiter, he returned with them to the parlor. Jamie had never seen such a movement before, and remembering all that he had heard about temperance at school of late, his curiosity was the more excited to know what his father was going to do.

So he listened carefully to all that was said, for as the door was left open he could hear every word of it from where he sat.

"Will you have a drop of the best brandy, Mr. Price, to cheer you up this evening?" asked Mr. Williams.

"No, thank you, I believe not," was the reply.

"You need not be afraid of it; 'tis the genuine article."

"Perhaps so, but I never take any. In fact, sir, it goes against my temperance principles."

"Not such a little bit as that, I hope," replied Mr. Williams, holding up about a gill in a tumbler.

"I think it best not to touch it, and then I know that I am safe."

"Well, now, I cannot carry the thing so far as that," was the reply of Mr. Williams. "I know that it does me good. I never have been in the habit of drinking, but I take a little, just for medicine, at night when I come in all tired out. I think people that work as hard as you

and I do need some stimulus. Besides, you see that I am rather spare and thin blooded."

"Well, if you take it for medicine, why don't you take it in the same way, put it up in your medicine chest, and dose it out by the spoonful when it is needed? I suppose if you were taking regular doses of pills, or castor-oil, or even anything as good as extract of sarsaparilla, or hive syrup, you would hardly think of offering it to a visitor. I beg your pardon for the freedom of the remark, sir; I hope you will not take it amiss; I only just wanted to show you the difference."

"Now," said James to himself, "I shall know how to get a sup of that nice brandy; I can pretend to be sick."

"Yes," said Mr. Williams, continuing the conversation, "but you know that temperance people do not believe in taking it at all."

"We do not when we can do without it. We believe that it has its place in medicine and in the arts, but we never

take it so long as we can find anything else that will answer in its place. If we do take it, we do not make a constant use of it, any more than we would of castor-oil, or of laudanum, or opium, on which the Turk and the Chinaman get intoxicated. The latter is just as bad, but not quite so dangerous to us, because we do not abuse it so much as we do our intoxicating liquors."

"Well," responded Mr. Williams, "I cannot say that I like these temperance societies. They answer very well for the lower classes, who cannot control their appetites, but for an intelligent man who is in no danger of drunkenness to make a written promise that he will not touch a drop, just for nothing at all, I think is very foolish. Now it is not so in the old countries. The respectable part of the community, even the church-members and the ministers, have their ale and their wines, or whatever they want, and leave the temperance societies for the lower classes, who are in danger of killing themselves off with gin."

"Just allow me to ask one question, Mr. Williams. How much good do the temperance societies do among these lower classes?"

"As much as they do anywhere, I suppose, though I must say that they are pretty much a humbug wherever I have seen them. All these folks that make so much ado about temperance will take a drop themselves when they get behind the door."

"Well, it may be so in the old countries; I won't dispute, for I do not know; but it is not so here. The most of our professed temperance men are such really, and never taste a drop of intoxicating liquors, and do not have it in their houses excepting in camphor or essences, or for bathing. Some are so particular that they will not touch the stuff even when prescribed by the physician."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Williams; "how many such houses do you suppose there are in these United States?"

"Hundreds of thousands, sir, scattered all over the length and breadth of the

land. You must not judge the whole country by New-York city. We have too many foreign customs here. But let me tell you that your temperance societies in Great Britain will not be worth a straw till the respectable people set the example of joining them. The very reason that we have so many drunken foreigners here, Irish, English, German, etc., is because they have not been taught total abstinence at home by respectable people. Why, drunken foreigners outnumber drunken Americans here in our city ten to one."

I know not what answer Mr. Williams would have made to this, for he was English, and this speech did not please him; but just then his wife came in to greet their guest and invite him to supper, and there was no more said about the matter. He did not want to talk of such things before James, for he did not want him to learn to drink, and these feelings showed that he knew himself in the wrong.

James went with his father that evening up to the Crystal Palace, and in the ex-

citement of the pretty sights he forgot for the present all about the brandy.

A few days after this James, who had taken a violent cold, came down in the morning, looking rather poorly.

"What is the matter, my son?" inquired the father when he came in. "You don't look well."

James thought of the brandy in a moment, and said to himself, "Now is the time for it!" It is true he did feel bad, but I am afraid he made out the case worse than it was. His father pitied him, his mother petted him, and various remedies were proposed. It was finally decided that he should remain at home, and have a hot foot-bath, and drink thoroughwort tea, a very different medicine from the brandy, James thought, and he began to wish that he had made less ado about his cold. Finally, he ventured to ask if a little brandy would not do quite as well; but he received a very decided answer from his father, who told him that brandy was not made for little boys.

Soon his father went to his work, and

left poor Jamie with the bitter prospect of throughwort-tea before him. Nell had gone to school, Dickie was in the street again, Mrs. Williams was clearing away the breakfast, and Jamie was in the corner, thinking of what was in reserve for him, so soon as his mother should have time to go to the apothecary's and get the herbs.

"Scalded feet and thoroughwort tea!" said he to himself after she was gone. "Well, now that I am here all alone, what is to hinder my helping myself to some brandy? Nobody will be any the wiser for it."

He opened the closet door and brought a chair, on which he climbed; but that did not make him high enough to reach it. Then he brought Dickie's stool, which made him just high enough. But now, how should he take it? If he should use a tumbler, his mother would notice it. He would drink it out of the bottle. So he tipped it up further and further, and then there came so much of it, and so strong, that he was strangled, and, losing his balance, he fell backward. What a smash there was!

the upset stool, the sprawling boy, the broken decanter, and the spilled brandy!

Just then Mrs. Williams, returning from the apothecary's, opened the door.

"Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed; "that beautiful decanter that my mother gave me!" and she stepped forward to

pick up some of the broken fragments. "How dare you?" said she, aiming a blow at James, who had by this time picked himself up; but the naughty boy dodged it, slipped out at the door, and running down the alley, was soon in the street.

Now what should he do? He could not go to school, for he had neither books nor hat, and he dared not go home again. But it was not the first time he had run away, and so he wandered off down to the docks and among the boats. The want of a hat troubled him for a while. He was afraid the police would pick him up as a vagrant and take him to the station-house. At last he fished an old one out of the dock and dried it in the sun, and this he thought better than nothing.

At home dinner-time came and went, but no Jamie. Mr. Williams seldom came home to dinner, but the mother knew that if James did not return before his father came home at night he would receive a severe beating.

I am sorry to say that she felt worse about this than she did about Jamie's

naughty deeds, for which he deserved flogging. It is really selfish in any parents who will not have their children punished when they deserve it, merely because it hurts their own feelings; but perhaps Mrs. Williams did not know any better; at all events she was to be pitied, as, from time to time, she went out to the street and looked anxiously up and down in vain for her child. Ah, very few children know how much trouble they make their parents.

Before night James began to have some better thoughts. If he had been a temperance boy he would not have feigned sickness for the sake of getting some brandy; he would not have broken the decanter, and run away. In short, he would have been at school, happy, neat, and clean, studying his lessons, instead of wandering about hungry, cold, and guilty, with the certainty of a sound flogging when he reached home. He came to the wise conclusion that the temperance folks were the best off by far. Then, too, if it was as Mr. Price said, about foreigners being opposed to temperance and Ameri-

MRS. WILLIAMS LOOKING FOR HER CHILD.

cans being in favor of it, why, he ought to be in favor of it, for was he not an American, born on American soil? And this feeling, very common among the children of naturalized foreigners, was very strong with Jamie.

But at last, home he must go. He had found nothing all day to satisfy his hunger but a few half-rotten apples; and besides, he could not remain in the streets all night. He crept up the dark alley and up the stairs to the kitchen door. There was a light in the room. He opened the door carefully, but seeing his father sitting there reading his newspaper, evidently waiting for him, he turned and ran away. It was of no use; he was soon brought back, and O what a whipping he did get! And when he went sobbing, smarting, and supperless to bed, he could not help thinking of the Scripture in his last Sunday-school lessson: "The way of the transgressor is hard."

CHAPTER X.

A TEMPERANCE SOCIETY FORMED.

When Jefferson Townley had studied his pledge, as he said, he found that he must promise not only that he would not use it himself nor offer it to his friends, but he must try to "abolish its use as a beverage from the nation and the world." He did not see how he could do that, and he did not like to promise anything that he could not perform. So he brought it to Charlie for an explanation, but Charlie had thought nothing about it. The next resort was that Charlie should ask his father. This was soon done.

"Why now," said Mr. Martin, "do you not suppose if you could get everybody to sign and keep such a pledge, that the world would soon be free from intoxication?"

"Yes, sir, I should think so," replied Charlie.

"Well, if you get all you can to sign it, and if you never drink, buy, sell, nor offer it to others, that would be trying to abolish it from the world so far as you are able."

This explanation, when reported to Jeff, proved quite satisfactory; and taking his pen he wrote his name with a flourish, saying:

"There, I can subscribe to every word of it!"

By noon Jefferson was ready with another proposition. Could they not get some of the other boys to sign it? would not that be doing what they could to fight it out of the world? Charlie thought that would be a good idea; and then he remembered what Eddie had said about Jamie Williams.

"Well, now," said he, "I will tell Jamie that I have signed the pledge, and perhaps he will sign it," and off they started to find him.

Poor Jamie was feeling rather dull. It was the day after his scrape, as he called it. His cold was really worse than on the

day before, and he was feeling rather sore from the severe whipping. He was sitting alone at his desk, when to his surprise he saw Jeff and Charlie coming toward him.

"Come, Jamie," said Jeff in a cheerful voice, "Charlie and I have been signing the pledge; would not you like to?"

"Well, I don't know but I would. I don't see any use it is going to be to me to drink, any way; and I do believe it is one of the meanest things in the world to be a drunkard."

"That is just what I think," said Jeff, with a clap on Jamie's shoulder in his friendly way.

So he sat down by his side and began to explain the pledge. Would he like to sign all that?

Yes, that he would! he would like to be a temperance man all over, teetotal. But then where could he get such a card? must he have just such a one?

Jeff smilingly assured him that it was not necessary. It would be enough just to copy that off and sign his name to it,

or promise to do it any way. "But then," said he, "I'd like to have you get a card just like ours. I must find out where they are kept. If they do not cost too much, I will get a card for every boy in the school that will sign the pledge."

"Why, how will you pay for them?" asked Charlie.

"I'll give my quarter of a dollar spending money that I have every week."

"It would be too bad to have you do it all. I'll give my spending money, but it is only ten cents. Perhaps some of the other boys will give up theirs. Do you have any, Jamie?"

Jamie shook his head, but after a minute he added: "I have now and then a cent or two that I get for running errands. I'll give you them."

"Good!" exclaimed Jeff. "Charlie, you will be the treasurer. There's my quarter. And perhaps your father can get them cheaper than we could."

"I have only five cents left," replied Charlie; "but that shall go along with it, and I'll ask father about the pledges."

"Now," pursued Jeff, "let's see who else we can get to sign it. There's Eddie, he has signed it already, that makes four of us. Good! we shall be quite a little company."

In the evening Charlie went with his father to see about the card pledges. When the stationer, who was a personal friend of Mr. Martin, heard the story of the little temperance society, he promised to supply them with cards at the wholesale price, which was three cents each, the usual price being five cents. So little Charlie laid out his thirty cents in cards.

Very happy was Charlie to take them to school the next day. By showing them around they soon attracted the attention of the other boys, and they found six more who offered to join them. Jeff would question each one very closely, to see whether he was willing to keep all the promises, and when he found that they were willing to do so, he would hand them over a card, and see that they put their names to it.

When they had all done this, Jeff sprang upon a desk and began to harangue them. "Now, fellow-soldiers," said he, "we must fight! We have promised to do our best to drive intoxicating liquors out of the country, and we will fight like men; won't we, my lads?"

Upon this all the boys pulled off their hats, and began to hurra for temperance.

In the midst of it who should come in but Clifford Nash! Now as it happened very fortunately for our little temperance champions, Clifford had been absent from school for some days, or else he would have fought against it, and put no ordinary stumbling-blocks in their way. As it was they had fairly the start of him. They were all on the side of right, and they knew it. From that day Cliff's influence among the boys of that school waned. But the temperance boys, as they were called, prospered finely. At the suggestion of George Barker, and with his help, they formed a regularly organized society, of which Jeff was unanimously elected the president, Charlie the treasu-

rer, and George kindly consented to lend his aid as secretary.

It would make my story quite too long to relate all their interesting adventures in getting signatures to the pledge. After getting nearly all the school, they went out into the streets and hunted up a great many little boys, and persuaded them to join their society. They met at noon time in the school-yard, and in this way many a ragged little boy began to come to school, and then to the Sunday school; and it would take another whole book to tell half the good they did in this way.

Many of these deeds and adventures may yet be told in some future volume. We think enough has been said here to show the value of the pledge even to little folks that we do not suppose to be in much danger from intoxicating drinks. And very many of our little readers could, no doubt, get others to sign the pledge also. Perhaps they could get up a little society, that would be pleasant as well as useful to its members. And, to begin with, here is one of the favorite hymns

of the "Temperance Boys," as they called themselves. Learn it yourself, at all events, and get up a temperance society if you can.

THE PLEDGE.

"UNITED in a joyous band,
We'll sign the pledge with heart and hand;
The ruby wine we'll lay aside,
And be our country's hope and pride.

"'T will keep the roses on the cheek,
Preserve the spirit mild and meek;
The eye will beam expression bright,
The mind improve in wisdom's light.

"It makes the home of labor sweet,
And happy faces there you'll greet;
It leads the way to honest wealth,
And gives earth's choicest blessing—health."

THE END.

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