

CHAPTER VII.

TEMPERANCE.

ONE evening, several of the boys were invited to meet a small company at one of the neighbour's houses in the village, and William was among the number; and having obtained permission of Mr. Sanford, they went. As the evening wore away, refreshments were passed around, and among the rest a waiter well-filled with glasses of wine. It seems the temperance cause had not made great progress in the place, and all the company, except William, partook of the wine. He alone politely declined.

"Not take wine!" said some one sitting near him.

"Why not?"

"I belong to the Temperance Society," replied William, "and you know we abstain from wine."

"What society?"

"The Temperance Society."

"Oh, then he must be one of the Re-

formed drunkards," said Arnold. A general laugh ensued.

The warm blood came into William's face, but he checked himself. He felt embarrassed, but was conscious that he was in the right.

"Probably he is better than the rest of us," remarked another.

"Come, now," said a third, "take a glass—it won't hurt you. Don't be the only black sheep in the flock. Some wine is not fit to drink, but such wine as this the Bible does not forbid."

William bit his lip. To be drawn out in this way before such company, and stranger as he was, too, was a great trial to his principle, but he firmly persisted in his refusal, and thus proved himself the bravest of them all.

"A reformed drunkard, hey!" exclaimed one of the party, laughing. "Well, that is good!"

William thought it was better to be even a reformed drunkard than a moderate drinker, but he did not say so. He felt it was more proper, calmly and silently to maintain his own ground than to attack others.

And even the very persons who had treated him so rudely could not but secretly admire his manly courage in resisting temptation before them all, and against such a strong public opinion too. But he had the fear of God in his heart, and that was a stronger motive than the fear of man.

WE have seen William Herbert in sports and company; and perhaps the reader may think that he was not much of a scholar, or at least that he spent a good deal of time in play; but this was not the case. He did spend a portion of his time in sports and recreation, and it was proper that he should. Young persons of his age must have something to occupy them besides books and lessons. They need some amusements, and if they are of a proper kind, and used in moderation, so far from injuring they do them good. A bow is all the better for being unstrung occasionally, and a good student will study to more advantage after a little respite. It is the abuse of the thing that does the mischief.

Our friend William was a diligent scholar, and rose early every day that

he might acquire his lessons perfectly, (that is the reason he had time to play,) and when he went into recitation, he was not obliged secretly to open the book to find the answer, nor have the teacher say to him tauntingly, "*You read* very well," as he told some of his class-mates. He always felt at ease, for he was conscious that he was prepared to tell all about the lessons that was expected. He was in the class which studied chemistry. There were some other boys in the class who delighted to see the beautiful experiments which explained and illustrated the subject, but were not disposed to study the principles. By diligence and attention, William soon became so much of a proficient, that the teacher selected him and one other scholar as his assistants. While they were engaged in a lecture one afternoon, Mr. Morgan, the teacher, missed a piece of phosphorus which he had just been using. Now it so happened that some of the boys had paid so little attention to the subject that they had not noticed what had been said of the care which was needful in using this substance, to prevent its taking fire.

Search was made, but in vain. William was last seen nearest the bottle, and Andrew Jones suggested that perhaps he had taken it. The whole class at once acquitted him of the charge.

"Have any of you taken it?" inquired Mr. Morgan.

"No, sir," was the reply from the whole class.

The practised eye of Mr. Morgan, however, saw who was the offender, but he chose to let the event prove his guilt; he steadily observed his movements until all eyes were fixed upon Andrew Jones, the one who had so meanly and falsely accused William of the misconduct. Jones began to turn red, and stammered out:

"I didn't take it; upon my word I didn't take it, sir."

"Jones," said Mr. Morgan, "what have you in your coat-pocket?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing!" inquired Mr. Morgan; "what then causes that smoke?"

"Oh my coat is on fire!" he exclaimed.

"Turn your pocket inside out," said Mr. Morgan.

Jones turned his pocket, and out

dropped the phosphorus. A little water soon extinguished it, and no essential injury was done, but a universal expression of indignation burst from the whole class against Jones, who stood trembling with fright and chagrin, and attempted in vain to say something, he knew not what, in extenuation of his guilt.

"Jones," said Mr. Morgan, "you need not attempt to make any excuse; you have already endeavoured to screen yourself from blame by throwing it upon an innocent person, and have thus added falsehood to the wickedness of taking that which did not belong to you.

"I shall confer with Mr. Sanford before deciding what shall be done in the case. In the mean time you can retire to your room."

If any one had listened to the remarks made by the class as they left the recitation room, he would have considered it of little use for Jones to try to make friends with any of them. And it would seem that Jones was of the same opinion himself, for he ran away from school, and went home the same night.