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Freedom Ring (1860), Eastman Johnson. See page 13.

PSYCHOTROPIC PRACTICE PATTERNS FOR YOUTH:
A 10-YEAR PERSPECTIVE

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ANTIBIOTIC USE
AND PRIMARY IDIOPATHIC INTUSSUSCEPTION

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American Medical Association

Eastman Johnson

Freedom Ring (1860)

Editor's Note: With the October 2002 issue, we inaugurated a new feature for *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*: art on the cover. We plan to feature art that depicts children, with an accompanying commentary that discusses not only the artwork but also some aspects of the life of children at the time the art was created. The commentaries will be written by Thomas D. Koepsell, MD, MPH. Tom is a world-renowned epidemiologist and former chair of the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Washington, and an art history buff. He is widely known as a wonderful teacher and will use this skill to teach us about art and the historical role of children in society. We will initially have these new covers quarterly. Please let us know your reactions and thoughts about this new feature.

Frederick P. Rivara, MD, MPH, Editor

AFTER HIS Sunday sermon on February 5, 1860, Reverend Henry Ward Beecher introduced a girl named Pink to his congregation at Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, NY. Pink was a 9-year-old slave from Washington, DC, who was about to be sold by her owner. Beecher, an outspoken abolitionist, proposed that the church buy her freedom. Following his emotional plea, collection plates were passed. Mixed in with the money was a valuable ring that had been contributed by church member Rose Terry. The money alone proved more than enough, so the ring was presented to Pink as a gift. She was christened Rose Ward. Beecher later took her to visit artist Eastman Johnson, who painted her sitting in a patch of light on the floor of his darkened studio gazing at the "freedom ring" on her index finger.

At that time, a year before the American Civil War began, approximately 4 million slaves lived in the South. Their numbers had grown substantially during the early 19th century, mainly because of a baby boom in the slave population. By 1860, more than 40% were

younger than 15 years, and about 95% had been born in America into slavery. Many owners promoted child-bearing among their slaves, which provided a ready source of human capital. Healthy slaves could be put to work as soon as they were physically able, and any extras could be sold to growers elsewhere in the South. Pink's 5 siblings had already been sold one by one. Then her mother was sold, leaving Pink to live with her grandmother. According to a story in the *New York Times* the next day, Pink was a mixed-race child, consistent with Johnson's portrait. Her father was reported to be "one of the leading physicians in Washington."^{1(p8)} However, because her mother was a slave, Pink was a slave. Young girls were in demand as potential house servants, and lighter-skinned, attractive ones could be sold as "fancies" into prostitution when they came of age.

When Eastman Johnson was asked to paint the young Rose Ward, he was presented with a moral dilemma. He had been raised in Maine as a northerner, and his sister had married into the family of an abolitionist preacher. On the other hand, Johnson had recently lived in Washington, DC, with his father. After his first wife died, the father remarried a southern widow who owned 3 slaves. Thus, the Johnson family itself was a house divided. By painting the ransomed slave girl and later exhibiting the portrait publicly, Eastman Johnson made both a choice and a political statement. He painted several other sympathetic pictures of African Americans during the next decade.

In 1927, Mrs James Hunt, formerly Rose Ward, formerly Pink, returned to Plymouth Church. Then in her 70s, she presented the ring as a gift to the congregation that had been her benefactor long ago. It can still be viewed there today.

*Thomas D. Koepsell, MD, MPH
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Eastman Johnson (1824-1906), Freedom Ring, 1860, American. Oil on panel. Reproduced with permission from the Hallmark Fine Art Collection, Kansas City, Mo.

1. An interesting scene in Plymouth Church: purchase of a slave by the congregation. *New York Times*. February 6, 1860.