

usually drunk with enthusiasm, turned his glass upside down and retained his seat, a silent and solitary protest against all who rose to honor that toast. We ought not to be like jelly-fish, to have our conduct shaped by outside influences, but should have the moral back-bone which will enable us to stand alone, for what is right and true.

"Be sure they sleep not whom God needs!"

So says Browning in his *Paracelsus*. John's work was done, and so John sleeps. A

See Lesson 1

TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

With a junior class, there can be no better way than to follow the narrative step by step. It is only when children grow a little older, that analysis of character and motive becomes interesting. What draws them here is the foolish, wicked, rash king; the cruel and cunning queen, and the bewitching girl, so quickly learning her mother's evil ways; and, even more, if properly presented, the sturdy, faithful, courageous John, with all the sadness of his tragic end. Use Herod's folly and crime, not only to warn against strong drink, but against every evil passion and habit—for sins generally "lunt in gangs."

For the older classes, the lesson may be taken as A STUDY IN CONSCIENCE.

There are four distinct types.

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST, whose conscience bade him speak the truth, though the heavens should fall. There is room for the dramatic in the expansion of v. 18—the wilderness prophet in the presence of the pampered ruler, testifying again and again (see Exposition) to his face concerning his horrible sin and crime. Scripture examples abound—Nathan (2 Sam. 12), Elijah (1 Kings 18: 18), Daniel (Dan. 4: 25), Paul (Acts 24: 25).

John's is a sample of a clear conscience.

II. HEROD, in whom conscience was active, though frequently over-ridden. He knew it was wrong to bind John in prison, but did it because of his guilty love for Herodias. He listened to conscience, and kept John alive, when Herodias would have had him

young man still, when the cruel blow was given which left his body a headless corpse; and a young man still, the Man of Nazareth, when He cried on the cross, "It is finished," and bowed His head and gave up the ghost. There is a twofold lesson here: First, let us make haste to do our work in the world, for our time may be short; secondly, when men die martyrs to duty or are slain in a just cause in battle, let us not unduly mourn. God's ways are strange, but they are wise ways, too.

Conscience made him listen gladly to many things John had to say, and doubtless to resolve some time (but not then) to leave off sin. Conscience, lulled to sleep in the excitement of the feast, waked up sternly when the demand for John's head came. Again conscience was violated. The wound was apparently fatal. (See Application, on Herod's downward course.)

Herod's was a case of conscience struggling, but quenched.

III. HERODIAS. So far as appears, she had already reached the stage which Herod finally reached, conscience not only "seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4: 2), but utterly dead. (See 1 Tim. 5: 6.) There are few sadder figures in history, even as there is no sadder state into which one can fall, than to have conscience dead within the breast.

IV. HERODIAS' DAUGHTER. We must avoid the extreme of classing this young girl unreservedly with her crime-hardened mother. She was evidently not new to evil. The atmosphere of sin had long enveloped her. It was indeed in her very veins. But remorse probably followed her sin that day. Her's was an instance of trifling with conscience. She was gay and giddy, and let herself go in the whirl of excitement. Oh, how many are the sins of thoughtlessness!

Paul's rule is the only safe and right one. Acts 24: 16. *See Lesson 1*

. Questions for Juniors—14. To what king is reference made? How many Herods were there? (Matt. 2: 3; Luke 3: 19; Acts 12: