

THE MILL DAM BLOCKADE.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

"Those young men will get themselves into trouble yet," said Mrs. Ainsworth to her son Tom, as she glanced out at a group of noisy fellows sitting on the rocks above the mill-dam overlooking her little cottage. Tom's glance followed her own, and presently he closed his book, took up his hat, and started to go out. "Are you going up there again to-night, Tom?" she asked. "I wish you would not. I very much dislike the appearance of that Jerry Rawlins, and as he strolls past here with his swaggering companions I have heard language that I do not at all approve. Why do you associate with them, my son?" "I hardly know," replied the young man. "They seem to expect me to do so. They are jolly fellows about my own age, and that Jerry Rawlins is as droll as a comic almanac and a minstrel show and a circus clown, all put together—he gets off the greatest stories." "Better stories and more helpful than you can get out of your books, Tom?" "Not at all the same kind, and of course, mother, I know they are not in any way helpful, but a young fellow must have some let-up." "Go out in the back-yard and turn a hand-spring," said Tom's sister Alice, passing through the room, "and then come to walk with me. I have got to go over the river to call on Ella Parkes, one of my scholars who is sick, and I must walk a mile around just on account of the mill dam being blockaded by those fellows; there isn't a girl in town who would dare venture within earshot. Look up at them; the smoke from their pipes and cigars hangs like a cloud against the gold of the sunset, and I can't help thinking the cloud is much more dense by the vile language and the oaths that are ejected with the smoke. I should like to have you go out with me, Tom, to prove to the town that you have not entirely gone over to the majority of hoodlums, that seems to be the controlling element among the village boys just now." "Run up and get on your things," said Tom, looking admiringly at the lively girl. "You are talking too much for a school-ma'am who has to be using her voice all day," and as she tripped away his mother said, "Do you fancy such company more than you do the society you find at home and in your own social circle?" "No, mother, but it stands a fellow in hand if he intends to make a business man of himself to be popular with everybody, and I don't like to have these chaps think that I feel above them because I happen to have a good situation and they are not earning anything just now. Some of them used to be our very best boys, you know." "They might all have work if they would accept the company's terms, I suppose." "Oh, yes, of course, but the leaders of the strike will not allow the others to give in." "And the leaders are this droll Jerry Rawlins and his companions, who six months ago came as strangers to the village, and by their comic songs and circus jokes have succeeded in getting a following of our village boys. Now, Jem, you have given me no good reason for going with these fellows, and that in my opinion makes one good reason why you should not associate with them. If you find them so entertaining it is a pity that your mother and sisters should lose the fun; suppose you run over and invite them in here to spend the evening." "Mother!" exclaimed the young man in astonishment, "you know that is impossible." "Not at all; my children are equally precious in my sight. Good men are just as much needed in the world as good women. You have decided this case against yourself. There is another point from which to look at this matter. 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.' Those fellows cannot live without some kind of an income. They must have money; if not honestly, why, then dishonestly. It is easy to be wise after some dreadful event has happened, but then it is too late." John flushed and his mother saw it. "You are a wise little woman," he said; "you would see mischief through a mill-stone." "Yes, if it was to harm my own children." "Ready, sis," he called from the foot of

the stairs, and was presently walking down the street with his sister. His appearance on the street at that hour was hailed with surprise, and he was chagrined at being asked several times how it happened that he was not over with the blockade. At the house where they called the mother of the young girl who was ill exclaimed, "Well, I am glad to know that the report I have heard that you were out every night with Jerry Rawlins and his crew was a mistake, but some of the village boys have been drawn in with them, I suppose." "It is a mystery how they live," said a talkative neighbor, who had just run in. "Not to me," said Mrs. Parker. "They are keeping house in that old shed down in the valley that used to be a grist-mill. Few people know it, I suppose, but it is only a short distance from here across the orchard and pasture. We have no doubt, my husband and I, that this gang are the perpetrators of the petty thieving that has been going on for months in this and adjacent towns. Their larder must be supplied in some way. A dozen great, hearty fellows can't live on air, and the labor organizations are not going to support them all this time." "Where is the old mill of which these drones have made a hive? I never heard about it before," said Tom, as he and his sister were taking leave, and Mrs. Parker replied: "It is a half mile below here in the gully, but you can see it if you will go out through our garden and orchard to the edge of the ravine near that large hemlock tree. It is a lovely spot, but you must have a care to not fall over the ledge. The end of the great dam is there, you know. It is where the course of the stream was changed; as you look down you will see the bed of the old channel. The mill is among the hemlocks far below. I dare say you can see the roof shining in the moonlight." "Let us go around there," said Tom, as he and his sister left the house. "The daylight has not quite gone, and the full moon is just up." So they walked quietly over the soft orchard turf, listening to the notes of a whip-poor-will that was sending forth his plaintive cry from the deep wood far down the stream. "Hark!" whispered Tom presently. "What is that? Do you hear that noise like a stonecutter's chisel? Wait here just a minute," and he crept under the low hanging hemlock boughs to the very edge of the abyss. The moon's rays shone bright and full into the channel. Up above and around the bend of the dam he could hear Jerry Rawlins singing a plantation melody, while far below three or four of the fellows were hard at work weakening the dam. The cold chill ran down his spine. He understood now the meaning of the deep threats he had heard against the corporation. He had wondered if they intended to burn the mills, and had quieted his conscience with the reasoning that it was idle talk, and they would not dare do anything of the kind. Now he knew that every night after the water was shut off a part of the gang blockaded the dam to keep intruders away, and to act as spies while the others worked at their scheme. He was in the employment of the corporation. Should this dam give way his life would not be worth as much as that of the whip-poor-will still singing in the glen. The gang was broken up next day, several arrests were made and there was great excitement in the village. "I tell you," said Tom, as he came home to dinner, "Jerry Rawlins' friends are all shaking in their shoes, and I should have been as nervous as any of them if some one else had discovered and reported their scheme." After these events happened every one was free to say that they had had their own suspicions of that Jerry Rawlins, and all comforted themselves and each other with the assurance that happily no harm had been done. "Harm has been done," said Tom one day. "It harms every young person to keep low company, they can not escape moral contamination. This experience will serve as a warning to me never again to associate with any person, however amusing I may find him, that I would not be willing to invite to my own home and introduce to my own mother and sisters." All young men will find this a safe balance in which to weigh their companions.—Christian at Work.

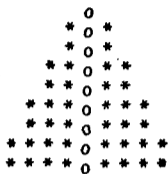
Question Corner.—No. 21.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

- 1. From what town of the Philistines did a giant come, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam?
2. Who was made king over all the tribes of Israel, excepting Judah, on the death of Saul?
3. In Nathan's parable to David concerning the wife of Uriah, what was it that the poor man possessed and prized which was taken by the rich man?
4. By what brook did the two hundred men stay who were too faint to accompany David in his pursuit of the Amalekites?
5. A tree that proved a gallows to a king's son.
6. A king of the Amalekites whom Samuel killed, saying that, as his sword had made many childless, so should his mother be childless. The whole is the mountain where Saul and his three sons were slain.

BIBLICAL PYRAMID.



- 1. A letter of the alphabet.
2. An emblem of the watchful care of God.
3. A number.
4. An animal mentioned in Revelation.
5. A bird mentioned in Deuteronomy.
6. A wise king of Israel.
7. Ten great Egyptian calamities.
8. A king mentioned in Esther.
9. Is what our lives should be.
The central word, read downward, is a place of worship often mentioned in the Bible.

William H Densmore, Westfield, Ont., some few years ago set to work to discover the number of times the words "Lord" and "God" were mentioned in the Bible. For this purpose, he writes us, he has read the whole of the Old Testament through five times, making a record as he went along, of the words in each book and chapter, and a few days ago he sent us the results of his work. The word "Lord," he says, is mentioned 6,501 times; "God," 2,509; "Lord God," 532; "God the Almighty," 7; and "Jehovah," 8. The word "lord" as applying to false gods he finds mentioned 239; and "god," meaning false gods, 288 times. He is now at work on the New Testament for a similar purpose and will let us know when he has finished.

We would like to hear from more of the young people who work from time to time on these Bible Questions. Send us your answers as you get them, and send also questions of your own for the other young Bible students to look up. Your own name and address need not be published with them unless you wish, but should always be upon every letter you send.

ED. "NORTHERN MESSENGER." ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN LAST NUMBER.

- 1. See, 1 Kings 11, 29-31.
2. Shishak, King of Egypt. 1 Kings 14, 25, 26.
SCRIPTURE CHARACTER.

Ruth.

- 1. 2. Ruth 1, 4.
3. Ruth 1, 16.
4. Ruth 1, 18.
5. Ruth 4, 10.
6. Matt. 1, 5.

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