

Dr. Parker, who was a powerful man, rallied and seized me. Mr. Fairfax cautiously lent a hand. My wife and mother and the cook joined forces, and I "yielded to overwhelming numbers and resources," and was soon stretched helpless on the sofa again. The morning papers had just suggested the name of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston for Congress. That fact seemed to be uppermost in my mind, and I lay there yelling, at the top of my voice, like an idiot: "Hurrah for Joe Johnston for Congress!" Gradually I came to my senses. I was minus a big toe nail. I had finished settling for my tancy boots.

Whatever other mistakes Moses may have made, he was right when he said: "Be sure your sin will find you out." Mine did.—*Epworth Herald*.

Practical Poetry.

BY REV. E. H. HUGHES, D.D.

POETRY would by many be considered the least practical of intellectual forms of service. The poet, some declare, is the dreamer, the man who lives on inaccessible heights, the idealist who dwells apart from throbbing life. But who can measure the practicalness of the poet's work? We need not point now to the service of agitation rendered by our New England poets in the great anti-slavery struggle. Simpler illustrations are at hand. Places and persons and trades have been rescued from insignificance or forgetfulness or indifference by the poet's power of service. The traveller down the Rhine passes towers and castles of historic interest. But the interest reaches its height when small Bingen comes to view. Why is this? Because that village was lifted by the hand of a poet who sang—not with excess of skill, one might say—of "fair Bingen on the Rhine." When the nation was ready to forget the man of the April ride, Longfellow came forward and set on high the name of Paul Revere, giving him a place among the heroes of the Revolution. He did a like service for a trade. His lines on "The Village Blacksmith" have entered a thousand shops, have been heard among the sounds of anvils and hammers, and have flashed more brightly than the flying sparks. Little children and men and women have been educated to the sense of labor's dignity. No words can ever fully estimate the practical effect of this one poem. These are well-nigh homely illustrations of the fact that the dreamiest realm of the intellectual life may render a vast service in the glorifying of place and event and work. Real poetry is ever practical.

"Do Thyself No Harm."

IT was to a man alarmed and confused, about to take his own life, that Paul gave this counsel. What Paul said to the keeper of the prison the Gospel says to every man and woman to whom the glad tidings come. We were not sent into this world to murder ourselves, to torture ourselves, or to harm ourselves in any way, but to make the most of ourselves and our opportunities.

But what need of this counsel? Cannot each human being be depended on to do the best he can for himself? Is not selfishness the most prominent characteristic of human nature? Do we not find men generally seeking their own interest, their own profit and pleasure, regardless of others? It is true that men are selfish. But in their self-seeking they are injuring themselves in many ways. They are doing themselves more harm than they are doing to others. Others are not doing them so much harm as they are doing themselves. The pathway which each one treads is full of thorns, but the sharpest thorn that tears the foot of each one is the thorn he planted himself.

Whether we consider the body, the mind, the influence, the manhood, or the spiritual life, the care-less are inflicting on themselves untold injury. One commits suicide. Another does the same thing practically by the use of strong drink. Whatever injures the body, impairs the digestion, shatters the nerves, breaks down the cells of the brain, weakens the action of the heart, produces insomnia, if it be intelligently and deliberately done, is a sin against the body, against decency, against God.

Another does for his mental powers what the suicide does

for his physical forces. There are many ways to break down and impair the faculties of the mind. One may do it by reading. There is great temptation in literature. Many read without discrimination. They do not consider their own improvement and edification, but their immediate gratification. They read to find pleasure, not strength and light. They choose books which have the power to hold their eyes waking through the night and stir their feelings. How few persons consider what their reading is doing for them. As food is taken into the body, so what we read is taken into the mind. The food we eat is digested, if it is digestible, assimilated, and transformed into flesh and blood and bone. It becomes a part of our physical being. What we read is inwardly digested, if it is digestible, and becomes a part of our mental being. Many minds are sickly and puny because the mental food they receive is destitute of the nourishing qualities which the mind requires. Such readers are doing themselves more harm than good by reading.

Another impairs his influence by the words he utters or the pleasures in which he indulges. Another destroys his manhood by giving rein to his passions. Another destroys his spiritual life. One may murder his soul as well as his body. Man has within him a mysterious power which thinks of God, desires God, reaches out after God, seeks after God, enters into fellowship with God, feels the presence of God, and rejoices in his presence and love. Man is a physical being, an intellectual being, a social being, and a religious being. The religious power may be impaired, as the imagination or memory may be impaired. Those who refuse to hear the voice of God and turn away from Him will lose the power of faith if they persist in this course. That faculty which goes out after God, and is so sensitive and quick in childhood, may be obliterated. The inner light may become darkness. The tender heart may become hard as a stone. The eyes, once so keen to discern spiritual things, may be put out.

The dreadful thing about this spiritual suicide is that it is in the power of every one. No one can permanently injure us except ourselves. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Whatever others may do unto us will be mustered into our service. It is only the blow which we strike with our own hand that can harm. "Do thyself no harm."—*Christian Advocate*.

A Timely Invitation.

A BUSINESS man was on his way to the prayer-meeting. His work had detained him so long that his dinner had been hastily eaten, and yet he was late for service. The sound of music floated down the street, and, as the church came into view, he quickened his steps.

On the pavement he hurriedly passed a stranger, who was gazing curiously up at the open windows. Acting on a sudden impulse, he turned back.

"This is our prayer-meeting evening. Will you go in with me?"

The stranger hesitated a moment.

"Why, yes," he answered.

Prayer-meeting ended, the two went out together.

"I was very glad to have your company to-night," said the business man, as he parted from his new acquaintance, after finding out his name and where he lived. "May I call for you next Wednesday?"

The man, without much enthusiasm, replied that he "didn't care" if he did.

He called, and followed it up on succeeding Wednesdays, taking care to introduce the stranger to the other men of the congregation.

That was the starting-point. Prayer-meeting led to church service. The stranger finally, with his family, united with that congregation. He has become an active and efficient church worker.

"Do you know," he said to his first friend, recently, "do you know, I had lived in our city for seven years before I met you. I had not been in the city three days before grocers and dairymen had hunted me up; within three weeks the politicians had learned my political preferences. Yet in all those years you were the first man who ever said, 'Come, let us go into the house of the Lord.'—*Christian Herald*.