

made any mistake! See here, it is bad to drink too much, isn't it? It is naughty for people, isn't it?"

"I suppose it is," said her uncle lightly, "though what you have to do with it is more than I can say."

Janet did not heed this remark. She was looking at her paper.

"People say they cannot stop—that's true, isn't it?"

"Perfectly true."

"And this about God helping people, of course that is true," said Janet, looking at him with her earnest dark eyes. "I have known that ever since I knew anything. He always helps those who pray to Him."

"Does he?" was on Sidney's lips to say; but he could not say it in presence of the child's simple trust. He sat silent, and little Janet was quick to read the meaning of that bitter silence.

"You don't mean that—I have not said anything wrong there, have I?—you know that he helps people!"

"Nay, not I!" was Sidney's answer, given almost before he knew that he had spoken. He was sorry he had said it, and half afraid of the effect upon poor little Janet. She turned quite white with astonishment, and could not speak for some minutes. And then Minna came up, and claimed his aid in a game. So the opportunity of speaking was lost for that time at least.

But Janet slipped out of the room, and perhaps she had a little talk with her mother for by-and-by she came back in her hat and jacket as if she were going out for a walk, and Mrs. Aylmer followed and asked if uncle Sidney would be kind enough to take care of her. For Janet was going to carry a little present to a poor woman's house, and Mrs. Aylmer did not like her to go alone. Sidney was somewhat puzzled as to the reason why he should be asked to go. But when he was in the street his niece told him why.

"Uncle Sidney," she said, "I didn't tell mamma what we were talking about, because I wasn't quite sure whether I understood it rightly or not."

"That was one of Janet's wise little speeches which often made her sister laugh. Uncle Sidney did not laugh, however, he only took her hand in his, and held it fast.

"Good little woman," he said. "But tell mamma all about it if you like. She will understand."

"You don't like talking about temperance, do you, uncle Sidney?"

"I don't care for it much, certainly."

"Then will you be angry," said Janet with a vivid blush, "if I take you to a house where you are quite sure to hear something about it?"

"Certainly not. So you have been laying plots, have you, Miss Janet? You fancy you will make me a teetotaler like yourself eh?"

"Do you think it would be bad for you to be one?" asked Janet simply.

Something in the phrase struck home. Sidney Aylmer's face changed, and a sigh issued from his lips as he answered—

"Perhaps not, little one, perhaps not. Too late now!" but the last words were addressed rather to himself than to her.

"They stopped" at the door of a poor little house in a back street. Sidney noticed as he passed in that everything about it was beautifully clean. They entered an inner room, where several persons were sitting or standing; and these persons were introduced by Janet to her uncle with anxious courtesy.

"This is Mrs. Dean, uncle Sidney, who washes my frocks so nicely. (This is my uncle Sidney, Mrs. Dean.) And this is Mrs. Dean's husband having his tea, with little Jimmy on his lap. And this is Granny, Mrs. Dean's husband's mother. And the children's names are Mary, Jane, and Amelia. Mamma has sent this black currant jelly, Mrs. Dean, for Amelia's throat, please, and a cake for Jimmy."

The visitors were gladly welcomed, and uncle Sidney showed no objection to a seat in the midst of this friendly family. He began to talk to "Mrs. Dean's husband," who was a fine, healthy-looking, brown-bearded man, and got on with him capitally. Before long, James Dean's tongue was loosened, and he was discoursing gravely upon the prospects of trade and the coming winter. He seemed to be a very intelligent man, and Sidney listened to him with pleasure as well as curiosity. Meanwhile Janet sat silent, or spoke a word or two to little Jimmy. Suddenly the color came into her face. "What was James Dean saying? She listened more eagerly than ever.

"Well, yes, sir, I'm doing pretty well now but I thought it was near over with me some three years ago, didn't I, Mary?"

"How was that?" said Sidney. "Were you ill?"

"Well, no, sir—not to say ill. It was the drink, sir, that had got such a hold on me, that though I knew it was ruining me body and soul, I couldn't give it up."

"Ah," said Sidney, rather dryly. "But you were never an habitual drinker, I suppose?"

"It had a tight grip of me, sir. It wasn't many nights in the month that I came home sober. We lived down Bilder's Alley then—mayhap you know the sort of place."

Sidney nodded. The Deans' present abode was a perfect Paradise compared to the houses that he had seen in Bilder's Alley.

"And Mary there," continued James Dean, "she hadn't scarce a gown to her back, nor bread to give the children, for all my wages went in drink. You can ask the neighbors, sir; they knew of me, though they hadn't much to say to me about here—they was a cut above me,—and they'll tell you that there wasn't a worse drunken brute than me when the fit was on me in all London. It's the truth, sir, God forgive me!"

"But it's wonderful how he's mended since then," said Mrs. Dean, eagerly. "He don't touch nothing stronger than coffee, now, sir, and that's why we're so comfortable."

"Ay, but it was a hard fight," said James Dean, shaking his head.

"And what made you give it up?" asked Sidney. "Some temperance meeting or lecturer?"

"It might ha' done, sir, but I never went near them. No; it was this way. I came home one night sober than usual, as I had just lost my place, and was thinking what a fool I'd been. And I see my wife on her knees by a chair. 'Come, Mary,' says I, 'get up. What are you doing there?' 'Oh, James,' she says, 'I've been praying that God would make you see the bad ways you've fallen into, and give you grace to mend them.' She looked half frightened when she'd said it, but I was low-spirited. I didn't abuse her as usual, but I said quiet like—'Too late, Mary. I couldn't give up the drink now if I wanted to. It's got too firm a hold on me.' 'God's stronger than I, James,' she said. 'If you asked Him to help you, He would.' 'You may ask Him for me,' says I. And then she went down on her knees again, but all she did was to burst out crying; and before I hardly knew what I was after, I was down on my knees a-crying too."

"And what then?" said Sidney, for the man stopped short to brush away a tear which had started at the remembrance of that voiceless prayer.

"What then, sir? Why, it burst upon me like a flash of lightning, what a brute-beast I'd been making of myself. And the worst was, I felt I had no strength to resist the temptation, and that I should want the drink as much as ever next morning. So I prayed the Lord to give me His help; sir; and He did."

"How?"

"I can't rightly say how," answered James Dean, reverently; "but I know that for His sake I was enabled to say 'No' when the temptation was the strongest, and but for Him I should never have got through with it. It's three years ago now, and I trust I shall hold on to Him to the end."

Sidney Aylmer was silent for some little time.

"You are fortunate," he said at length, "to have found a motive strong enough to influence your will."

"Bless you, sir," said James Dean, only half comprehending, "hadn't I motives enough, with wife and children and all depending on me? It wasn't motives as did it, sir—it was God's grace."

"Perhaps so," murmured Sidney to himself. Janet heard him, though the Deans did not.

"Well, little woman," said the uncle to his niece, when they were walking home; "so you let me in for a lecture, did you?"

"I thought you wouldn't mind, Uncle Sidney," said the child.

"And that man uses your argument, too, Janet—that Divine strength is given to those who ask for it."

"Yes," said Janet.

"If it is true," said Sidney, musingly, "one might be able to make a new start—"

"He broke off with something like a sigh. Janet did not venture to speak again, and they walked on quietly until they reached

Mr. Aylmer's house.

"You'll come in, Uncle Sidney," said Janet, beseechingly.

"Not now, dear, I'll come another day." And as the front door was opened, he bent down and kissed Janet's forehead.

"I won't forget your tracts, little Janet," he said, with rather an incompressible smile.

Janet wondered what he meant. And when she told her mother all the story, she found that Mrs. Aylmer was well content with it, but advised her not to puzzle her brains over everything Uncle Sidney said.

"But I don't mean to write another tract," said Janet, gravely.

"No, dear. I would wait till you are older."

"I wish Uncle Sidney would come and see us again," Janet sighed, impatiently.

"It was some time before he came, however. And when at last he did appear, it was not to Janet, but to his elder brother that he paid a visit."

He had something of a confession to make. He had been led astray by evil companions, and had involved himself in many difficulties which were less grievous indeed than the bad habits he had also contracted, but which, nevertheless, gave him much anxiety and care. And until his talk with Janet, he had thought that the chain of evil custom was too strong ever to be broken.

But her earnest belief in God's willingness to help, as well as James Dean's testimony to the power of prayer, carried hope to his heart. In the presence of the need he felt of some outward constraining motive for action, his avowed disbelief fell from him like a garment. And now he had resolved to lead a better life, and his first cry was for that guidance, that help, that Divine strength in which he had learnt his first lesson from the lips of little Janet.

Janet did not know how much she had done for him. Her parents begged Sidney to give her no hint of the use her work had been, and it was better so, for even in Janet's simple heart some seed of vanity and self-complacency might easily have been planted by her uncle's gratitude. It was only to Kathleen that Mrs. Aylmer pointed the moral.

"See," she said, "what Janet in her child-like faith has done. And yet you tried to hinder her, Kathleen."

"She is such a child," said Kathleen, only half convinced.

"Yes, a child," said her mother, "but 'even a child is known by his doings, whether they be pure and whether they be right.' She has done what we have tried to do for years in vain. The little seed of God's truth which she had been so anxious to cast forth has indeed sprung up and brought forth a hundredfold."

A hundredfold, indeed, as many would have said in after years had they known Sidney Aylmer's story. As a rule he was known less by his own words than by the many deeds of kindness and pity that grew to be associated with his name. But one hardly dares to think of what he might have been, had he never listened to Janet's simple words: "God always helps those who pray to Him.—*Temperance Mirror*."

MISS CORSON'S MUTTON WITH POACHED EGGS.—Mince a pound of cooked mutton very fine, and warm it in its own gravy, or with just enough water to moisten it, add a high seasoning of salt and pepper. While the meat is being warmed make several slices of toast and poach three eggs by dropping them into salted boiling water, and boiling them gently for two minutes, serve the minced mutton on the toast with the eggs on top.

MACARONI WITH COD.—Break a quarter of a pound of macaroni into short pieces, boil twenty minutes in hot salted-water, drain, stir in a table-spoonful of butter and three table-spoonfuls of grated cheese, mix up with one-third as much chopped cod as you have macaroni and put into a buttered bake dish. Wet with a little milk, scatter bread crumbs on the top and bake, covered, half an hour, then brown.

FLOATING ISLAND.—Into one quart of hot milk stir the yolks of six eggs previously well beaten. Stir until cooked sufficiently. Then sweeten and flavor. Put the whites of the eggs beaten stiff into a colander, and pour boiling water over to harden them, then place them on top of the custard, with bits of jelly if desired.

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes.)

February 22.—Acts 23 : 1-11.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Intervening events. The connecting history is more important here than in many lessons. Picture out the scenes vividly. Let the scholars see, as it were, the excited mob in the court of the Gentiles, angrily shouting and gesturing at Paul upon the stairway; the rescue; the preparation for scourging; Paul's claim to be a Roman citizen, and his escape.

Illustration of Roman citizenship. By the Lex Porcia, Roman citizens were exempted from all degrading punishment, such as that of scourging. The words *civis Romanus sum* acted like a magical charm in disarming the violence of provincial magistrates. It was the heaviest of all the charges brought by Cicero against Verres, that he had violated the rights of citizenship. It is a crime to bind a Roman citizen; a heinous iniquity to scourge him; next to parricide to kill him; what shall I say to crucify him! According to the Roman laws, it was death for any one falsely to assert a claim to the immunities of citizenship.

Word-picture of the scene in the council. The different elements of which this Sanhedrim was composed; the place of meeting; the arrangement of the different parties; old friends and enemies of Paul among the members; the fact that Paul himself was once a member, and listened to Stephen and condemned him.

Subject.—Comfort in the hours of trouble.

Paul was in circumstances of peculiar trial, and yet the Lord helped him, and made all things work together for good, and gave him especial comfort, and yet just such as we may have in our troubles.

Illustration. Vers. 6, 7. There is a Greek legend of Cadmus, the builder of Thebes, that he slew a dragon and sowed the teeth in the field. The dragon's teeth sprang up from the ground armed giants, a great army. Then he took up a rock and threw it among them. So that instead of slaying him they went to fighting one another. And they slew one another till only one tall giant remained, and he became the helper of Cadmus in carrying stones for the walls of the city of Thebes he began to build. So it is wise to let the enemies of Christianity fight one another; one tears down what another builds up. So it has been through the ages, whether they use historic criticism or geology, or antiquarian researches or development theories, or any form of science for their weapons. But always after the battle is over there is left some solid, settled truth which never fails to help to build the city of our God.

How to WASH BLANKETS.—The following method of washing blankets has been highly recommended by an experienced housekeeper: For half a dozen double blankets take one pound of borax dissolved in a gallon of boiling water, with a pound of pure white bar soap, shaved up finely. Stir until all is melted. Then put the blankets into a tub, as many as will go in, turn water upon them just warm to the hand, and mix with it the solution of borax and soap. If three double blankets are to be washed, take half the mixture at one time. Never rub soap upon any kind of woollen, or rub the blankets, but loose them up and down in the suds, and squeeze them in the hands, and pull them from one hand into the other, until all the dirt and soil are removed. If there are spots of grease upon the blankets, a little borax and soap can be gently rubbed upon them until they are extracted, but much rubbing will fill up the texture. When white and clean, rinse in lukewarm water, and use two waters if one does not leave them very white. Wring through a wringer, hang on the line and pull straight and smooth. Blankets should always be washed on a sunny day, when they can dry quickly, and be folded up before the dew commences to fall. They do not need to be ironed, but can be passed through a mangle, if one is at hand. They can be laid between two mattresses and pressed, or put on shelves in the linen closet, and heavy books placed upon them.—*The Household*.

HATRED stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins.—*Proverbs x.*