

A USEFUL LESSON.

BY DR. E. W. RICHARDSON.

I am now going to suggest an extremely curious question. Perhaps when you read it you may think I am making fun of you. I assure you I am not doing so, but am intending to draw from the question a most useful lesson. We will suppose, then, that a child is living on milk. The child is quite well in health, it can run as fast as any other child, and for as long a distance, it can jump as high; it can laugh as merrily; it can sleep as readily and quietly, and wake up as much refreshed as any other child in the world. It can sing; it can learn its lesson easily; it can carry its little body erect, and move its limbs gracefully; it can exercise in the gymnasium, and it can vie with any of its fellows in looking the pink of health and beauty.

Suppose this child, then suppose some one came and said: "Yes, the child has good limbs, good muscles, and he gets these good parts, no doubt, from the milk he takes, the casein or cheese of the milk builds up those parts well. But here I have got something to put into the milk that is like casein very much, which the child will hate at first, but will soon learn to like to such an extent that he will not do without it if he can help it." And suppose that after this the muscles of this child became, in consequence, very unruly, so that he could not keep them still, nor make them obey his will and pleasure. Should you not think that the man had done a very foolish and mischievous act? I am sure you would think so.

Or suppose the man, feeling the hand of the little child, said:—"This is a nice healthy little hand, it is not too cool, it is not too warm, and such proper warmth and power that it has it gets from the butter and sugar which is present in the milk on which it feeds. But, see you, I have something here like the butter and the sugar, which the child will hate at first, and will then soon learn to love that he will take this new thing, whenever he can get it, in preference to the natural milk." And suppose the man's words proved true, and the child, learning to like the new thing exceedingly, took it and was thrown by it into a fever, and afterwards became extremely cold and chilly and was also made unsettled in his mind, excitable, and cross, and silly. Should you not think that the man had done a very cruel and mischievous and wicked act? I am sure you would think so.

Or, again, suppose the man feeling the bones of the child and moving the limbs, said:—"Oh, yes, the child has a splendid skeleton without any doubt, and he gets that skeleton in part from the butter and albumen of the milk, and in part from the mineral matter that is in the milk. But I have something here like the bone-forming materials, which the child will hate at first, but will soon learn to like so much that when he can get it he will take it in preference to everything else of the kind." Suppose the child did take the new substance, began to like it, continued to like it, and in time got from it a deformed body, with crooked, weak back and bent legs and feeble gait. Should you not think that the man who induced the child to take such a substance, even though in his ignorance he called it a food, had done a most mischievous, wicked, and cruel act? I am sure you would think so. I should think so at all events, and should do my best to stop the proceedings of that man, whoever he might be, and whatever people might say in his defence.

It is fortunate that no such man has ever arisen to tamper in this way with the solid foods on which we feed. It is, however, unfortunate that when we come to the natural fluid, water, which forms so important a part of our bodies, the case is not so satisfactory. Once in the history of the world, when the human world was in its infancy, and when it was living on milk and on the first fruits of the earth, some man or men came forward and said to those who were living very well on the water that nature gave to them in the fruits, the milk, and the springs and the rivers:—"See you, we have learned how to make a new drink, which you will hate at first, a drink which will make you giddy and sick, and fevered; but which in time you will like, and will like so much, you will always take it when you can get it, in preference to simple water."

And the words proved true; for when men learned, as they did learn, to substitute

the drink, which was afterwards called wine, or strong drink, for water, they did indeed begin to like it best. Then, too, they commenced to learn what was the effect of taking this new fluid in place of the simple water which their bodies naturally required, and which forms a portion of all the other parts. For the muscles of those who indulged in this drink began to be unruly and false to the will, and easily powerless, their animal warmth became irregular, now high, now low, their temper began to get feverish, fretful, mad, and broken, and their skeleton became early decrepit and old, the back bent and the limbs feeble. Then, in short, a new and widespread disease crept in amongst manhood, which has never left it to this day. I do not ask now, "Suppose a man had done this, do you not think he would have done, however, innocently, a mischievous, cruel, and evil act?" For man has actually done it, and I hope you will agree with me in thinking he ought to do it no longer, if we can stop him.—(From *Drink and Strong Drink*)

JACK, THE BLACKSMITH.

He was the son of a hotel-keeper, of a social disposition, and a general favorite with all his acquaintances. A bright boy, he made good progress in his studies at school, and, whilst still an apprentice, became the best workman in the shop.

Of an evening he soon learned to tell a good story and to sing a merry drinking song in the bar-room, and invitations to drink were constantly given him.

Is it any wonder that in a few years, after he had married and was the father of children, he sometimes was seen to be much worse for liquor, and frequently neglected his business? With a shop in a good neighborhood, and a reputation for first-class work and plenty of customers, he and his family might have been in every way prosperous. But the old story of going down-hill was soon told of Jack, the blacksmith.

His work was behindhand. He would promise to iron carriages and do other necessary jobs within a certain time, and the promises would not be kept, so his neighbors lost confidence in him, and they soon were obliged to look around for another mechanic in his line. His wife, worn down by unavailing efforts to make both ends meet, grew sickly. His children were neglected. Furniture and clothing became shabby. He was a poor provider. Even his tools and stock began to rive out, and when he tried to do a day's work he found himself that he was losing his strength and skill. He had no longer the reputation of a cheerful companion and the sad end of a wretched, drunken life was hurrying on rapidly.

One Saturday night he had some money in his pocket; and, somewhat ashamed of his treatment of his wife and children, he set out for the village stores, intending not to spend his cash for drink, but for food, as there was none in the house. But on the way he fell in with a jolly crowd of idlers, and near midnight he reeled out of the tavern, his money all spent. He had, however, purchased something to take home, for in each pocket of his trousers was a small bottle filled with whiskey—the nearest to anything in the line of provisions that the place where he had spent the evening afforded.

Let him tell the night's story in his own words: "I staggered towards home quite satisfied with my evening's enjoyment, and fully prepared to boast that all the liquor I had drunk had not made me at all the worse for it. 'Yes,' said I, 'and here I've got all this good whiskey to take to my folks. Won't we have a jolly old time with it tomorrow? It'll make us all so cheerful.' Just then I stumbled over something, and found myself in a ditch where there was soft turf.

"This is a good place to take a nap," says I. So I slept awhile and woke up thirsty. I took a long drink from one of the bottles, and suppose that I repeated it at intervals through the night. Just before sunrise I woke again. It was a lovely Sabbath morning. Everything was as beautiful as only the blooming spring, with singing birds and green fields and trees in blossom, can make it in the open country.

"Why, Jack," said I, "you have been drinking; you have been drunk; you have stayed out all night. This is Sabbath morning. Where are the provisions you were

going to carry home? You never expected this. You're a drunkard." And I wept.

After a time I went on talking to myself. "Now, Jack, there's one of two things for you to do. Go on just as you've begun. Drink ahead. Finish up. It won't take long for the old shop to be used up, for the family to be scattered, for you to fill a drunkard's grave. That's one plan. The other plan would be to turn a short corner, and never again to touch a drop of liquor. God would help you to do this. I know it would be very hard to get by the tavern, or to refuse to take a drink with your comrades. Which will you do?"

Perhaps I sat for an hour thinking and making up my mind. Then if anybody ever prayed, I did, down in that ditch. Then I said, "I will try to take the good plan." And I asked for God's help.

This was nine years ago. I had a terrible struggle for the first few days, and sometimes I was almost persuaded to go into the old tavern when my acquaintances laughed at me and dared me to take at least one glass with them. But I held out. Since that morning I have not tasted strong drink.

And now, after nine years, you cannot find a happier family than mine. You will not see a finer or better furnished shop than the one I have built. I have bought the property on which it stands, with my house next door. I owe on all only two hundred and fifty dollars, which I shall pay off this year. And I call . . . experience a pretty good lesson for others who would know the difference between a drunken man and a sober life. No one could tempt Jack, the blacksmith, to drink a glass of liquor, if, as the bribe, he could give him all the money in the world.—*National Temperance Advocate*.

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From *Peloubat's Select Notes*.)

Dec. 21.—Eccles. 12: 1-14.

THE CONCLUSION.

The conclusion.—Vers 13, 14. 13. This verse begins in the Hebrew with a large letter (as Deut. 6: 4), as Baxford remarks, to excite more attention.—*Bridges*. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." The main thought toward which the whole discourse has tended; the practical conclusion to which, after all this wide view of life, we come. "Fear God, and keep his commandments." The fear of God denotes internal piety, and the keeping of the commandments of God denotes the expression of it by external obedience. This religion of heart and life is said to be the whole duty of man, or rather the whole of man.—*Emmons*. The whole duty of man. Rather the whole man. So the Septuagint, Vulgate, Ewald, Herzfeld, and others. To fear God and to obey Him is the whole man, constitutes man's whole being; that only is conceded to man; all other things, as this book again and again teaches, are dependent on a Higher Incomprehensible Being.—*Herzfeld*. That is, this is your part of life, God will take care of the rest. He that has true religious life within, and in his daily conduct, has all the essentials of life. He has found what shall profit a man, the way to true happiness.—*P*. In beautiful order under the genial rays of the sun of righteousness, the implanted fear of the Lord ripens into a golden harvest of duty.—*Young*.

For God shall bring every work into judgment. Knobel argues fairly from the expressions "every work" and "every secret thing" (comp. Rom. 2: 16; 1 Cor. 4: 5) that the Preacher here means an appointed judgment which shall take place in another world, as distinct from the retribution which frequently follows man's actions in the course of this world, and which is too imperfect (comp. 2: 15; 4: 1; 7: 15; 9: 2, etc.) to be described by these expressions.—*Coak*. With every secret thing. That which is unknown to others; that which may have been forgotten by ourselves. Whether it be good, or whether it be evil. We forget many of our good deeds as well as our bad, and much that good people do is entirely unknown to the world. The good will be as much surprised as the bad when the hidden and forgotten things of life are brought to light. (see Matt. 25: 37-40.)

"Count that day lost
Whose low descending sun
Views by thy hand
No worthy action done."

"IN GREAT DANGER."

As a Christian man was passing out of church a few Sabbaths ago he met an old acquaintance whom he had not seen for several years. In the brief interview he seriously said to him, "I understand that you are in great danger."

The remark was heard with surprise. The friend addressed was not aware of any danger, and eagerly inquired what was meant. The answer was, "I have been informed that you are getting rich."

Men of this class are not accustomed to suspect danger from such a cause. They see none, and they see no reason why others should. And yet they are in peril; they are in great peril of losing their souls. They are in danger of making a god of mammon, instead of the living God. They are in danger of seeking to lay up their treasures on the earth, instead of in heaven, as the Saviour exhorts them to do. To his disciples he said, "Verily, I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God." And Paul thus wrote: "They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." And Solomon says, "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." Alas, prosperous worldly men stand in slippery places, and there is great danger that their feet will slide in due time, and that they will be destroyed both body and soul in hell.—*American Messenger*.

Question Corner.—No. 23.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Which name, beginning with A, is that of a good housekeeper who averted a great peril from her cross husband, and made a friend of an enemy?
2. How many loaves of bread, clusters of raisins, and cakes of figs did this matron prepare as a gift for a very short notice?
3. Which name, beginning with H, is that of a wise woman who was a prophetess? Where was her home?
4. Which king was only seven years old when he began to reign? His mother's name began with Z. What is it?
5. Give the name of a royal lady beginning with V. She was shamefully insulted by her husband, a king. Give the name of the beautiful maiden who succeeded her as queen. It begins with E.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

An exhortation we all should heed.

1. The place where Jesus wrought His first miracle.
2. The priest unto whom Samuel was a child ministered.
3. The place where Paul came and abode with the disciples.
4. The first king of Israel.
5. The first of the seven churches to which John wrote.
6. Where Jonah sought to flee from the presence of the Lord.
7. He who hid a hundred prophets in a cave.
8. He who was worshipped by a king.
9. He in whose house the ark of God rested.
10. Joseph's youngest son.
11. The queen who refused to appear before the king at his command.
12. A symbolical name given to Christ by the prophet Isaiah.
13. The place where the people attempted to offer sacrifices to Paul, calling him Mercurius.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN No. 21.

1. Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; an Sisera captain of the host of the king of Canaan. Judges 4: 21.
2. Deborah. Judges 4: 4.
3. The ten tribes revolted because Rehoboam refused to lighten their burdens. 2 Chron. 10: 1, 19.
4. Elisha feeding the hundred men with twenty loaves and some ears of corn. 2 Kings 4: 42, 43.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

EAR-EYE.

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| 1. E-v-e | Gen. iii. 20. |
| 2. A-r-m-y | Judges ix. 2. |
| 3. R-o-m-e | Acts xviii. 2. |

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been sent by Cora Ma Snow.