

Light from the East

LEWD FELLOWS—Lewd means now licentious, but in Old English, it means low, depraved, vicious. The phrase here means "loafers from the market square". As the unemployed in our cities hang around the City Hall looking for a job, so the floating poor of Greek cities gathered on the market, and were always ready for some mischief. Besides these, the market men who brought garden stuff from the surrounding country, were a rude and semi-barbarous people, easily roused to violence. Sometimes they were not permitted to enter the city, but had a market place assigned to them outside the

walls, on account of the violence and foul language of the women, who outdid their sisters of Billingsgate in that particular.

RULERS—Politarchs. This unusual word is found in an inscription on the remains of a marble arch at Thessalonica, which informs posterity that it was a free city, and that its magistrates which Rome recognized were called politarchs, and that they were seven in number. The security which these rulers demanded of Jason and his friends, was a sum of money to be deposited with them, and to be forfeited if the Christian community were the cause of any further disturbance.

APPLICATION

As his manner was, v. 2. A story is told of a battle fought near a corral where a number of old, worn-out cavalry horses were confined. At the sound of the A Trumpet Call heavy firing they grew warlike, formed into a squadron and charged upon a number of mules, wheeled round and overthrew a high rail fence, nor ceased their wild demonstrations until the firing stopped. The power of habit becomes the master influence in man and beast. How advisable that in youth we form those habits of which we shall never be ashamed! The sight of a synagogue on the dawn of the Sabbath was like a trumpet call to the apostle. His religious habits drove him to the place of prayer.

Out of the scriptures, v. 2. A certain old colored sexton was not a professor of homiletics, as the art of preaching is called, but he was a shrewd judge of what a sermon should be like. "Some preachers", he used to say, "don't put the fodder down low enough. Thank God, we have got a preacher that just puts the fodder right down on the ground where every one can get it." There is a clearness and simplicity about the Bible that makes its message intelligible to all. "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." It is wise to study God's works in nature and history, to be acquainted with science and philosophy. But Bible truths in Bible words are the food on which

the souls of men flourish, and these are within the reach of everybody.

Consorted with Paul and Silas, v. 4. Some people claim to be Christians without belonging to the church, and this is, of course, perfectly possible; but their Christianity is not usually of a very aggressive type. If called upon to offer a prayer of rejoicing at the conversion of some penitent sinner, they are amazed that such an expression should be asked from them. When asked to deal personally with some anxious soul, they will look at you as if you must be out of your senses, to expect such service from them. They readily admit that these things are properly done by church members. Such Christians, however, are witnesses that do not testify, saved men that are not anxious for salvation, orthodox believers that will do nothing orthodox, forgetting James' injunction, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Another king, v. 7. Look at the stalwart engineer, as he stands with his hand on the throttle and his eye on the track. He looks at his watch, then pulls the throttle a little wider open, as much as to say to his faithful engine, "Give me six or eight miles more an hour—we are getting a little behind", and the good engine immediately begins to puff louder and turn its wheels more swiftly. Then again he shuts the throttle off, drops

"Puts the Fodder on the Ground"

The Hand on the Throttle