

WHY?

BY MRS. HELEN E. BROWN.



WHEN I was a child I was continually asking why? I was told then that I must "do as I was bid and not ask why," but yet that little question would be for ever popping out.

When I grew up I had the same habit. People laughed at me and told me I was never satisfied. But, if they had only known it, a good reason would have satisfied me at any time.

I am old now, but I have not done asking why. And here is a matter which puzzles me. Perhaps some of you little children can answer me. If alcohol is good, and you know how many people say it is, why hasn't God made it for us? We go all over the earth and we can't find alcohol growing naturally anywhere. There's water, good cold water, everywhere; lakes and rivers and brooks and springs enough to satisfy the thirst of every living being. But there are no rivers or lakes or rills of brandy, whiskey, wine, or beer. There are medicinal springs in a good many places, soda springs, sulphur springs, iron springs, and many other kinds, and invalids go to these and drink the waters to make them well. But you never yet heard of an alcohol spring, did you?

And God has made all manner of beautiful fruits on the earth, oranges, lemons, peaches, plums, pears, apples, grapes, melons, berries, oh! how many kinds there are, and all very nice, some sweet and some sour, so juicy and so wholesome. And yet not one, no, not one of them, contains alcohol. I am sure it would be just as easy for God to make alcohol in some of them as not. And if it is good for us to take, why didn't he? That is what I want to know.

Then look into the Bible. There was Hagar's poor little son Ishmael laid under the bushes to cry himself to death for the want of something to drink. Yes, he was dying of thirst, and the poor mother ready to die of grief, when "God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink." Now wouldn't it have been just as easy for God to have given her wine to fill her bottle with as water? The wine would have been so strengthening, some people say, for the poor famished child; it would have been meat and drink both, as they tell us, and if it would have been so much better, why do you suppose God didn't give it to him?

And when the Israelites were traveling from Egypt to Canaan, when they started on that long forty years' journey through the wilderness, you remember they came to a place where they found nothing to drink, and the whole multitude cried from thirst. And God told Moses to smite the rock, and there flowed out a stream of pure cold water, a stream that followed them all the way. If wine had been better for them, couldn't God have made a river of wine for their use?

When Elijah, the prophet, fled for his life into the wilderness God sent him a cruse of water to drink. Why didn't he give him something stronger?

If brandy and whiskey make people strong, why did God tell Samson's

mother to be sure not to drink any strong drink before he was born, and not to give him any? Samson was the strongest man that ever lived. How strange that he should become so strong on nothing but water!

How did it happen if wine is good for people that Daniel and his companions were fairer and fatter in flesh than those who took it?

And the Lord forbade the priests ever to drink wine on pain of death, and the kings, too, were told they should not take it. And when a person in ancient times took a vow of consecration to the Lord one of the things they resolved to do was to abstain from wine and strong drinks; and so particular were they that they wouldn't taste a grape or even a raisin. If these liquors were really strengthening and nourishing I shouldn't think the good God would have required this, would you?

And you remember about the Rechabites, who obeyed their father so faithfully and never tasted wine, even when the prophet at God's command offered it to them to see what they would do. How pleased God was with them because they were so true to their total-abstinence pledge!

Don't you think, children, that this is a great puzzle? Why, if alcoholic drinks are good for people, shouldn't God have provided them? Why should he have so strictly forbidden them? And why should he have been so pleased with those who never touched or tasted?

How can you explain it?



WORDS OF WARNING.

THE tobacco-habit makes no boy a man, nor any man more manly. A boy is in danger the moment he begins to smoke or chew. All medical men agree that the physical development of early manhood is seriously retarded by the use of tobacco. It is for this reason, and also because the tobacco-habit is a hindrance to mental improvement, that the Board of Public Instruction in Paris has issued a circular forbidding the use of tobacco by students in the public schools of that city. In Germany, the police in several states have been instructed to stop all smoking by lads and young men. This action is based on the testimony of the medical faculty that tobacco-using is so injurious to the health as to impair the fitness of boys and youth for military service, in which, in Germany, all young men must bear a part. In England, Dr. Drysdale, a distinguished London physician, has, in a letter to the London Times, denounced tobacco-smoking as "deleterious to health and vitality," and as the cause of various disorders which he points out.

The Interior—always careful, and very reliable in all it publishes—puts the case strongly when it says: "It is a great misfortune every way for a young man to contract the habit of tobacco-using. He stands nine chances out of ten to have his life shortened by it, and ten chances out of ten to have his usefulness impaired." The Sunday-school Times, one of our ablest weeklies, thus concludes a recent editorial on this subject: "A great many excellent men still use tobacco; but we believe there is not one among them all whose influence for good is not in

some measure lessened by this indulgence. We believe, moreover, that the best men—the clearest-headed and the purest-hearted—of these tobacco-users are coming to recognize this truth, and are one by one abandoning their vicious habit for the glory of God and the good of their fellows."

More than nine in every ten men who use tobacco wish they had never formed the habit. Many more good reasons might be given with these three words of advice: Boys, DON'T BEGIN.

A DYING MINER.

TWENTY miles from camp, and night approaching. A young home missionary working for his Master in one of the mining communities of Colorado, found himself in this situation one day, and was beginning to look about him for a desirable place in which to spend the night, when a little way ahead he descried a rude cabin.

Approaching nearer, he saw it was one of the poorest of these habitations, and much of the "chinking" between the logs had fallen out, rendering the place additionally uncomfortable.

"Such a place as that is surely deserted," said the young minister to himself; "and I am inclined to think I would rather sleep out of doors to-night, than inside that shell, even if it should prove to be inhabited by one who would make me welcome."

At that moment the sound of song floated out through the openings between the logs, and our traveller stopped his horse to listen to the man's weak voice singing that dear old home-song—"The Home of the Soul:"

"Oh, that home of the soul! in my visions and dreams  
It's bright, Jasper walls I can see,  
Till I fancy but dimly the veil intervenes  
Between the fair city and me."

were the words which reached the ears of the listener outside.

"I must see the man who can sing like that in such a place as this," thought the missionary, riding up to the cabin and alighting from his horse.

A feeble "Come!" came from within in answer to his knock; and entering he found himself in the one small room of the cabin, which was almost destitute of furniture.

In one corner, a rude bedstead had been constructed of boards and rude pieces of timber, on which some old blankets were spread, and on this hard bed lay a man, evidently very near to death.

"Dying alone in this situation, twenty miles from the nearest camp, still his look into the beyond seemed so clear, so real, that the language of the hymn he feebly sang was indeed the language of the heart," said the missionary, as he related the incident afterward. "He died that night, and I have never ceased to feel a thrill of thankfulness whenever I think of him, that I was belated that day, and so enabled to be with that man when the end came. Surely that which satisfies a man when dying in the midst of such surroundings is not a thing to be lightly rejected. When a young man leaves the home of his boyhood, he cannot afford to leave the religion of Christ, too."

When thy father and mother forsake thee, the Lord will take thee up.

DEAR LITTLE HANDS.

DEAR little hands: I loved them so! And now they are lying under the snow—

Under the snow so cold and white,  
And I cannot see them or touch them to-night.

They are quiet and still at last. Ah! me,  
How busy and restless they used to be!  
But now they can never reach up through the snow—

Dear little hands! I loved them so!

Dear little hands! I miss them so!  
All through the day wherever I go!  
All through the night how lonely it seems,  
For no little hands wake me out of my dreams!

I miss them through all the weary hours—  
Miss them as others miss sunshine and flowers—

Day-time or night-time, wherever I go;  
Dear little hands! I loved them so!

Dear little hands! When the Master shall call

I'll welcome the summons that comes to us all,

When my feet touch the water so dark and so cold,

And I catch my first glimpse of the City of Gold,

If I keep my eyes fixed on the heavenly gate,  
Over the tide where the white-robed ones wait,

Shall I know you, I wonder, among the bright hands?

Will you beckon me over, oh, dear little hands?

PUZZLEDOM.

ANSWERS FOR LAST NUMBER.

I. HIDDEN ANIMALS.—1. Baboon. 2. Pallah. 3. Paca. 4. Paco. 5. Puma. 6. Ounce.

II. DIAMOND.

G  
L E A  
L I M B S  
G E M S B O K  
A B B O T  
S O T  
K

NEW PUZZLES.

I. DIAMOND.

1. A letter from Salem. 2. A mimic. 3. Cease. 4. Undaunted. 5. To impede. 6. A pipe for drawing liquor. 7. A letter from Sweden.

II. NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

I am composed of 27 letters.  
My 13, 11, 7, is a vessel for the ashes of the dead.  
My 5, 9, 16, 15, 26, 22, is a numeral.  
My 4, 25, 12, 18, 16, 14, is one whom we honor.  
Out of my 27, 10, 6, 24, 17, are the issues of life.  
My 20, 21, 2, is a verb.  
My 8, 3, 23, is to scatter.  
My 16, 1, 14, 26, 27, is a globe.  
My 19, is a vowel.  
My whole is one of the sayings of Solomon.

III. CURTAILMENTS.

1. Curtail a poison, and leave a cure.  
2. Curtail a staff, and leave to be able.  
3. Curtail short and leave a dog.  
4. Curtail a fish, and leave a vehicle.  
5. Curtail a burr, and leave a study.  
6. Curtail a lady, and leave a bank.

IV. DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

1. A flower. 2. Part of a shield. 3. To faint. 4. An instant. 5. The rainbow. 6. A title. 7. In season. The initials and finals form two admirable virtues.