

GOODY'S CUP OF MILK.

BY E. M. DAUGLISH.

"You want to know how it was I became foreman of these works? Well, I'll tell you. It was all along of a cup of milk."

There was a slight laugh among the men who sat round George Robson as he said these words, but they knew he was "fond of his joke," as they expressed it, so they waited to hear what was coming next.

He was a fine tall fellow, this foreman, and as he stood amid his men he overtopped most of them. His hair was grizzled, and his face marked with lines that told of an accomplished purpose and struggles overcome.

It was the dinner-hour, and as the men's homes were in many cases distant they gathered in a neighboring coffee tavern for their meal.

"Well, you may laugh," went on Robson, "but if it's true that the acorn is the beginning of the oak tree, so it is that Goody Brown's milk-jug was the first start I got on the road to a better life. Ah! she was a good old soul."

"Well, tell us the story," said one of the men.

"Well, but about Goody's milk-jug," went on the foreman. "It was a good many years ago, and I was a lad somewhere about sixteen, and as hardened a young villain as you would see anywhere. I had been a regular 'gutter-child.' I never knew my mother; my father turned me out at seven years of age to shift for myself. He drank himself to death, and I just lived on the streets. I often got in prison for stealing little things, but at last for a bigger offence I was put in a reformatory. After a year or two I managed to run away, and took to a roving life, often up to wild pranks that might have caused my ruin, only God in his mercy held out His hand to save me. After a time I got work as a navvy on a new railway they were making down in the country. Though so young, I was strong for my age, and willing enough to work. Arab as I was, I yet thought it was somehow better to earn my own living by honest labor than to get it by stealing. Conscience was not quite dead in me, and I knew well enough when I was doing wrong. The navvies I was with were a rough lot, but none worse than myself, and some a deal better. I lodged in some sheds near the cutting, and every day, as I went to work, I had to pass Goody Brown's cottage."

"She was a tall, old woman, and used to stand at her gate and watch us as we passed, never heeding the rude words some of us gave her. She had a pretty little garden with roses and southernwood in it, and a row of beehives in a corner. She had some chickens too, and I fear we thought it would be a jolly plan to make off with one or two for our supper some fine evening.

"There was a little public close to the railway cutting, where we used to go and drink, but I never look kindly to it. I had seen too much of it when my father was alive, so I really suffered when my mates tried to make me drink.

"Well, one morning, after a drunken bout overnight, I started off to my work before the others. I felt very good for nothing, and almost wished I could kill myself and get rid of life altogether. As I passed the little cottage I noticed the old woman at her gate, seemingly on the lookout for me. It was very early, hardly light, and I felt surprised to see her there. As I came up she called to me, 'Here! my lad!'"

"I felt half inclined to go and take no notice, but her voice sounded uncommon pleasant after the rough ones I'd been accustomed to, so I just stopped in the middle of the road. She beckoned me to come nearer, and when I went she held out a large mug full of milk. 'Here, lad,' says she, 'drink this; you must feel thirsty this morning,' and she looked at me with a look that went through me, hard and wretched as I was. It was so full of pity that as I drank the milk it was like to choke me. She said nothing more till I gave back the mug; then she said, 'Look here, lad, you're too young to take to drinking ways. Come in here for a sup of milk or coffee as you pass in the day. It will be better than the beer.'

"I was so surprised I could only say, 'Thank ye, missis,' and hurry off as fast as I could. You fellows can hardly understand the stunning effect of a bit of kindness, when you've never been used to it all your life. As I went to my work I felt as if Goody Brown had given me a blow on the

head. I could not make out what she meant by caring to single me out and give me her milk. When I went home that night I was with a lot of others, and they carried me along with them, so I never stopped to see if the coffee was there, though I was thirsty. Next morning, however, it was just the same, there was Goody and her big mug. She watched me drink, with a smile on her face, and then said, 'Well, lad, is it good?'"

"I should think it was," I said, 'too good for the likes of me.'

"Nay, lad, nothing's too good for one of the Saviour's sheep."

"What do you mean, missis?" said I, though a faint idea of what she meant began to come into my mind.

"Why, your Saviour cares for you. Don't you know that, my lad?" said Goody, putting her kind old hand on my shoulder, and looking earnestly in my face. "Neglect him as much as you will, he cares for you; and so I am glad to give you a cupful for his sake."

"I hardly understood a word of what she said, yet all day it kept running in my head. 'He cares for you,' and then because He cared old Goody did too—careful enough to stint herself for the sake of a young good-for-nothing who had meant to rob her hen house! Day by day went on, and the milk never failed. She always said a word or two about the Saviour; not much, only one or two little things that I never forgot; and in the midst of my rough life and wicked heart, there arose a desire to be better, just for the sake of Goody and the Saviour she served."

"I made no change to speak of in my life; however, I did keep out of the public most times. Once I got drunk, and next day was too ashamed to go for my milk as usual, but slunk to my work another way. When I went again she never scolded me; she only said, 'Well, lad, you've had a fall, but the Lord upholdeth all that fall, so you won't do it again, most likely.'

"At last came a sort of crash that ended all this, and drove me away to another part of the country. One night some of my mates made up their minds to steal one of Goody's hens, and determined I should be the thief. They had hated my friendship with her, and some of the worst of the lot meant to put a stop to it. Being almost the youngest among them, they thought they could force me to do anything, but they were wrong. They got me into the little public, and with threats and oaths told me what was expected of me. I said little, but when I started off, as they thought, in the direction of Goody's cottage, I only went to have a last look at it in the moonlight, and then I took to my heels and ran as hard as I could till I was far away from my old comrades and could smell the sea air."

"I got on board a ship, and was taken out to Australia as captain's boy. He was a goodly man, that captain, just the same sort as old Goody, and he finished the work her milk jug had begun."

"It was something more than her milk jug," remarked one of the more serious of George Robson's auditors. "That begun it, perhaps, but it didn't carry it on."

"You're right there, Joe, it was God's grace that saved me at last, but I owed the knowledge of it to old Goody, who first showed me what Christian kindness meant."

"I told all this story after a bit, to Captain Graves, and he advised me to go and see Mrs. Brown as soon as I returned, and tell her all I had told him. I often felt how bitterly she must think of me, after all her goodness—to go off without a word; and I wondered if she had been robbed after all."

"I was too shy to write to her, so the voyage came to an end; and about a year and a half after I had left England I stood once more at Goody Brown's gate."

"It was evening time and the door was shut, but no light shone in the little window. I felt chilled to the heart. What if the old woman were dead? As I stood there, a train rushed by in the cutting below, and startled me into giving a good hard knock at the door."

"Come in," cried a cheerful voice, which made my heart beat with joy—for it was Goody's."

"I opened the door, and could just see her sitting in the dark all alone. 'Who is it?' she asked."

"Don't you know me, Mrs. Brown? It's me—George—the navvy boy you used to be so good to."

"So it is," she said, getting up, with a joyful smile, "and a new man, too, I know, by the sound of your voice. Come in, come in. I can't see you, for I've been blind the last six months."

"When I heard that I ran forward and took both of Goody's hands, and we kissed each other. She made me sit down by her and I told her all the story. How she wept, to be sure, poor old soul. It seems she had a son about my age who had died, and from the first she had taken an interest in me for his sake."

"But it was your cup of milk that first made me want to be better, Goody," I said; "and now with God's help, I'll be a help to you for the rest of your days."

"Well, George," said Goody, softly, "you know a cup of cold water given for the sake of the Lord shall not lose its reward, and I'm sure mine far exceeds what I deserve. I never thought the Lord would let you be lost, but I did not feel sure he'd let me know all about it as he has."

"I did not go back to sea again. I lodged with Goody and got work on the railway. She was glad to have me lead her about and be a comfort to her in her declining days. I gradually improved my position, and she took a delight in every fresh step I made, till she was called home a few years ago."

"That's the story, mates. It's a very simple one, but it is quite wonderful what a little act of kindness can do for one who is in need."

The great bell rang and called the men back to their work; but the hour had not been lost, for the foreman's story made its mark, even though the good seed did not immediately shoot up and bear fruit.—*Temperance Chronicle.*

A MOTHER'S TACT.

The mother was sewing busily, and Josie, sitting on the carpet beside her, and provided with dull, rounded scissors, and some old magazines, was just as busily cutting out pictures.

"It would litter the carpet"—so said aunt Martha, who had come in for a cosy chat. Mamma knew this, but she knew that a few minutes' work would make all right again, and Josie was happy.

All went well until the little boy found that he had cut off the leg of a horse that he considered a marvel of beauty. It was a real disappointment and grief to the little one.

"Mamma, see!" and half crying he held it up.

"Play he's holding up one foot," the mother said quickly.

"Do real horses, mamma?"

"Oh, yes, sometimes."

"I will!"—and sunshine chased away the cloud that in another minute would have rained down.

It was a little thing, the mother's answer; but the quick sympathy, the ready tact made all right. The boy's heart was comforted, and he went on with his play, while the mother sewed on with no jar on nerves or temper, and auntie's call lost none of its pleasantness.

"I am tired cutting pies, mamma," said Josie, after a while.

"Well, get your horse waggon, and play those bits of paper are wool, and you are going to bring me a load. Draw it over to that corner by the fire, and put them into the kindling box; play that's the wood house."

Pleased and proud, the little teamster drew load after load till the paper were all picked up, without his ever thinking that he was doing anything but play.

"Well," said aunt Martha, "old as I am, I've learned one thing to-day, and I wish Emily would come in and take lessons, I do."

Mrs. Waldo looked up in some surprise.

"What do you mean, auntie?"

"Well, I spent yesterday afternoon over there," the old lady had a weakness for visiting, and was "Auntie" to people generally, "and things were in a snarl, all the time, starting with less than Josie's given you a dozen times since I sat here. I've had a good talk with you, and you've given me pleasant thoughts for a week to come; over there we couldn't hear ourselves speak. It was 'Don't do that,' and 'You naughty child,' spill and scrap and break and tumble, scold and slap half the time. Emily means well; she loves her children, and never spares herself sewing for them, or nursing them when they are sick. She has a world of patience some ways, but she don't

seem to have any faculty for managing them. Well, well, I'll send her over here, only I won't let on why," and the old lady rolled up her knitting as the bell rang for tea.

A little tact springing from thoughtful love, how good it is!—*Selected.*

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From *Peeluba's Select Notes.*)

Sept. 14.—Ps. 40: 1-17.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

The experience of Christian in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" can be used by the teacher as a most perfect series of illustrations of the various points in this story of the Christian's life. The horrible pit and miry clay can be seen in Christian's feelings which prompted his escape from the City of Destruction, in the Slough of Despond, and in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. His conversion and joy at the sight of the cross and the Palace Beautiful illustrate the first three verses of this Psalm. The psalmist's trials and troubles and experiences of God's care and love, are repeated. It will add much interest if during the week previous the scholars are directed to Pilgrim's Progress, and set to work at finding the correspondence between Christian's experience and that of David.

Question Corner.—No. 17.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

With reverend hands they laid him to his rest,

Nor doubted but his work on earth was o'er,

In life—the living had his power confessed.

In death—the death still greater witness bore.

1. Fair wife, to thee no memory e'er can come

Of the dear sacred atmosphere of home.

No childhood's hour (that gay unthinking time)

When young companions mixed their joys with thine.

2. Brother beloved—nor as a friend less dear

How sad the hearts now lingering round thy bier.

But where is he, that loved and looked-for guest,

Why came he not, e'er thou hadst sunk to rest?

3. An only child, thine aged mother's joy,

Thy father's hope—his bright, his promised boy.

Yet not the dearest to that faithful breast,

Higher and fiercer of all was God's behest.

4. Son of a king, and greater still than he

In pride of pomp, and real majesty;

Yet high above the splendors of thy throne

Shines forth thy Sire's title—his alone.

5. Meek matron, wouldst thou seek from all to hide

The griefs that in thy patient heart abide!

It may not be—speak out aloud thy woe,

Then blissful from the holy temple go.

6. And didst thou think that thou couldst lightly sin,

And in the sinning not draw others in?

Couldst thou not see the bitter grief, the shame,

Entailed on all the race that bears thy name?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 15.

1. Solomon's temple. 1 Kings 6, 7.

2. Absalom. 2 Sam. 18, 9.

3. Pilate's wife. Because she had suffered many things in a dream because of him. Matt. 27, 19.

4. David mourned over the death of Saul and Jonathan. 2 Sam. 1.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

THE WORK OF CREATION.—Gen. 1, 3.

1. Chorazin Matt. xi. 21.

2. Ruth Ruth i. 22.

3. Esau Ex. xv. 27.

4. Aaron Ex. iv. 27.

5. Timothy 2 Tim. ii. 15.

6. Israelites Ex. iii. 7.

7. Onnesimus Philemon 10.

8. N-a-aman 2 Kings v. 9.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been received from Albert Jesse French.