

HOW WE CHURNED.

BY PHILIP SNOW.

Was I too sure that Sarah and I would never quarrel again, that I needed another lesson? Perhaps, as the months went calmly by, I grew self-confident and boastful; at any rate, I have been again at the school of sad experience, but the last time Sarah was my fellow pupil, and which of us stood at the head when the day's work was over, I cannot quite tell.

Well, early in the fall, Sarah began to lament the necessity of buying our milk and butter. Now and then the butter was rank, and the milk watered, and every time it occurred the misfortune served Sarah's purpose, and gave her an opportunity of dwelling upon the advantage of owning a cow. Week after week it was the same; every bit of squash, or turnip upon the table reminded my wife that it would be so much cheaper and better to make our own butter. I always turned the subject, but it was not for long. In vain I argued upon the other side of the question; Sarah is a match for any man in an argument, in her own dignified way. I set forth the expense of pasturage and hay, and the trouble of the animal. But Sarah could see no difficulty at all. I could drive the cow to pasture during the summer when I went to the shop. We could give her odds and ends from the table so that she would need less hay, and really, milking was nothing; her father used to milk ten cows before breakfast, and think nothing of it, and if I couldn't milk one it was a pity.

Need I say that we have a cow? Sarah saw a fine one at farmer Johnson's in November, and, before the week was out I had drawn from the little sum deposited in the savings' bank a hundred dollars. Fifty paid for the noble animal, and Mr. Johnson affirmed she was cheap at that. Twenty-five bought a ton and a half of hay and with the rest I built a shed for her accommodation. Really, we were both proud of the sleek creature on that first day, and I began to hope she would prove better than money in the bank. Still it was with something of dread that I looked forward to milking time. I had often watched the interesting process, but until I tried for myself, I had but a meagre idea of the skill required.

Well, the days went by and we set apart Monday evening for the great event of churning. We had a fine lot of cream, and as Sarah poured it out of the jar, I began to feel sure I had always wanted a cow, and to anticipate the time when I could say to my neighbors: "Ah friends, we have no trouble now, we make our own butter."

I was a little dismayed at Sarah's choice of a churn, for why women always will have an old-fashioned dash churn if possible, I do not know. In my early boyhood, at my uncle's, I had practiced upon the thing, and knew it was aggravating, but Sarah was sure that butter came firmer, and sweeter, and of course now we had a cow we wanted good butter. I began to churn, the cream began to thicken and increase in volume, till I told my wife, we should be able to pack a whole tub at least; ever thicker, and more aspiring, it filled the churn completely, and at last lay piled round the dasher, with an evident intention of reaching the top. My arms grew weary, my patience small. Sarah sat by to encourage me, and now and then offered to help. At last I went off to borrow a larger churn, and after much tribulation the cream was transferred to it, and I turned the crank with renewed ardor. I repeated coaxingly that good old stanza.

"Cream, cream butter make,  
Peter stands at the gate,  
Waiting for a butter cake,"

but all in vain. I began to get desperate, but Sarah was delightfully cool and consoling. She had heard that butter kept better if it did not come too quick.

"And pray, Mrs. Snow," I asked "will you please specify what you consider too quick? Here it is almost ten o'clock and I have been hard at work upon it for four mortal hours."

She sweetly answered that she guessed it would come before long, it seemed as if it must.

"Are you sure it was warm enough," I inquired an hour later, "I think I've heard that having the cream too cold is bad if you are in a hurry."

"Why Philip, it must be warm enough, I brought it in before tea and it stood in the kitchen a long time."

I began again with a vigor born of desperation, but to all appearance I might have folded my hands as well. Sarah tried to cheer me on, but I was too far gone in despair and vexation.

"I've a great mind to send the confounded thing over the bank," I muttered, "I don't believe it was warm enough. Women are always so afraid of cream being half-warmed."

"And men are always so afraid of cream's

being to cold; for my part I want butter to come hard," returned she.

She left the room a moment, and I seized the tea-kettle and poured in a liberal quantity of hot water. On her return, she affirmed that there was a different sound about it, and that it was just ready to come. I laughed to myself, but kept silence. Truly there was a change, but it grew thin and settled down, down to its first estate, but alas! it did not come.

At last I confessed my evil deed, and very meekly went out for ice to cool it up again. My exultation had died out, but Sarah was still hopeful. However, boiling and freezing alike proved ineffectual, and as one o'clock came I put down my foot, as becoming the master of the house, and affirmed I would not churn another minute if the butter never came. Sarah thought it a pity, for, perhaps, it might be almost here, and it seemed too bad to leave it now, when ten minutes might bring it. But I maintained my ground manfully, and was soon sleeping calmly.

Early next morning we were up with a stolid determination to conquer or die. Sarah churned while I milked, I churned while she got breakfast. Noon came, still we churned; my work at the shop was untouched, but one thing consoled me, Sarah stood by me faithfully. There was no assumed superiority now and it was with a very becoming meekness that she suggested that perhaps, after all, our ancestors were right and that sometimes churns were bewitched. It was a trifle monotonous but not hard, anger had died out long ago, there was now only a dogged determination "to fight it out on this line" to the bitter end.

At length as the sun went down, Sarah proposed to give it up, and keep the cream for shortening. I knew my duty better, so still I churned. Often we lifted the cover in search of consolation; many times we were sure it was changing, but yet at dusk, it seemed not a whit nearer than in the morning. I went out for a breath of air, and Sarah took my place. A little later I stepped upon the piazza.

What sound is that? It is the delightful "swash" of the buttermilk, and the "chug" of the butter as it goes down. Sarah was radiant, I seized her and gave her an ecstatic kiss. I watched with admiring eyes while she removed, washed, and salted the yellow mass. It looked so nice I almost forgot the labor we had expended on it; just then a neighbor dropped in, we told him our trouble and asked this opinion.

"Too cold," he replied sententiously. I am proud to say I did not even look triumphantly at Sarah, as he thus corroborated my opinion.

"I shall take that cow back to-morrow," I observed, "we can't afford to make our own butter, till we grow richer."

"All nonsense," said he, "just get a thermometer, and it will be all right."

The good book says that "the sleep of the laboring man is sweet," and you may be sure that I rested beautifully that night. The next morning on the way to the shop, I bought a thermometer, and since that time churning day has lost its terror. We no longer rush blindly on in an unknown way, but follow David Crockett's own bit of advice, and "be sure we are right, then go ahead." I am a wiser man, I trust; Sarah, too, is growing more considerate, and is not always quite so sure of things, which adds greatly to my comfort.

Altogether, as we sit cosily together of an evening, or draw our chairs around the table, adorned with fresh vegetables, and a golden ball of "our butter" I feel sure things might be worse. I have, indeed, almost come back to my old belief, that Sarah is as near an angel as it is possible to be and yet be a woman.—The Household.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHILDREN READING.

Preaching a few Sundays since in one of our country churches, we noticed that the little son of our host, who was about twelve years of age, was entirely absorbed in the book which he had secured from the Sunday-school library. He curled himself up upon the lounge, and was soon entirely unconscious of what was said or done in the room. His face was flushed with the exciting details of the story, and he reluctantly closed the volume when summoned to supper.

He was reading one of the numerous exciting sea tales, of a prolific author, which are sold by tens of thousands, and form no small proportion of many of our Sunday-school libraries. The language of them is coarse, although not exactly profane; the incidents in them are astonishing, even if not absolutely improbable; the plot is somewhat intricate, the occurrences are exciting, and the outcome is wonderful! Boys are absolutely fascinated by them. Now, what is the most manifest result of reading them? Not to speak of the fact that they crowd aside all religious reading on the Sabbath, and fairly overmaster all

the sanctuary and home influences of the day, of a serious or spiritual character; overlooking also, the vital truth that the intellectual and moral culture of such a book is exactly like to that of the family presence of a rough and vulgar companion; that it is all the time weakening the mental fibre, and deteriorating the moral strength—leaving these important considerations out of our view, for the time, let us not forget that an overmastering, morbid appetite is being nurtured and fed, which will constantly demand, hereafter, the same kind of nutriment, only in a stronger form. All taste for wholesome and improving literature is destroyed, and only a craving is engendered for the lightest and most noxious fictions. Why is it that nearly eighty per cent. of the patrons of our public libraries choose only novels, and, when they can be obtained, only those of the most flashy character? It is simply because they are brought up, in their childhood and youth, in our homes and Sunday-schools, upon these weak and improbable novelettes.

But what shall be done about it? Shall we snatch the entertaining volume from the hand of the bewitched little lad? By no means. There is an infinitely better way than this. By all means, if he reads the book, let it be done in the common sitting-room, and in the presence of his parents. Do not train him to concealment and hypocrisy. Do not force him into the hay-mow, or into his cold chamber, or to snatch the opportunity, with the stealthy lamp by night. Better, a thousand times, have him read the book before your face, than simply to drive him into concealment, and abuse his conscience and harden his heart at the same time. The boy is to be won to something better. It will cost something, as every valuable result does, to accomplish this, but the end gained will be an ample compensation for all the time and trouble incident to its consummation.

Boys that are accustomed to simply and wholesome food, find their appetites entirely satisfied with it; but by pandering a lad's taste with rich viands only for a little while, he will soon turn away disgusted from his oatmeal and bread and milk. We know a father who has been accustomed to read volumes of history, of travel, or read adventure, and of popular science, with his little boys almost from the time they were able themselves to read. Now, about ten and twelve, they are as interested in a volume of well written history, in polar explorations, and in clear illustrations of applied science, as the father himself. He reads aloud in the family. He has the children read in their turn; and he makes the facts of their reading the subject of domestic conversation. Here is the very simple secret of awakening and culturing a taste for pure and instructive literature.

There never was an hour when so many specially entertaining volumes were coming from the press. Hundreds of juvenile works, if only a little time were taken to sift them out from the masses of trash, of the most wholesome and attractive character, are now provided for young people. But the indispensable thing is for the parent to be personally interested in the reading of the child. The father or mother must watch and cultivate the taste, as a wise parent would care for a child if one of its limbs threatened to become, in some way, distorted, or elements of physical disease had manifested themselves. A pure taste for wholesome knowledge is more important than a perfect foot, or the cure of an perfect foot, or the cure of an oblique vision in the eye. Any Christian parent would blame himself severely, and properly, if he should neglect, in time, to correct any morbid physical tendency on the part of a child. Of how much importance is it that he should watch over the healthful development of his child's mind? and how much more bitter will be his chagrin, when he apprehends, as he some time may, the sad consequences which follow such neglect!—Zion's Herald.

—If there ever should be organized a society for the prevention of worry, we think it might find a field for usefulness and hopeful labor in preventing or curing the habit of idle and pointless complaining and needless fretfulness, which blights so many homes. It could teach overwrought mothers and overactive fathers to take more sleep—to breathe a better air—to stop overloading their stomachs—and thus abolish many of the strictly physical causes of a disagreeable habit of unamiableness. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in this matter, for the descending steps of the scale are: Worry, fret, "stew," growl, bark, bite. And when one has gone clear down there, philosophy won't save him. Reform has as hopeless a job in tackling him as it has in dealing with an old hack politician. Conversion—the real, old-fashioned conviction of sin, repentance and a new birth—will alone do the job. Beware, therefore, how you yield to any tendencies in this direction that can be controlled or checked. Worry may be unavoidable; but nobody has a right to make a human burr or our of himself.—Golden Rule.

Question Corner.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

- Where is the first mention of beggars in the Bible?
- Where is the first prophecy of the millennium recorded?
- Where is recorded the first act of surveying?
- Where do we read of the first Christian letter of recommendation?
- When and by whom were Temperance Societies first formed?
- Where were mules first found, and by whom?
- To whom did God promise that his children should be in numbers as the stars of heaven?
- How many examples does the Scripture give of ungodly men desiring the prayers of the righteous and what are they?
- Why were the Levites scattered over the face of the earth?
- What king beat down a city and sowed it with salt?
- Who was the father-in-law of Moses?
- What prophet was himself the subject of prophecy?

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

- A name, the symbol of mere worldly gain, To love it and love God—the attempt is vain.
- A vale Tobiah sought, with feigned alarm, To entrap there Nehemiah to his harm.
- A plain where building projects of proud aim, By heaven confounded soon were put to shame.
- A word of Christ which ears fast chained unbound.
- For incense, jewels, gold, a land renowned.

The initials of these words read downwards, and the finals upwards give the names of two brothers.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS OF MAY 1ST.

- Maaseiah.
- Ararat.
- Be fruitful and multiply &c.
- The Eunuch of Ethiopia.
- Abram.
- Solomon's navy.
- When the men of Judah crossed the Jordan at Gilgal to King David.
- At Antioch by Paul and Barnabas.
- Gen. xxiii. 8 Abraham purchased a burying place for Sarah at Machpelah.
- Job xix. 23, 24.
- By Abraham in the purchase of land.
- Rept.

ANSWER TO ENIGMA.

- J-egar-sahaduth-a.
- E-as-t.
- H-achila-h.
- O-she-a.
- I-shmae-l
- A-i.
- D-ur-a.
- A-bia-h.

Jehoiada—Athaliah.

A subscriber sends us the following assertions which our young readers for their own satisfaction might endeavor to verify:—

The 19th chapter of the second of Kings and the 37th of Isaiah are alike. The shortest verse in the old testament is in 1st Chronicles 1st chapter and 1st verse, "Adam Sheth, Enosh;" the shortest verse in the new testament is the 11th chapter of John, verse 35, "Jesus wept." Chapters in old testament, 929, chapters in new testament, 260. The 21st verse of the 7th chapter of Ezra has all the letters of the alphabet in it. Words in the old testament, 629,489, words in the new testament 281,258. Letters in the old testament, 2,728,100, letters in the new testament 838,380. Verses in the old testament, 23,214, verses in the new testament, 7,959. Letters in the Bible, old and new testament, 3,566,480.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN NO. 8.

Elsy L. Duncan, Little Shemogue, N. B. 10; Rebecca W. Shakspeare, N. E. Hope, B. C. 7; Agnes McCartney, Durham, Ont., 5; Pattie Sandie, Caledonia, Ont., 9; John F. Millen, Cottam, Ont., 10; Stephen S. Steevens, Hopewell Hill, N. B. 7; Margaret R. Clayton, Loydtown, Ont., 6; Sarah McGregor, Wingham, Ont., 4; Lillie Jackson, Southampton Ont., 8; M. M. East Nissouri, Ont., 7; D. J. Dyson, Kintall, Ont., 4; Harry E. Gowen, Kingsay, Que., 10; Jas. Rose, Black Heath, Ont., 10; Jas. G. Jackson, Westmeath, Ont., 10.

The following are the answers received up to date for the questions of May 1st:—  
Pattie Sandys, Caledonia, Ont., 10; A. P. Solandt, Inverness, Que., 8; Hannah M. Treleven, Eden, Ont., 10; Maud Kirkland sends, from New Westminster, British Columbia, the answers to the questions of No. 7, nine of which are correct.

