



### THE PROPHECY.

BY MARY DWINELL CHELLIS.

"HALLO there, Bill! What are you doing?"

"Smoking."

"Don't it make you sick?"

"Not a bit of it. I'm too old a stager for that."

"You ain't as old as I am, and I think I am young. I tried smoking once, and that was enough for me. I thought I was going to die, I was so sick."

"Hain't you tried it again?"

"No, sir; and what is more, I sha'n't."

"When was it?"

"The next day after Cross came here. I was fool enough to think it would be smart to do as he did; but, as grandpa says, I saw the folly of it before it was too late, and there was no great harm done."

"Well, I began the very day you did, and I don't believe you were sicker than I was. But when I make up my mind to do a thing I do it; and to tell the truth, it has taken me all this time to get so I can smoke and enjoy it. Now I'm all right."

"According to my way of thinking, you are all wrong. Father says he wouldn't have me learn to smoke for five thousand dollars. He says I should be so much out of pocket. It costs a good deal to smoke in style. He says he knew a man who used to spend a dollar a day for cigars right along. I would rather invest money in some other way."

"Pshaw! most every man smokes, and when I grow up I want to do like the rest. I should feel pretty flat if I happened to be with a lot of fellows that were smoking and I couldn't take a cigar without making myself sick. You won't catch me in such a scrape as that. Cross can smoke half a day right along."

"He would stop long enough to drink a glass of beer now and then. Cold water tastes pretty flat when a fellow's mouth is all burnt up with tobacco."

"That's a fact, but Cross has money enough to pay for all the beer he wants. He says he began to smoke when he was eight years old."

"He looks like it: he isn't half-grown. Three years older than I am, and only up to my shoulders! I thought you wanted to be tall and large."

"I do, and I expect to be."

"So do I. I don't calculate to lose a foot or two in height, and spoil my teeth, and muddle my brain, for the sake of being ready to smoke with some fellows I may happen to meet ten years from now. I sha'n't do it, and you'd better not. The next thing, you will be drinking beer; then something stronger, and more of it, until you won't care what else comes to you if you can only get all the rum and tobacco you want."

"That's hard talk, Joe—rather more than I can stand. If I was in the habit of fighting I should call you to account. When a man gets so he don't care for anything but rum and tobacco he is a drunkard. You don't think I shall ever be a drunkard, do you?"

"I hope not; but you are only twelve years old, and if you have got a taste for beer and tobacco you have taken the first step. I never thought so much about it until father talked to me, the night after I tried smoking, but he said a young boy couldn't expect to make the best of himself in any way if he used tobacco. It will drain his pocket of small change, weaken his body, and dull his brains. Some men get so used to having a quid rolling round in their mouths they can't talk without it. They stutter and stammer, as though they had lost a part of their tongues. I hope you won't chew as well as smoke. One is bad enough, but take them together they are too bad to be tolerated. As for me, I will have none of the filthy stuff."

The two boys who talked thus with each other were schoolmates, and their parents neighbours, so that seldom a day passed when they were not together; but from the time when one decided not to use tobacco and the other resolved to smoke like "an old stager" their paths in life diverged.

Less than a score of years have gone by since then; yet the prophecy, counted so severe, has been literally fulfilled, as Bill acknowledges, with bitter regrets that he had not heeded the warning of his old-time friend. He is a besotted drunkard, without hope of reform, replying to all exhortations: "As long as I use tobacco I must drink liquor; and I would rather die than give up tobacco."

### LESSON NOTES.

B.C. 1000.] LESSON XI. [March 18.

WINE A MOCKER.

Prov. 20. 1-7. Memory verses, 1-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whoever is deceived thereby is not wise.—Prov. 20-1.

OUTLINE.

1. Folly, v. 1-4.
2. Wisdom, v. 5-7.

EXPLANATIONS.

"Wine is a mocker"—"Wine is a sneerer"; a frivolous, impudent person. "Strong drink is raging"—Or, "any sort of intoxicant is clamour and tumult." "Is not wise"—Cannot become wise. Strong drink is an enemy to wisdom in every sphere of life. "The fear of a king"—"King" here stands for all governmental authority. The criminal is as much afraid of a policeman as a Congo negro is of a lion. "Sinneth against his own soul"—Forfeits his life. This is true not only when capital punishment is incurred. A very large share of people are living diminished lives because of the knowledge that some act of theirs, if generally known, would "provoke to anger" that most despotic of all kings, Public Opinion. "Cease from"—Keep apart from. "Will be meddling"—Better, "pushes recklessly on;" "gets angry." "Will not plough, by reason of the cold"—The smallest difficulty deters a lazy man from most needed work. "Therefore shall he beg in harvest"—He who neglects work will suffer loss, and this is as true in the spiritual as in the natural world. "Counsel in the heart"—Unspoken plans. "Like deep water"—Hard to be fathomed. "A man of understanding will draw it out"—A shrewd man can find out most secrets. "Most men"—Most people proclaim what virtue they have. An unobtrusive, pious man is hard to find. "The just man" etc.—A righteous ancestry is one of the greatest of blessings.

### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson are we warned—

1. Against liquor drinking?
2. Against laziness?
3. Against overweening self-esteem.

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What is said in the Golden Text about wine and wine-drinkers? "Wine is a mocker," etc. 2. What are we taught concerning quarrels? "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife." 3. What is said about the sluggard who will not work? "He shall beg, and have nothing." 4. What is said of the just man? "He walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The folly of sin.

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

How is Christ a priest?

On earth he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins; and in heaven he presents himself to God for us, makes continual intercession on our behalf, and sends down upon us his blessing.

### Stop and Think.

BY E. E. REXFORD.

My boy, when they ask you to drink,

Stop and think.

Just think of the danger ahead:

Of the hearts that in sorrow have bled  
O'er hopes that were drown'd in the bowl  
Filled with death for the body and soul.

When you hear a man asking for drink,

Stop and think.

The draught that he drinks will destroy

High hopes and ambitions, my boy!

And the man who the leader might be

Is a slave that no man's hand can free.

Of this terrible demon of drink!

Stop and think.

Of the graves where the victims have laid,

Of the ruin and woe it has made,

Of the wives and the mother who pray

For the curse to be taken away.

Yes, when you are tempted to drink,

Stop and think

Of the danger that lurks in the bowl,

The death that it brings to the soul,

The harvest of sin and of woe,

And spurn back the tempter with "No."

### "STEER STRAIGHT FOR ME."

A FISHERMAN, who habitually drank to excess, used to sail from a small cove on the Scotch coast to the fishing grounds, several miles out in the ocean. There was no lighthouse to guide him, not even a beacon-light, and the channel was intricate. When the fisherman had taken a drop too much and night had fallen, it was dangerous work entering that cove.

His little son used to watch for his father's coming, and as soon as he saw him he would run down to the point, and cry out:

"Steer straight for me, father, and you'll get safe home!"

The boy died; and one evening the father was sitting at his lonely fireside. His conscience troubled him, for he had been thinking over the sins of his life. As he night settled down he thought he heard the voice of his boy ring out through the darkness:

"Steer straight for me, father, and you'll get safe home!"

Springing to his feet, he called out:

"You're right this time, my son!"

From that moment he was a changed man; he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and served him until he was taken to heaven to join his little son whom he had so much loved.

### THE SURETY.

THOMAS NOLAN had been turned out of Sabbath-school. He had become so bad that it seemed impossible to bear with him any longer, and his influence over the other pupils was so bad, that for their sake it was thought best to expel him. But his parents brought him to the school again, begging the superintendent to take him back, and give him one more trial.

"I should be very glad to do so, if I could feel sure of his good conduct. But it is a sad thing for such a big boy to set such a bad example. However, I will see," and the superintendent went into the school-room.



WINE IS A MOCKER.

"Boys," said he, "Thomas Nolan wants to come back to the Sabbath-school, and if someone will become security for his good conduct, I will gladly receive him into the school again."

There was silence for a few minutes. The larger boys shook their heads, for they knew him of old. Then one of the smallest boys said, "Please, sir, I will."

"You!" said the superintendent, "you become security for a boy twice as large as you! Willie, do you understand what it means to become security for any one?"

"Yes, sir; it means that when he is bad, I am to be punished instead of him," was Willie's reply.

The superintendent then went out and told Mr. Nolan that they would receive Thomas into the school again, as Willie Graham had become security for his good conduct.

Tom's heart was touched; and as he followed the superintendent into the school-room he made a mental resolve that little Willie Graham should never have to be punished for his misconduct.

"You ought to acquire the faculty of being at home in the best society," said a fashionable aunt to an honest nephew. "I manage that easily enough," responded the nephew, "by staying at home with my wife and children."

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