

"DRY" AMERICA AMAZES WORLD

The International Sunday School Lesson for Nov. 2nd is A Temperance Lesson—Jeremiah 35:1-8, 12-14a, 18, 19.

By William T. Ellis.

Often during the present year my fellow traveller and I have talked together of the incredulity which we found in the old world concerning America's adoption of a nation-wide prohibition law. We have sought to understand why foreign friends could have had out of our countless conversations with these bewildered inquirers—and also much food for serious reflection. Practically every English-speaking person we met talked about this wonder of the world. It was more consistently a theme of discussion than the peace treaty, the war itself or the influenza epidemic. I can testify that all the civilized world is deeply interested in America's going "dry."

Many men, especially British officers, were sincerely concerned last there should be a revolution in America! They fully expected "the working classes" to rise up in armed protest against being "deprived of their beer." Their basic assumption was that certain weird reformers and fanatics, possessed of sudden unaccountable authority, had taken advantage of the absence of the soldiers from America to put this terrible prohibition law upon the statute books. And what would become of the country? Men surely would not submit patiently to being deprived of their drink!

declassifies us, as it were; puts us out of the good society of the good. Looked at in the large, the liquor question is more than an economic question and a social question and a physiological question; it is a religious question.

Celebration-Jubilee For decades the Sunday Schools have observed what they call "World's Temperance Sunday." This lesson recognizes that anniversary; that is why we treat it topically, rather than textually—although the Rechabites are well worth studying about. There will be the note of jubilation in this year's celebration; for we have witnessed the greatest demonstration of the advantages of the suppression of the liquor traffic the world has ever seen. Some drinkers are still grumbling, of course; but they are not drinking as of yore, so who minds the grumbling?

Queer stories of all kinds are current since the United States went "dry." Thus, the House of Correction Farm in Philadelphia has not had enough "d.d.'s"—"drunk and disorderly"—to carry on its farm, or to run the plant which supplies the community with gas; and both of these calamities have been heralded as evils of prohibition. Mr. Rhythe tells in "The Saturday Evening Post" of workmen who now are so sober and "flush" on Monday morning that they do not care whether they work or not; they have money, so why labor? In the old days, the beneficent saloon kept them so poor that they had to work. Also a steam laundry complained of being swamped with business, because so many wives are now using the husband's booze money to pay for the family wash, instead of doing it themselves.

None of the dire prophecies of the brewers have been fulfilled; and the people generally are better off and happier with this one avenue of expenditure closed to them. Best of all, the men who used to drink regularly are finding themselves in better health and spirits than before, and they have quickly adapted themselves to the new conditions. The only organized protest against the new law has come from the liquor dealers, and in sober daylight, they have few friends. They were not the "good fellows" many thought them; but only a crowd of selfish, unscrupulous money-grabbers.

Bigger Than Booze

There is no denying that Europe has been given a jolt by the drastic temperance legislation of the United States and Canada. And the Moslem East has been arrested in its new following of the European fashion of alcoholic indulgence. The frantic manner in which advocates of strong drink are defending it is one portent of the not-distant day when the whole world will be "dry." After the British home folk have heard the full truth about the part that whiskey played in the tragic loss of certain great battles and positions, they will take measures to prevent at least the higher officers from capitulating to the bottled enemy who is always a powerful ally of every other enemy.

Back of this all lies an idea that is greater than the liquor question. That is the notion that whatever hurts a person's efficiency, or a nation's, is not to be tolerated; and that whatever makes for selfishness and unbrotherliness in fundamentally bad for efficiency and for life we cannot run this world on a "look-out-for-number-one" basis. We are all too tightly tied up in the one bundle for that. Nowadays we are glimpsing a vast significance in the interpretation of the fulfillment of Christ's principles as we read "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." We are outlaws from the kingdom of heaven so long as we are not sharing the other person's load. Not to have a load on our shoulders

Lifting Life's Level.

Nobody with a clear brain should suppose that the temperance battle has been won because the saloons have been put out of business in the United States and most of Canada. Far from it. Negations create nothing. We have to build a new and nobler spirit of human relationship if we are to make this old world the lovable place it should be. Our sober society should breed factors and inspirers to brotherhood. Life's level must be lifted. There is a message for the day in Marguerite O. B. Wilkinson's poem:

"He set his hand to the plow one day,

While yet his years were few,  
Resolved to mark a distant field  
With furrows firm and true.

His arms were strong for the toil of life,

His heart was all aflame,  
Till a neighbor laughed, and turned  
him home.

Rebuked his desires:  
'You are too young, you are too poor,  
you are too weak,' said he.

'Best leave such tasks to the rich  
and great, and strive to be like me!

"Then rosy Love brought grand largesse

To his very cottage door,  
A maid of mystery and of charm  
God never gave before;

And the lad held out dumb hands of Hope

To the mighty fires of Peace,  
Till the neighbor passed with tongue  
in cheek,

And then he sought release.  
'You are too dull,' the neighbor said,  
'to shine by such as she.

'Find you a girl of common clay to wed,  
and be like me!

"So time sped by, till the fading day

Could bring but one last chance  
To break the bonds of a sordid life  
And conquer circumstance;

And, well-nigh spent, he sought the road

To the heights where life is great,  
Eager to reach one shining goal,  
But his neighbor whispered,

'Wait—  
'You are too old to do it now—it is  
far too late,' said he.

'I could not do it myself, you know,  
and you are just like me!"

A Menace or an Opportunity.

Of course there is law violation in "dry" territory; somehow, the whole miserable business of booze seems to beget lawlessness. Just now, the intelligent men who are committing these breaches of the enacted statutes of the land need to do a bit of sensible thinking.

Disrespect for law is the world's greatest contemporary evil. In Russia it has produced Bolshevism; in America it has blossomed in lynchings and riots.

Law is law, and sacred, if civilization is to stand. The man who breaks the law concerning liquor has no case against the man, several stages below him in the intellectual scale, who breaks the law against making and throwing bombs. Lawlessness is anarchy; and honest minds know that the present outbreak of lawlessness at the bottom is the legitimate child of years of lawlessness at the top. For the sake of the integrity of our own thinking let us not forget that Charism begot Bolshevism; and that an era of lawless capitalism cannot disown its offspring, an era of industrial violence.

The hour is here for facing all the facts and accepting their implications squarely. The new liquor laws are not a joke; they are law, and as indifferent to individual opinion and

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desire as all other law. Friends of civilization will look upon the situation as an opportunity to honor the law and to put into it the noblest and most positive significance. Let us help men to love self-control and clear-headedness and efficiency and idealism and altruism. It is a day to glorify mankind and to thank God

that the desire for the common good is strong enough to register itself in this advanced legislation. Suppose we try to convert the man who loves liquor to a love of life's higher things; so that he will willingly sacrifice a measure of his personal liberty for the sake of mankind and the kingdom of heaven, whose King "sanctified him-

self" in order to save the lowest and the least.

There are men in the world who would not cheat another man—unless they could.

If a mountain refuses to come to some men, they put up a bluff of their own.

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