



A JAPANESE JUNK.

**"The Love of God**

Like a cradle rocking, rocking,  
 Silent, peaceful, to and fro,  
 Like a mother's sweet looks dropping  
 On the little face below,—  
 Hangs the green earth, swinging, turning,  
 Jarless, noiseless, safe, and slow;  
 Falls the light of God's face bending  
 Down and watching us below.

And as feeble babes that suffer,  
 Toss and cry, and will not rest,  
 Are the ones the tender mother  
 Holds the closest, loves the best,—  
 So when we are weak and wretched,  
 By our sins weighed down, distressed,  
 Then it is that God's great patience  
 Holds us closest, loves us best.

O great Heart of God! whose loving  
 Cannot hindered be nor crossed;  
 Will not weary, will not even  
 In our death itself be lost,—  
 Love divine! of such great loving  
 Only mothers know the cost,—  
 Cost of love, which, all love passing,  
 Gave a Son to save the lost.

—Saxe Holm.

**SPONGES.**

When you use your sponge, do you ever ask yourself where it came from, whether it grew or was made? The sponge is a collection of animals, really, who lay eggs which hatch and increase the size of the sponges. The best sponges are found in the Mediterranean. They used to be caught by naked divers, and even with harpoons; but they have grown scarcer, and are now caught in deep waters that require expert divers in divers' suits. Sponges are found in the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

The Greeks are said to be the best divers in the world. A glass is placed at the end of a large tube. The boat engaged in sponge-fishing passes slowly over the ground while an expert watches the bottom through the large tube, the glass of which is beneath the surface. The water is so clear that the bottom can be seen at a great depth. When the sponges are discovered, the divers put on their suits and go to the bottom, and the sponges are brought to the surface.

In the waters of the West Indies the sponges are secured in comparatively shallow water. A box or bucket is used, with a pane of glass inserted in the bottom. The sponge-fisher puts his face into this, and when he discovers sponges brings them to the surface with a hook. The large woolly sponge, as you would imagine, is called a sheep sponge.

All sponges have to be prepared for market. As taken from the water they are unfit for use, and must be cleansed, and bleached to some extent. The very white, hard sponges are over-treated, and not as good as those cleansed without so free a use of acid. The best sponges are found in the deepest waters.

**JAPANESE JUNK-LIFE.**

"One of the most interesting features of Japanese life to me," said a recent traveller, "was the manner of living in the boats and junks, thousands of which frequent every bay along the coast. The junks always belong to the members of one family; and usually every branch of the family, old and young, live on board. The smaller sail-boats are made like a narrow flat-boat; and the sail (they never have but one) extends from the mast about the same distance in either direction—that is, the mast runs up the middle of the sail when it is spread. In these little boats men are born and die without even having an abiding-place on shore. Women and all wear little clothing except in rainy weather, when they put on layers of ringy straw mats, which give them the appearance of being thatched. At night, if in harbour, they bend poles over the boat from side to side in the shape of a bow, and cover them with this water-tight straw fringe, and go to sleep all together like a lot of pigs. A child three years old can swim like a fish; and often children who will not

learn of their own accord are repeatedly thrown overboard until they become expert swimmers. In the harbours children seem to be perpetually tumbling overboard; but the mothers deliberately pick them out of the water, and cuffing them a little, go on with their work. It is astonishing at what age these boys and girls learn to scull a boat. I have seen a boat twenty feet long most adroitly managed by three children, all under seven years of age. I am told that, notwithstanding their aptness at swimming, many boatmen get drowned, for no boat ever goes to another's aid; nor will any boatman save another from drowning, because, as he says, it is all fate, and he who interferes with fate will be severely punished in some way. Besides this, the saving of a boatman's life keeps a chafing soul only so much longer in purgatory, when it ought to be released by the death of the sailor, whom the gods, by fate, seem to have selected for the purpose."

**LESSON NOTES.****SECOND QUARTER.**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

**LESSON II.—APRIL 12.**

PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.  
 Luke 14. 15-24. Memory verses, 21-23.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

Come, for all things are now ready.—  
 Luke 14. 17.

Time—A. D. 29, just at the close of the third year of Christ's ministry.

Place.—Perea.

**CONNECTING LINKS.**

To-day's lesson comes in order after that on watchfulness. Between them the following events took place: Report of the murder of Galileans by Pilate, parable of the fig tree, healing of a woman eighteen years sick, dining with a Pharisee, at whose table these words were spoken.

**DAY BY DAY WORK.**

Monday.—Read about a great supper (Luke 14. 15-24). Prepare to tell in your own words the last lesson and this.

Tuesday.—Read the account of an Eastern marriage feast (Matt. 22. 1-14). Fix in your mind Time, Place, and Connecting Links.

Wednesday.—Read Wisdom's invitation (Prov. 9. 1-11). Learn the Golden Text.

Thursday.—Read the sin of refusing (Prov. 1. 20-33). Learn the Memory Verse.

Friday.—Read good things offered free (Isa. 55. 1-7). Answer the Questions.

Saturday.—Read how some rejected

(Acts 13. 42-52). Study Teachings of the Lesson.

Sunday.—Read the supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19. 4-10).

**QUESTIONS.**

1. Invitation, verses 15-17.—15. Where was this parable spoken? What led one to speak about eating bread in the kingdom of God? Or what was eating bread a Jewish figure? 16. Why was this a great supper? Where are gospel blessings compared to a banquet? 17. Was it strange to give more than one invitation to a feast?

2. Excuse, verses 18-20.—18. How do Eastern people regard such excuses? Why was the first man's excuse of no value? 19. Why the second man's? 20. Why the third man's? What was the real reason all stayed away?

3. Rejection, verses 21-24.—21. Is anything said in the Bible about God's anger? Are the poor and maimed numerous in the East? 22. Where is there room? 23. What was meant by "the highways"? What by the "hedges"? When the rich and religious people refused the Gospel who came? When the Jews rejected it to whom was it given? 24. If we reject salvation and die unsaved can we hope for any other remedy?

**TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.**

To be a member of the Church will not admit us to the feast in God's kingdom. The Gospel invites us to a feast, not to a funeral. Neglect without meaning to be lost is what ruins many. Worldly gains and pleasures are common excuses for neglect of religion; the more needy and helpless we are the more Christ will welcome us. God will use every means to bring us to Christ. All who wilfully refuse to come will be "excused" and excluded.

**THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE PASSOVER.**

What a touching story we find in the legend about a little girl who was a Jewess and lived in Egypt at the time when God brought his people out of captivity. You remember that in the Twelfth of Exodus, it is stated that God would pass through the land of Egypt and destroy the first-born of every house if the blood of a lamb was not put upon the door and lintel; and those of you who have read the story in the Bible will remember how Moses told the people of Israel what God had told him, and how that all the people put the blood of the poor little lamb upon the doorposts of the houses, so that when the angel of death passed by at midnight they and all within the house were safe.

The legend to which I have referred states that a little girl, the first-born in the house of an Israelite, was very sick, and was afraid that the blood had not been sprinkled upon the doorpost of her father's house in which she lay; so she asked her father if he was sure he had put the blood upon the doorpost; and the father said, "Yes, he was quite sure; he had ordered it to be done." But the little girl said the second time, "Father, are you quite sure the blood is there?" "Yes, my child," answered the father; "be quiet and sleep." But the child could not sleep. She was very sick and very restless; and as night came on, it grew darker and darker, and nearer and nearer to the time when the angel should pass over Goshen, she got still more nervous and restless and uneasy, and at last she said: "Father, take me in your arms and let me see the blood upon the doorpost." And the father, to satisfy the child, took her to the door to show her the blood. And lo and behold! it was not there; the man to whom he had given instructions had forgotten to do it, and then her father, in the sight of the child, had the blood sprinkled upon the doorpost, and the child lay down and went to sleep.

Dear reader, I want to ask you all one question: Are you sprinkled with the precious blood of Jesus? Has he cleansed your heart? If not, I beseech you to go to him at once. Do not rest satisfied with remaining as you are, but, like the little girl whose story I have told you, examine your own heart and then go to God in prayer, and ask him to wash you "whiter than snow." Remember, it is his precious promise that

"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—Words of Life.

**A Day in Winter.**

BY MRS. L. C. WHITON.

Through the crimson fires of morning  
 Streaming upward in the east  
 Leaps the sun, with sudden dawning,  
 Like a captive king, released;  
 And the glowing skies reflected  
 In the azure hue below,  
 Seem like summer recollected  
 In the dreaming of the snow—  
 It is winter, little children, let the summer, singing, go!

There are crisp winds gaily blowing  
 From the north and from the west;  
 'Ove the river strongly flowing  
 Lies the river's frozen breast:  
 O'er its shining silence crashing  
 Skim the skaters to and fro;  
 And the noonday splendours flashing  
 In the rainbow colours show—  
 It is winter, little children, let the summer, singing, go!

When the gorgeous day is dying,  
 There is swept a cloud of rose  
 O'er the hilltops softly lying  
 In the flush of sweet repose;  
 And the nests, all white with snowing,  
 In the twilight breezes blow;  
 And the untired moon is showing  
 Her bare heart to the snow—  
 It is winter, little children, let the summer, singing, go!

**A LITERARY TEST.**

St. Nicholas recently offered prizes for the best corrections of a misspelled poem. More than 10,000 answers were received from all over the world—from Turkey, Egypt, and all over Europe, from a little countess in Vienna, and from another in Ireland, and from the grandchildren of Emerson and Hawthorne in America. The committee reluctantly states that the penmanship of the English and Canadian children is better than that of the American.

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METHODIST BOOK AND PUBLISHING HOUSE, TORONTO.

C. W. COATES, Montreal, Que.

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