

FEAR NOT.

Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.

Poor Joseph covered his head under many bedclothes and said the words with trembling tongue. He was certainly very much afraid. How the verse could help him he could not imagine, yet it was some comfort that it began with those assuring words, "Fear not." He had been only amused when he made the selection. His name was not Abram, and he declared to himself that he had done nothing to be rewarded for, nevertheless he chose that verse.

Now, under the bedclothes, he thought of it and shivered. What was the matter? The story is quickly told. It was vacation time, and the scholars had all gone home. On the morning of the day just past, the entire Fowler family had gone to spend the day with friends, leaving Joseph in charge of the house. They were to come home on the eight o'clock train; but eight o'clock came, and the train whistled and puffed itself into the depot, and the mail wagon, in the course of another half-hour, rolled by the Fowler gateway. Rolled by, to Joseph's dismay. There was no other train until nine o'clock in the morning. After that, for an hour, Joseph sat by the kitchen fire, and did some serious thinking. The day had been lonely enough for a boy who was used to many people about him, but a long night in this great shut-up house all alone, was a good deal of a trial. Still, there was no help for it. Joseph decided that from the first. True there were neighbors a quarter of a mile away where he had once been caught in a storm, and spent the night with the boys. He could scud over there across lots, and he knew they would be glad to see him; but he did not give that matter a second thought. He had been left in charge of the house, and did not intend to desert it. So, after thinking a while, he covered the fire, locked all the doors, and whistling a great deal, took his lamp and went up to his room, repeating in his mind, even while he whistled, the verse which began, "Fear not," and wishing that his name were Abram. After some trouble he had gone to sleep. But now he was wide enough awake and trembling in every limb. There were people stepping softly around the house, and at least two windows had been tried. Burglars! There was little doubt of it. Listening, he heard their voices, not speaking very low. "There isn't a soul at home," some one said; "I was at the train myself, and I heard the mail driver say, 'Why, the Fowlers were coming on this train, and there ain't one of 'em here.'" "They missed it, I s'pose; and they can't get here now till morning; we'll have a good haul; the house is well stocked with things easy to move."

After that, do you wonder that Joseph covered his head with the bedclothes and trembled? He was in the attic chamber, and the door was locked. The thieves would hardly be likely to trouble him; they would find treasures enough all over the great old farmhouse. But how dreadful to lie there and listen to things being stolen! What could he do? Suddenly his heart began to beat in such great thuds that it seemed to bump against the head-board. He had thought of something to do. What if he should go from room to room and light the bracket lamps all over the house. Might not the burglars think there were people in charge, and run away? But, on the other hand, might they not think of him, a little boy, and break in, and dispose of him, and have it all their own way? "Thud! thud! thud!" said his heart; but Joseph was already out of bed. He said it aloud, while he was drawing on his clothes, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield;" if ever a boy needed shielding, he did; and what if his name wasn't Abram? God knew his name, and God could shield him. Joseph did not doubt that. His hand trembled so much that the first and second matches went out; but the third lighted his lamp. A moment, and the rays from the great hall lamp with the reflector behind it, flamed into the snow-covered street. The noise below had suddenly ceased. From room to room went Joseph, shivering with cold, and with fear, but flaming up the lights until there was certainly an illumination in the Fowler homestead. Now he had done all he could, and might lock himself into the attic room and wait. What would be the result? Would the burglars be frightened away, or would they suspect the true state of things, and only wait to plan a

way to get rid of him? With his head under the bedclothes he waited, shivering. For how long? He could not have told. It seemed to him hours and hours!

Every little while he bobbed his head out, and listened; all was still. However, this did not greatly encourage him; of course the burglars would know enough to work quietly now. Suddenly there was a sound outside. "Whoa!" said a strange voice, loudly, almost under his window. Then a loud thumping at the kitchen door. Oh! what should he do now. They had come back reinforced, and meant to break down the door!

"Joseph!" shouted a voice, "Joseph! Joseph!"

Mr. Fowler's voice, as sure as the world! Do you need to be told how suddenly Joseph bounded out of bed and rushed down two flights of stairs to the kitchen door?

"What does all this mean?" said the astonished master. And then, when he heard the story, "Well, I do say!" But what he might have said he kept to himself. "We missed the train," he explained, in turn, as soon as Joseph's explanations were over; "the others can't get here until nine o'clock; but I thought you would be a good deal disturbed, so I got the privilege of coming on the three o'clock freight, and caught a ride out with Barnet and his hens. Well, well, well! When I saw the house all ablaze with light, I thought first of fire, and then of lunatics."

Joseph slept late the next morning; slept, in fact, until the nine o'clock train came in, and all the people were at home, moving softly, so as not to waken him.

"It was a brave, wise thing for a boy of his years," said Farmer Fowler, after he had told the whole story and answered all the questions poured out on him from the excited family. "In fact, it was about the only thing that could have been done; there's no telling what he saved us by his quick-wittedness and pluck. The snow tracks show that there was quite a party of them. I'll tell you what it is, mother, let us write to that sister of his, this very day, and spread out our plans. My mind is quite made up that it is the thing to do."

About this time, Joseph awoke with a start and a smile. He had been dreaming that he was really Abram. "I was carried through it, anyhow," he said, as he made all speed with his dressing. "I don't see but I was shielded as well as Abram could have been; and as for the reward, why, I don't want that."

And yet it was on its way at that very moment; such a reward as Joseph had not dreamed of.—Pansy.

STORY OF A SYRIAN CHILD.

"Dear Mariam Shamoon has gone home." So runs my letter to-day, and my heart is full of sadness that I shall never look on her guileless face on earth again. And yet

Why should our tears run down,
And our hearts be sorely riven,
For another gem in the Saviour's crown
And another star in heaven?

Mariam came to us in the Institution first as a day scholar, and soon became the pet of all, through her gentle lovable ways. Not having brothers or sisters at home, she missed her little playmates, and constantly entreated her parents to let her become a boarder. And how happy she was with us. No, she never wished to be married, she said, all her life, whatever others did, she would be a teacher and remain in the school. One year she fell ill in the holidays and her recovery was retarded by her anxiety lest she should be prevented from returning. Indeed, her love for the Institution was quite proverbial among her relatives.

It was at the beginning of 1886, that, one Saturday night, the girls were learning a new hymn. The hymn chosen was, "Why should I fear the darkest hour?" suggested, perhaps, by the trials through which the mission was just then passing. Verse by verse it was being translated into Arabic for the benefit of the younger ones. As we came to the last line, which runs, "Jesus is all, and He is mine," Mariam sprang from her seat, clasped her hands, and, as if quite forgetting that she was surrounded by some sixty companions, fervently exclaimed, "Ah, yes! Jesus is mine!" The others were almost electrified for the moment by this sudden ejaculation of one so timid and retiring, but we thought it wiser to take no further notice at the time.

However, a few weeks later, when we were visited by that gracious influence of the Holy Spirit which so encouraged our hearts, Mariam came, one morning to me, with a radiant face.

"Oh, I am so happy!"
"Indeed, Mariam, why?"
"Because I have given my heart to Christ!"

"But I thought you had done that long ago!"
"Yes; I had given a part, but now I have given it all!"

She had learned the secret that only an undivided heart can give true happiness. Of course, the next thing was to go home and tell her mother, and then she thought she would like to tell her father, so we went down to the American Printing Press, where he worked, that he might hear the good news from his child's own lips. Never shall I forget the lovely picture which those two made, standing among the cypresses and the brilliant geraniums of the little shrubbery between the Press and the church. Mariam's slight figure leaning against her father, her cheeks flushed, her wavy hair shading her face, her expressive eyes saying more even than her words, while he looked down upon her with tenderness and pride. And now—one has been taken, and the other left!

When the children went home a little society was formed among the more earnest ones—"The Shining for Jesus Society," each member of which was to shine in her home, always remembering it was to be for Him! Very many interesting letters used to come telling of their efforts among other children to spread the knowledge of their Saviour's love, and one wrote of Mariam, "It would make you so glad to see her, with the Moslem children of the next house all around her; she is so happy telling them of Jesus, and they are so happy to hear." And then the writer described the Moslem parents; how they used to say, "Your child is too good to live; she is an angel!"

We feared no danger, but thought of her as one who would be a great comfort to us for many years to come. The following spring, however, she had an attack of measles, followed by much prostration, causing great anxiety for some time. Then she seemed to rally, came to visit her old companions, and then went to the Lebanon for the summer. But again her strength failed, and her sorrowing parents brought her down to the plain—to die. In much weakness and suffering she lay for some time, and yet, while the outward man was perishing, the inward man was being renewed day by day. Her Bible was her constant companion, and often she seemed lost to those around, holding converse with invisible ones.

A day or two before she died, seeing her stricken mother weeping by her bed, she said:

"Oh, mother, why are you weeping? Don't you see them waiting for me?"
Ah, no! The mother's eyes were blinded by tears. She only saw her dying child with the glory on her face.

"Oh, mother, I see them all around my bed. I hear them speaking a new language, but I understand it all. And I see Jesus! He is with me always. He talks with me and I with him. I am so happy!"

And then she sent a message to her companions, that they knew how she had loved her dear school, and had never wished to leave it; but now she loved Jesus more than all, and was so happy to leave school, and friends, and all and go to be with Him. And soon she was not, for God took her.

Dear friends, at home, whose prayers and contributions support our dear British Syrian Schools, rejoice with us that one of our dear children is now among those thousands that stand around the throne of God in heaven. You must rejoice with us, for as their part is that go down to the battle, so shall theirs be that tarry by the stuff, they shall part alike. May we not say, rejoicing while sorrowing, with good old Rutherford:—

And if one soul from Anworth
Meet us at God's right hand,
Our heaven shall be two heavens,
In our Immanuel's land!

—The Christian.

ONLY A LITTLE more than twenty-five years have passed since the Sunday-school system was introduced into Sweden. Now there are 200,000 Sunday-school scholars and 20,000 teachers within the country's boundaries.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON I.—APRIL 3.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.—GEN. 37:23-36.
COMMIT VERSES 23-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.

But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy.—Gen. 39:21.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Envy is the parent of many sins and sorrows.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Gen. 35:1-15.
T. Gen. 35:16-29.
W. Gen. 37:1-17.
Th. Gen. 37:18-36.
F. John 15:17-27.
Sa. Gen. 4:3-16.
Su. Luke 20:9-18.

TIME.—B.C. 1729. Ten or eleven years after Jacob's return to Canaan (our last lesson).

ISAAC.—One hundred and sixty-eight years old, blind and feeble.

JACOB.—One hundred and nine years old, with twelve sons and one or more daughters.

JOSEPH.—Seventeen years old, and Benjamin two to four years.

PLACES.—Jacob's home was in Hebron, 20 miles south of Jerusalem. Joseph sold at Dothan, 17 miles beyond Shechem, and about 70 north-east from Hebron.

INTRODUCTION.—After Jacob had met Esau, and parted in peace, he went to Shechem, thence to Bethel, where he had the vision, and finally settled at Hebron, the home of his fathers. Here Joseph grew up till he was seventeen years old, a lovely, well-trained, godly young man.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

THE TEN OLDER BROTHERS were trained in the worldly period of Jacob's life, and among heathen associates. JOSEPH had had ten years of the more spiritual life of the family. He was trained to work. He had revelations from God. He had the especial love of his father. THE ELDER ONES ENVIED JOSEPH—because (1) he was better; (2) he had reported their bad conduct; (3) his father had shown partiality to him publicly; (4) his dreams seem to assert a superiority. 23. STRIPT . . . OUT OF HIS COAT—this was the coat of many colors Jacob had made for Joseph in his partiality,—a long tunic with sleeves, worn by people of rank, made of many pieces of different colors, embroidered. 24. INTO A PIT—a dry cistern or reservoir for rain-water, cut out of the rock, shaped like a bottle, so that it was impossible for him to get out. They are abundant. Many are 20 feet deep. 25. ISHMAELITES—descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son. GILEAD—a country east of the Jordan, near the brook Jabbok. 26. MIDIANITES—descendants of Midian, another son of Abraham. These were a part of the caravan which took its name from the more numerous Ishmaelites. TWENTY PIECES OF SILVER—probably in rings, like the Egyptian money. The amount was 10 or 15 dollars. 32. SENT THE COAT—by a servant. BROUGHT IT . . . AND SAID—i.e., by the servant.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was the subject of our last regular lesson? Where did Jacob settle in Canaan? How long after his return to Canaan was this ill-treatment of Joseph? What great sorrow came upon Jacob during these years? (35:19.)

SUBJECT: ENVY AND ITS FRUITS.

I. THE FAMILY AT HEBRON.—How many sons had Jacob? Where were the older ones brought up? (23:2.) What was their character? How old was Joseph at this time? (37:2.) What was his character? How was he beloved? How did God reveal himself to him? What were his duties? (37:2, 13.)

Did the difference in Jacob's character before and after his wrestling with the angel make any difference in the training of the younger and older children? Is there a moral atmosphere in every family? Has it great influence? Does the fact that God revealed himself to Joseph so young show that he was then a true follower of God? What lessons about home training do we learn from the narrative?

II. ENVY AND ITS CAUSES.—How did the older sons feel toward Joseph? (37:1-3.) What is envy? Is it a very wicked and mean feeling? What three reasons do you find in this narrative for the intensity of this hatred and envy? (37:2, 3, 4, 5-11.) Was Joseph right in reporting the bad conduct of his brothers? Was Jacob right in showing partiality? Why did Cain hate Abel? (Gen. 4:5.) Do such feelings still exist? (John 15:17-19.) When and why do bad men hate those who are good? How may we overcome this feeling?

III. ENVY AND ITS FRUITS (vs. 23-36).—Where were the brethren of Joseph? (vs. 13-17.) Why was Joseph sent to them? (v. 14.) How long was the journey? What did his brothers say when they saw him coming? Who changed their plan and why? What did they do with Joseph? What kind of pit was this? How did they show the hardness of their hearts? (v. 25.) How do we know that they were near Joseph and disregarded his cries while they were feasting? (Gen. 42:21.)

What changed their plans? Who were the Ishmaelites and Midianites? What were their motives in selling Joseph? How did the sons deceive their father? How had he long before deceived his father? What is said of the father's sorrow? How many evil fruits of envy do you find in this lesson?

LESSON CALENDAR.

(Second Quarter, 1887.)

1. April 3.—Joseph sold into Egypt. . . . Gen. 37:23-36
2. April 10.—Joseph exalted. . . . Gen. 41:38-43
3. April 17.—Joseph makes himself known. Gen. 45:1-15
4. April 24.—Joseph and his Father. . . . Gen. 47:1-12
5. May 1.—Israel in Egypt. . . . Exod. 1:6-14
6. May 8.—The Child Moses. . . . Exod. 2:1-10
7. May 15.—The Call of Moses. . . . Exod. 3:1-12
8. May 22.—The Passover. . . . Exod. 12:1-14
9. May 29.—The Red Sea. . . . Exod. 14:10-31
10. June 5.—The Manna. . . . Exod. 16:14-12
11. June 12.—The Commandments. . . . Exod. 20:1-11
12. June 19.—The Commandments. . . . Exod. 20:12-21
13. June 26.—Review, Temperance, Lev. 10:1-11, and Missions, Ex. 35:20-26.