

Our Story.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF McNEIL.

BY ANNE E. BARR.
Author of "Jan Voller's Wife," "The Daughter of Five," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

"God could take care of His own poor. He was not needing his help. And as for the devil's poor—the drunkards and wasters and idlers, what justice would there be in helping them?" To this mood succeeded one of angry resistance. He would not be forced to give, at any rate. Not for fear, not for suffering of any kind, would he submit to what he bluntly called a superstition. "If God saw well to afflict him, He was a just Judge, not one to be bought with a few thousand pounds."

When Brodick came up to the castle at night he glanced at the Laird with a quick, anxious curiosity. McNeil caught the glance and answered it fretfully. "No; I have not got any satisfaction from my session with myself, Brodick. I am doubting if there is a need of any special word. I can't feel as if I was doing wrong, sir."

"I was thinking after you left, McNeil, of the man who hid his talent in a napkin. Your desk drawer is very like it."

"Nothing of the kind, Brodick. I have been using the siller to good purpose all along. Part of it is in the fishing-boats, and part in the new town, and the rest just here and there."

"And you dinna feel as if you were trading with the Lord's money for your own proper advantage?"

"All the gold in the earth is the Lord's for that matter. He gives and He takes. I'm not settled in my mind at all. I will wait and see what Colin says. He has both wisdom and some enthusiasm left; and he will look at both sides and hold the balance even. He will be here I hope—I surely hope—in four days."

"Yet I would give him a week, Laird."

Brodick spoke slowly, and his eyes dropped. The Laird had nothing more to say—he sat silent, stooping forward with his hands outstretched to the blaze. Now and then he furtively glanced at Brodick, who appeared to be lost in some melancholy meditation. Suddenly there was the sound of wheels, a murmur of voices in the distance, and as both men rose inquiringly to their feet, Colin opened the door.

They looked at him speechless with wonder. His face was shining with the joy behind it. He walked, he spoke with the air of a man who brings glad tidings—almost too glad to be borne. He gave his hand to Brodick, but he put his arm round his uncle's neck and kissed him. It was a momentary touch of rapture, too great to last longer than a moment. But in it both McNeil and Brodick had been prepared for the amazing happiness at hand.

"Grizelda!"

It was all the father could ask.

"Grizelda is found! She is well! She is here! Grizelda!"

Then through the open door came a vision that might have come from heaven—Grizelda and her child. The Laird gave a loud cry. He would have fallen but for Colin's arms. He would have fallen but that the next moment he felt Grizelda's kisses on his lips; her tears were washing his face, her voice calling him back to the full sensation of his blessed experience.

He sat down soon, but he kept her on his knee and laid her cheek against his. He could say nothing but her name. Questions, conversation was as yet quite impossible to him. But, oh, when conversation came, when he heard the whole story, when he had talked with Peppo and Caterina, what words were there for his grief, his indignation, his delight over the retribution he clasped in his hand.

And what language can describe that joyful night! The hurried meal, in which every luxury within reach was put upon the table, the wild excitement of the servants, the rapture of the father, the beaming face of the minister as he tried to quiet the happy disturbance! Never in McNeil's memory of the past, never in all the days to come, would there be greater joy in McNeil castle, or greater reason for it.

Intentionally Colin had timed their arrival after dark. Until their own plans with regard to Maxwell were complete, it was better, it was indeed a necessity, to keep Grizelda's arrival unknown. Peppo had first thought of this precaution, and it commended itself to every one concerned.

As soon, therefore, as McNeil could command himself the exigency was explained to him. He saw it at once. He called every servant in the place, men and women, into his presence. They were all McNeil's, and he reminded them of it.

"Rejoice with me," he said, as he went from one to another, and gave them his hands—"rejoice with me! My daughter was lost, is found! My daughter was dead and is alive again!"

Then he explained to them the importance of secrecy and silence, and they looked into his face with a sympathy and intelligence that no oath could have strengthened. And until the dawn was pallid in the east they sat talking over the pitiful story. Its romance and wrong moved their Celtic natures to tears and lamentations, and passionate anticipations of vengeance.

Peppo looked at the scene with critical amusement. The fumes of hot whiskey, and the smoke of coarse tobacco, the tears and laughter, were far too strong stimulants for his more intellectual temper. He had a bottle of claret from the cellar, and found his cigarette, and Caterina with it, quite sufficient for his enjoyment of the situation.

"But I shall put an end to this affair very quickly, Caterina," he said. "We have ourselves to look after now, and this impertinent Maxwell must not delay us. I shall only have to speak to him. It is I that will do it all."

Brodick did not go back to the manse that night; indeed the night was far advanced when the family separated. And even then McNeil felt sleep to be impossible. When all others had found it, he sat wide awake in his room, enjoying every moment of his anticipated meeting with Maxwell.

For all his wrongs and insults he was going to have full payment, and wonder of wonders! Grizelda was back in his home! He had his child again! Several times he rose and went softly into the corridor and looked at the door of her room, and when the dawn was white in the east he heard Grizelda speaking to her child, and her voice made him tremble with joy.

"Do not talk, Archie, my darling! You might waken grandfather!"

"Grandfather," he had not thought of that before; he felt a new spring of love in his heart, and as he stood before the window, and the sunshine smote his wet eyelids, and made a glory all about him, an amazing thought came into his mind.

With hasty steps he went downstairs into his parlour. He took from his hiding place the slip of paper that had cost him so many uncomfortable hours. He let it lay in the palm of his hand, and looked bravely and tenderly at it. He thought of his restored child, of the loyalty of Colin, of his prosperous enterprises, of the enemy put under his feet. He thought of Helen—she was still the sweetest and dearest thought of his heart. He let the tears down-fall upon the paper as he remembered her lovely life and the glad triumph of her dying words: "The height of the depth! the breadth! The Cross of Christ! The unspeakable riches!"

He raised the faded yellow bit of paper to his lips. He kissed it with a great solemnity. "Helen, sweet Helen! all you asked of me I will give, to the last farthing of increase, it shall go where you willed it."

Without a thought of reservation, with all his soul he surrendered. In the moment of gift he resigned by an act of his mind every claim. He placed Helen's note now in his pocket-book, and before he had reached his sleeping-room again he was considering, with his usual shrewd wisdom, how to expend it in the wisest possible manner.

"I have no skill in such investments," he said quite seriously; "but Brodick and Mr. Selwyn have, and I will see that not a bawbee of Helen's money is wasted. Only one pleasure will I ask out of it—I love my old college, and as God has not given me a son of my own I will keep a lad there. As long as it stands I will keep a good lad there, one that wants to learn, and has not the money to pay for his fees and his food."

This resolution, so perfect, so final, so voluntarily and gratefully arrived at, gave him a singular peace and happiness. He washed, and then put on his finest clothing. Nothing less seemed in keeping with the tone of his spirits. Though he had not even been in bed, he came downstairs like a giant refreshed. Brodick looked admiringly and inquisitively at him. The change was so evidently that change which comes from the spiritual body, that he instantly suspected its cause.

He said softly to himself, "McNeil has been visited. He has had one of those glad times, when there is 'a song in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept and gladness of heart.'"

(To be continued.)

* Isa. xxx. 29.

Sabbath School Work.

LESSON HELPS.

LESSON VIII, August 25, 1889.

THE ANOINTING OF DAVID.

1 Sam. xvi. 1-13.

COMMIT VERSES 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.—1 Sam. xvi. 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Childhood and youth are the preparation season for life's work.

DAILY READINGS.

1 Sam. xvi. 1-23.

Ps. xxiii. 1-6

Ps. viii. 1-9

Ps. xxix. 1-11

Ps. cxix. 1-16

Luke xiv. 12-26

John xiv. 12-27

TIME.—About B.C. 1065 or 1068.

PLACE.—Ramah, four miles north of Jerusalem. And Bethlehem, six miles south of Jerusalem.

SAUL.—About 50 years old. Capital at Gibeon.

SAMUEL.—About 80 years old. Home at Ramah.

DAVID.—"Beloved," or "darling," born at Bethlehem B.C. 1085. Father

was Jesse; mother unknown. He had seven brothers and two sisters. At the time of this lesson he was from 17 to 20 years old.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—I. *Journal for Saul*: (1) Saul was his friend, and had disappointed him. (2) He was troubled about the kingdom, with its king a rejected man. *Jesse*: the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. 2. *He will kill me*: the act would seem like treason. And Saul was under the influence of a bad spirit (xvi. 14). *I am come to sacrifice*: holding a feast as usual in connection with it. He told the exact truth, but he did not tell his whole object. 4. *The Elders trembled*: they feared he might have come to reproach some sin; or they were afraid that Saul might regard them as harbouring an enemy of his, and therefore destroy them. 5. *Sanctify yourselves*: by washing their garments and their bodies; and by putting away sin, and consecrating themselves to God (see Ex. xix. 10, etc.). 10. *Seven of his sons*: including the three who had already passed before Samuel. 11. *Will not sit down*: to the feast. This was a family feast, apart from the public services of the sacrifice. 12. *Ruddy*: reddish in hair and complexion, or with fresh, red cheeks. *Of a beautiful countenance*: literally, of lovely eyes. 13. *Anointed him*: devoting him to a special purpose from God. It is not likely that the family, perhaps not even David, knew the object to which he was set apart. *The spirit of the Lord*: of whom the anointing was a sign. God's Spirit prepared David for his work.

SUBJECTS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND SPECIAL REPORTS.—Samuel's grief. Grief cured by trust in God, and work for God.—Samuel's concealment of his object.—The Bethlehemite's fear.—Verse 7.—David's birth and parentage.—Characteristics of his youth.—His anointing.—The spirit of God coming upon him.—How David was fitted for his life's work.

QUESTIONS.

REVIEW.—Why was Saul rejected from being king? Who announced this sad fact to him?

INTRODUCTION.—How old was Samuel? Where did he live? Point out on the map the places of this lesson?

SUBJECT: STEPS TO THE KINGDOM.

I. DAVID'S CALL TO THE KINGDOM (vs. 1-11).—What were Samuel's feelings towards Saul? What reason did God give why Samuel should cease mourning? What work did he give him to do? Is work for God a solace in sorrow? What objection did Samuel make? What plan overcame this objection? Was it perfectly truthful?

How did the elders of Bethlehem feel as Samuel drew near? What religious service was held? What did Samuel do at the family sacrificial feast, after the public services were over? (v. 6.) Tell all you can about Jesse and his family. Describe the way in which David was chosen. Explain verse 7. What comfort in this to many? Are the heart and soul the source of all real greatness and power?

II. DAVID SET APART FOR HIS WORK (vs. 12, 13).—Describe David's appearance. What did Samuel do to him? What was the meaning of this anointing? Did David himself know for what he was set apart? What other help was sent to him? May we have this same help?

What were some of the things David was to do, in his life? What work have we to do? What kingdom to gain? What kingdom to help extend over the world?

III. DAVID'S PREPARATORY SCHOOLS.—What could David learn from his care over sheep? Did he learn music? (1 Sam. xvi. 18.) How did this help him? (xvi. 23; 1 Chron. xxv. 1.) How did his faithful defence of the sheep by his sling help him? What is said of his youth? (xvi. 18; xviii. 14.) Can you see how all these things helped him to become king, and to become a wise and great king? What does Jesus say about this? (Matt. xiii. 12; Luke xix. 17, 26.) Is there any better way to the best and most useful life than by doing faithfully in childhood the duties of each day?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. Two cures of grief,—knowledge of God's will, and work to do for God.

II. If one person refuses to do God's work, God will raise up another in his place.

III. Men judge by outward appearances: they can see character only so far as it is manifested.

IV. God judges by the heart, out of which are the issues of life, and he sees in the heart all that will issue from it.

V. God often chooses his best servants from among those who seem least likely in the eyes of men.

VI. When God has work for us, he gives us his Holy Spirit to prepare us to do it.

VII. Childhood is the school time for mature age.

VIII. Doing present duties with faithfulness is the best preparation for higher duties; "to him that hath shall be given."—*Peloubet*.

"My will, not Thine, be done" turned Paradise into a desert. "Thy will not mine, be done" turned the desert into a Paradise, and made Gethsemane the gate of Heaven.—*Prentiss*.

TEACH THE CHILDREN TO REFLECT.

It is most essential for the future well-being of our children, that early in life we cultivate in them the habit of reflection. That we teach them to look over the day just ended and see its mistakes and failures—to look at the past years, be they few or many, and learn where they are drifting. It is only by such a course that they will be enabled to guide their lives intelligently.

A child or person that never reflects upon his doings, is liable to form most disagreeable and even dangerous habits, while his character can never become strong and reliable.

To cultivate this habit in your head strong boy or girl don't indulge in long, preachy talks to them; don't scold or harshly criticize. Oh, no, it is a work requiring the fullest of a mother's love, together with a most wise, tactful head. We cannot hammer and cudgel good habits into our children. How often in dealing with the little ones and children of a larger growth, am I reminded of the fable of the Wind and Sun trying to get the coat off the man's back. Rough, frigid treatment will not help us. Ours must be line upon line—"precept upon precept"—and most lovingly, tactfully administered.

But just how shall I form this habit in my child, do you ask?

First, choose the proper time to talk or chat with Nellie and Fred concerning their freak of temper—their sulks, carelessness or other fault that your watchful eye has detected to be growing upon them. Do not approach them when you are exasperated by their course, or when they are in an irritable, angry state of mind, but at the subduing twilight hour beguile them into a confidential talk about the events of the day—their little differences with their playmates, their breaking of the rules in school, their temptations on the play grounds to play "for keeps," to deceive, to use tobacco, etc., etc., for be assured that the judicious, discretionary treatment will bring all this rash to the surface, and this is your only hope of recovery. Then, when you tuck them into bed at night, drop with your loving kiss a "word fully spoken," or when out for a walk or ride.

This teaching of our children to "square up" their actions every night can but make them more earnest and careful. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," is a good motto to teach them. Help them in making their confessions of wrong and in asking forgiveness of one whom they have injured—we all know what a hard and humiliating task this is—but if not learned in childhood it is all the harder and oftentimes it is neglected.

I know a mother who has taught her children never to go to sleep without thinking over the day, and asking God to forgive their mistakes—or their friends and mates, if they have done them harm. What could develop in them a more quick and tender conscience?

Too many of them have their first serious moment of reflection when suffering the severe penalty that the lack of this habit has brought upon them. Will not our trials as mothers be lighter and our hope of reward greater, if we will take the time and trouble to arm our children with this safeguard—the habit of reflection?—*Mail and Express*.

SOUTHEY ON READING.

WOULD you know whether the tendency of a book is good or evil, examine in what state of mind you lay it down. Has it induced you to suspect that what you have been accustomed to think unlawful may, after all, be innocent, and that may be harmless which you have hitherto been taught to think dangerous? Has it tended to make you dissatisfied and impatient under the control of others? and disposed you to relax in that self-government without which both the laws of God and man tell us there can be no virtue, and consequently no happiness? Has it attempted to abate your admiration and reverence for what is great and good, and to diminish in you the love of your country and your fellow-creatures? Has it addressed itself to your pride, your vanity, your selfishness, or any other of your evil propensities? Has it defiled the imagination with what is loathsome, and shocked the heart with what is monstrous? Has it disturbed the sense of right and wrong which the Creator has implanted in the soul? If so—if you have felt that such were the effects it was intended to produce—throw the book in the fire, whatever name it may bear on the title-page! Throw it into the fire, young man, though it should have been the gift of a friend; young lady, away with the whole set, though it should be the prominent furniture of a rosewood book-case.—*Southey*.

If the way of heaven be narrow it is not long, and if the gate be straight it opens into endless life.—*Bishop Beveridge*.

This thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is the inspired hymn of love. The Eleventh chapter of Hebrews is the sublime epic of faith.

The one who will be found in trial capable of great acts of love is ever the one who is always doing considerate small ones.—*F. W. Robertson*.

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