

ONLY ONE SCENE.

BY ERNEST GILMORE.

It was a dreary, miserable morning; a heavy fog hung over the wretched street; the rain had fallen continually through the night, and still drizzled in a forlorn way. Pedestrians jostled along, occasionally hitting one another with wet umbrellas and sloshing the mud right and left over the dirty pavement.

Crossing a filthy street, where the thick, black mud entered the soles of her sodden shoes and clung with tenacity about her thin ankles, was a young girl of thirteen or thereabouts. She seemed utterly indifferent to the rain. And why should she be otherwise? For when one is thoroughly wet and worn a few drops more or less either of water or trouble make no difference. She hurried around the corner, and a shiver passed through her frame with the cutting blast of wind. She shuddered on as fast as possible, considering her soaked feet, held the poor, wet garment closer to her as if for protection, and soon turned up a dark court, opened a creaking door in a rickety tenement house, and entered. How cold and dark and damp! although just what she expected. A deep sigh escaped her. The "bundle of rags" (called father) on the straw in the corner did not move, and she softly opened the door into another smaller room and looked in. All was hushed and still. On a low couch of straw, covered with a thin, patched army blanket, lay a little girl of seven, pale and faded; but though the clammy sweat stood upon her fair brow, one could not but say, how lovely! Yes; though a drunkard's forsaken child, Lena Croft's pinched features were classically beautiful. Amy knelt down by her side, took the little thin hand in her own, and, poor child, although she did not intend to awaken her sick sister, the hot tears that fell from her eyes had that effect and the blue eyes opened and fastened upon her imploringly. She had begged her father with all the strength and pathos of her young voice to call a physician for Lena, even getting down upon her knees before the degraded man with her earnest pleading; but no, this heartless father turned away from his eldest-born's prayer and took the money that, with God's will, would have brought relief to his sick child and gave it willingly to the cruel rumseller, who was licensed to flood his home with poverty, hunger, and perhaps something worse.

"I am so glad you have come, Amy! I'm so hungry! Can I have something now?"

Amy looked at the thin cheek so touchingly white, at the blue eyes that had once beamed with laughter, and her heart sank within her. She felt such a weight of oppression that she could not speak. She had promised to get something for the sick child and had failed. She had rung at many basement doors, but the servants had bade her begone. "Shure," said one, "o've enough to do without waitin' on the likes of yez."

"You may, dearie; you shall, my little lamb! Just wait a minute." And out again she bounded (that freezing, wet, starving child), resolved that she would ring the front-door bells and see the ladies themselves as a last resort.

Thinking only of Lena, her poor, tired feet seemed shod with wings. She hurried through streets and rang the front-door bell of the first respectable house. A tidy housemaid opened the door, and in answer to Amy's pleading, "Please may I see the lady?" she received, "You dirty girl, to come up the clean steps with your muddy feet. Begone this instant! And the door slammed in her face. She turned despairingly but resolutely (the sad eyes at home haunting her) and pulled the next bell. As the servant opened the door Amy said quickly, "My little sister is starving; please give me something for her."

"Beggars should go to back-doors," angrily answered the girl, and was about to close the door when a gentle voice called: "Let her step in on the oil-cloth so that I can see her."

"But, shure she's droppin' wet, ma'am, and covered with mud."

"Do as I say; let her in."

The door was opened reluctantly and Amy stepped in.

"Oh! how lovely," thought the poor outcast. "How bright and how nice everything is!" And her eyes wandered to the

sweet-voiced invalid lying upon the crimsoned hall couch.

"My poor girl, what can I do for you?" "O, ma'am! something for my sister; my poor little sister is sick and dyin' and starvin'!"

"Poor child; poor little girl! Katy, tell the cook to give her part of my beef-tea in a bottle, a cup of jelly, and some bread and meat. And be quick about it."

The poor girl received the package with a thankful heart, and the world looked brighter to her young eyes as she ran to the hovel she called home, although the rain fell pitilessly. As she entered the door the tattered heap in the corner moved, and the miserable father raised himself with difficulty to a sitting posture and looked at her with an ill-tempered leer. He had grown so bitter and revengeful in his dissipation that Amy shuddered with dread.

"What you carrin' so meakin'?" he fiercely demanded.

"Something for Lena; she's starvin', father."

"Bring me what you've got, I'm starvin' and thirstin' too."

"O, father! I can't, Lena's dyin'!" moaned Amy, trying to pass the miserable wreck on the floor; but he raised himself slowly and uttered a threat so terrible, ending with the word, "Pity ye wa'n't both dyin'; ye better look out or ye will; bring me the basket, I say," that Amy trembling handed it to him. Snatching it from her, he swallowed the beef-tea as if famished, then greedily followed with the meat and as much of the bread as he could possibly eat; then he rose with difficulty, and wrapping the cup of jelly in paper, tottered to the door. Amy stood looking with horrified eyes, but with great effort asked: "Where are you goin' with the jelly, father?"

"To Washburn's for a drink."

"O, father! leave me the jelly or Lena will die." And poor Amy wrung her hands in agony.

"Pick up the crusts that I have left; they're good enough for such brats as you are." And the brutal father turned away.

Amy opened the bedroom door trembling. How could she face her little sister without food again and tell her there was none! But there was no need; Lena had heard all. Through the little broken window came a feeble ray of light, revealing a smile on the white lips, sweeter and lovelier than sunlight. She held out her thin hand to Amy, and the heart-broken girl caught it between her own and covered it with scalding tears as she broke forth into convulsive sobbing.

"Don't cry, Amy, my good Amy. I'm sleepy; but I love you, sister Amy. Kiss me, Amy, for I'm goin' to mamma. I won't be hungry anymore, nor cry any more, will I, sister?" Amy's tears were falling faster than the raindrops outside, but her heart was too full to speak.

"But I'll ask God to come for you, sister soon—soon. No tears there—mamma."

And the little sinless sleeper was at rest. One little tired heart has found peace; up the golden stairs her little feet have gone. But, O Father! the other.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

Before using new earthenware place in a boiler with cold water, and heat gradually till it boils; then let it remain until the water is cold. It will not be liable to crack if treated in this manner.

Before beginning to iron, sprinkle the table plentifully with water and lay on the ironing blanket. This will hold it firmly in place and prevent all wrinkling and shoving about. Never try to iron with a blanket having wrinkles or bunches.

To restore rubber rings for fruit-cans, let them lie in water in which you have put one part ammonia to two parts water. Sometimes they do not need to lie in this more than five minutes; but frequently a half hour is needed to restore their elasticity.

Success in raising house-plants may be forwarded by using soil, two-thirds of which is garden soil, and the rest sand. It should be kept light and loose about the roots, and the plants watered only as they appear to need it. When any of the leaves wither and fall, instead of throwing them away make little rolls of them and tuck them down in the earth, where they decay. This is the best fertilizer.

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloulet's Select Notes.)

August 10.—2 Sam. 15: 1-14.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Training of children. Madame Bunsen said: "I have more hope of my children's doing well in life from good instruction begun, continued, and ended in faith and prayer, than from any court influences."—Memoirs, vol. 1, p. 304. When the Trocadero Palace was built for the Paris Exposition of 1878, some great trees were transplanted to give immediate shade. It cost over a thousand dollars apiece to transplant them. Fifty years ago they could have been transplanted for fifty cents. None of them are alive now. They were not at home in the new soil.

II. Youth and crime. Anthony Comstock says that a short time ago he sat in a court-room where there were three stalwart burglars, each about thirteen years old. A record kept by him shows that out of 457 criminals under twenty-one years of age, fifty percent were under sixteen. Gov. Rice says that seven-eighths of the prisoners in the State prison of Massachusetts are under twenty-one years of age, and they are not chiefly fallen good men, but those who have never had good home training.

PRACTICAL.

1. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
2. Repentance and forgiveness cannot avert all the consequences of wrong doing.
3. Sins against the family will be followed by sorrow in the family.
4. To the end that he may rule, a man will make himself the slave of the lowest people.
5. David would rather be regarded as a timid man than resist God.—Berleburger Bible.
6. Those are good indeed that are good in their own place, not that pretend how good they will be in other people's places.—Henry.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The lesson gives us the harvest of sin. 1. (1) David had sown the wind (a) in his polygamous marriages, (b) especially in marrying Absalom's mother (Deut. 7: 3; Ex. 34: 16), (c) in his relation to Bathsheba, (d) in his weak indulgence towards his children, (e) in his treatment especially of Absalom. (2) He reaped the whirlwind (a) in the dishonor brought upon his family (chap. 13: 19) (b) in the death of his oldest born (chap. 13: 28), (c) in the loss of his people's hearts (chap. 15: 6), (d) in the open revolt (vers. 13, 14). II. (1) Absalom had sown the wind (a) in the spirit of hatred cherished for two years, (chap. 13: 22), (b) in the murder committed chap. 13: 29, 29), (c) headstrong passion chap. 14: 30.) (2) He reaped the whirlwind in proceeding (a) to treachery against his father (vers. 1-6), (b) hypocrisy (vers. 7-9), (c) open rebellion (vers. 10-12).

LIQUOR AND WATER.

The conductor of a suburban Chicago train said the other day as the cars halted at a way station. "I always step out to the artesian well here and drink two glasses of the pure water." Some of the men standing about the station began to chaff him on the "thinness" of the beverage. "Well," said he, "It'll never land me in the gutter."

It is said that the New York city car drivers are taking to water as the most steadily stimulating drink. One of them entertained a passenger not long since with the following:

"I've tried liquor and I've tried cold water, and I must say that cold water takes the cake everytime. I used to be what you might call a hard drinker, but I've turned over a new leaf. The first thing I do in the morning is to take a good big drink of cold water. It serves as my eye opener. While I'm on the car I get to drink at the end of the route. I don't know how to explain it, but it keeps me as warm as toast all day long. Some of the men drink hot tea or lemonade. The men who prefer whiskey are the men who complain most of the cold every time."—Union Signal

THE DISCIPLINARIAN.

It is not pleasant to be a guest where every thing is done by rule and measure; where the head of the house rises at precisely four o'clock every morning, and expects, nay, must have his breakfast at precisely six, no matter what the case may be.

Now Mr. Blake is one of that class of men, and I chanced to be there on a visit once, when the following incident occurred: Mrs. Blake's baby was sick in the night with a colic spell, and cried and sobbed so that she was awake with him all the first part of the night, while the child's father slept, unconscious of any trouble with him.

In the morning after Mr. Blake had left their room, Mrs. Blake had—being unable to sleep all the early part of the night—dropped into a doze, and had in consequence overslept half an hour, thus making breakfast half an hour later than the time laid down in the rules of household discipline.

When the gentleman (t) of the house comes in from doing the morning out-door work, and finds the meal is not ready, he never stops to ask pleasantly why it is not, but looks across, and puts on an injured look, and walks out on the porch and seats himself sullenly there to await the call to breakfast, after saying with a sharp intonation of voice:

"Late again, Mary! Seems to me you might manage to have breakfast at the usual time, if you would get up when I do."

She gives her reason, of course; perhaps she does not speak or feel quite as amiable about it as she might have done, for she has hurried and tried hard to make up for lost time, which, of course, she has not been able to do, while he has been holding baby, and trying to amuse him in the sitting room.

The meal is ready at half past six, and we are called to the table. This meal is eaten almost in silence by the host, who bolts his food and starts up from the table, before we have hardly commenced, and without even a "good morning" starts off for his forenoon's work in the field.

Now Mr. Blake does not realize that he is in any sense of the word a tyrant. He is on all other occasions an agreeable host, and calculates to do his duty by his family, and no doubt he would be both astonished and angry if any one intimated to him that he did not do it. But he is a strict disciplinarian and perhaps somewhat selfish withal.—Household.

Question Corner.—No. 15.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. What house was so built "that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building?"
2. What man while riding through a forest was caught by the hair in the thick branches of an oak and hanged?
3. Whose wife sent to her husband the message "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," and why did she send it?
4. What man mourned bitterly over the death of a king who had persecuted him for many years?

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

One of the ways in which God executeth His decrees.

1. The name of a city upbraided by Christ for not repenting.
2. The Moabitic daughter-in-law who went with Naomi.
3. The place where the Israelites found water and palm trees after they crossed the Red Sea.
4. He whom God sent to help Moses when he was to speak to Pharaoh.
5. He to whom Paul wrote, "Study to show thyself approved unto God."
6. Who were called the people of God in a special manner?
7. For whom did Paul intercede to Philimon?
8. Whom did Elisha cure of his leprosy?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 15.

1. Forty years. Chron. 29: 27.
2. That he might have wisdom to govern the people. 2 Chron. 1: 10.
3. In the reign of Jehoram. 2 Kings 1: 17 and 2: 18.
4. While talking with his disciples in Jerusalem a few days before his death. Matt. 23: 37.

BIBLE RIDDLE.—Daniel; he was cast into the den of lions.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been sent by Albert Jesse French, Mary Lucinda Shanklin, David Hammond, and Charles Spence.