

MINEVEH AND BABYLON.

It is singular that Herodotus, in speaking of "the many sovereigns who had ruled over Babylon, and lent their aid to the building of its walls and the adornment of its temples," does not even incidentally refer to Nebuchadnezzar, whose name was stamped upon the bricks of every important structure. What is styled the "standard inscription" of Nebuchadnezzar is a document of high interest. In this the great monarch gives a minute account of his principal works. He tells how, "with bricks made as hard as stones, I made a way for the branch of the Shimat to the waters of the Yapur-Shapu, the great reservoir of Babylon. With two long embankments of brick and mortar, I built the sides of the ditch. Across the outer wall, I constructed inside of of Babylon with brick. The reservoir I filled completely with water. Besides the outer wall, I constructed inside of Babylon a fortification such as no king had ever made before me, namely, a long rampart, five miles square, as an extra defence against presumptuous enemies. Great waters I made use of continually. I did not allow the waters to overflow; but the fulness of the floods I caused to flow on, restraining them with a brick embankment. Thus I completely made strong the defences of Babylon. May it stand forever."

This fortress, we imagine, stood not upon the Euphrates itself, but upon both sides of a bayou, or comparatively shallow side branch, running from it. This supposition enables us to comprehend the manner in which this strong citadel was captured by Cyrus. Herodotus, indeed, says Cyrus turned the course of the Euphrates itself into a huge artificial reservoir, 420 stadia in extent. But Sir Henry Rawlinson is confident that no such reservoir was ever practicable. If it had existed it is scarcely possible that all traces of it should have vanished, the more especially as it is said to have been faced throughout with stone, and that, too, in a region where, for a hundred miles, not even a pebble is to be found. Xenophon, who, in such a matter, is much better authority than Herodotus, says that Cyrus drained the river by two cuttings, one above and the other below the city, and thus was able to enter the town by the dry bed of the stream. If we suppose that this stream was a bayou or side-channel, the operation is comprehensible. He had only to dam up the mouth of the bayou above the fortress, and deepen its channel below, by which it entered the Euphrates, and in a few hours the bed would be left dry.

This, as we learn from the Book of Daniel, was done in the dead of night. The defenders were so confident in the strength of their fortress, that they even neglected to close the water-gates which fronted the stream at the foot of each street; and so, when the water was drawn off, there was nothing to prevent the entrance of the besiegers into every part of the fortress.

Babylon, after its capture (B.C. 538) was made a royal residence of the Persian kings. But after two unsuccessful attempts at revolt, its fortifications were partly thrown down. It ceased to be a royal city; its walls and palaces, mainly of unburnt brick, fell into decay, and in the time of Alexander the Great (B.C. 323) it was mostly a ruin. He had it in mind to restore Babylon, and make it the metropolis of his Asiatic dominions; but his death prevented the execution of the project. Four centuries later, according to St. Jerome, the site had been turned into a hunting park for the sport of the Persian kings, who partially restored the walls in order to preserve the game. From that time it passed more and more out of the memory of man, until its very site was forgotten; and it was not again positively identified until 1847.—Sunday Magazine.

The new birth is simply a change of ancestors.

AN UNSTEADY ISLAND.

Once, during a heavy gale from the east, a party of spongers in an open boat were driven off shore, and so fierce was the hurricane that their only hope was to keep the boat before the wind and run out into the Gulf. For four or five hours the headlong race was kept up; but finally the wind abated, and by early morning the sea was as smooth as glass, a peculiarity often noticed there after a gale. They had been carried far out of sight of land, and were well-nigh worn out, when one of the spongers exclaimed that they were nearing shore, and soon the entire party saw a familiar sight that seemed to signify a reef—a flamingo standing motionless in the water. As the boat drew near, the bird raised its graceful neck, straightened up, and stretched its wings as if to fly; then, seeing that they were not going to molest it, it resumed its position of security. To their astonishment, the men soon perceived that, instead of resting on a reef, the bird had alighted on a huge leather turtle that was fast asleep upon the water. Indeed, the flamingo was in distress, like themselves, having been blown off shore by the same storm, and it had evidently taken refuge on the sleeping turtle. The men did not attempt to disturb it, and their last view as they pulled away to the east was of the flamingo attempting to lift one leg and go to sleep, an act which the undulating motion of the floating turtle rendered well-nigh impossible.—From "Blown out to Sea," by C. F. Holder, in St. Nicholas.

MY LITTLE COMMENTATOR.

Georgie, my seven-year-old,
Was reading one day to me
That sweetest of stories ever told,
As he stood beside my knee—

The story of Jacob's sons,
Of Joseph, his father's joy,
And of all the cruel, wicked ones,
And the motherless, youngest boy.

As he threaded the touching tale
His wrath arose, and he said:—
"If I had been there at Joseph's sale,
I'd 'a' punched in Reuben's head!"

His face, as it grew half dim
With the pathos of the tale
Glanced on, and he shouted, "Good for him!
Simcon is going to jail!"

When he read how they found the cup
In Benjamin's sack, his fair
Face flushed, and he doubled his small
fists up,
"The sneaks! they had hid it there!"

And when they confessed their sin,
Weeping, he sneered, "A-hem!
I wonder if Joseph was taken in
By crocodile tears like them!"

When we read of the long array
Of waggons to Jacob sent,
Of the counsel to "fall not out by the
way,"
I asked of him what that meant.

I saw, in his critic eye,
A filial attempt to force
Down a bit of disdain at the question:
"Why,
Fall out of the waggons—of course!"

THE COMMANDMENTS IN METER.

"Thou no God shalt have but me;
Before no idol bend the knee;
Take not the name of God in vain;
Dare not the Sabbath day profane;
Give both thy parents honor due;
Take heed that thou no murder do;
Abstain from words and deeds unclean;
Steal not though thou be poor and
mean;
Make not a willful lie, or love it;
What is thy neighbor's dare not covet.
What is thy neighbor's dare not covet."
—Selected.

No one ever convinced himself of sin
who left God out of the argument.

KEEP CHILDREN WELL
DURING HOT WEATHER.

Every mother knows how fatal the summer months are to small children. Cholera infantum, diarrhoea, dysentery and stomach troubles are alarmingly frequent at this time and too often a little life is lost after a few hours illness. The mother who keeps Baby Own Tablets in the house feels safe. The occasional use of the Tablets prevents stomach and bowel troubles or if the trouble comes suddenly will bring the little one through safely." Mrs. Geo. Howell, Sandy Beach, Que., says:—"My baby was suffering from colic, vomiting and diarrhoea, but after giving him Baby's Own Tablets the trouble disappeared." Sold by Medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

BENNY'S THANK-YOU BOX.

They were going to have a thank-offering meeting at Benny's church. He knew, because his mamma was president of the big society, and sister Gertie attended the band. Benny went, too. He "belonged to both," he said, and he put a cent in, whenever he found a white one in papa's pocket. He had one of the thank-offering envelopes, but it wasn't large enough to suit him, so he begged a box from Gertie, and Benny was happy.

One night, as papa opened the front door, a little boy and a rattling box danced downstairs.

"Do you feel very thankful, papa?"
"What for?" papa asked, tossing the questioner up to his shoulder.
"Cause you're home, and I'm kissing you."

"Indeed I do," laughed papa.
"Then put a penny in my thank-you box!" shouted Benny.

Mamma had had to put one in because she was thankful that the spring cleaning was done. Brother Tom put in five, because his suit came home just in time for a party. Bridget had the box presented to her for an offering, when she said she was glad Monday was such a fine drying day for her washing; and Gertie gave him pennies twice, for two pleasant afternoons spent in gathering wild flowers. So many things to be thankful for seemed to happen that the little box grew heavy—it was so full it wouldn't rattle.

But one night soon after, Tom and Gertie were creeping around with pale frightened faces, and speaking in whispers. The little "thank you boy," as Benny liked to be called, was very ill—croup. The doctor came and went, and came again; but not till daylight broke could he give the comforting assurance, "He is safe now." In the dim light Tom dropped something into the little box, as he whispered, "Thank you, dear God." Somehow everybody seemed to feel as Tom did, and when Benny was propped up in bed next day, and counted his "thank-you" money, there were two dollars and a half in it, which papa changed for a gold piece that very day.

SOWING SEEDS.

Mabel dropped a few flower seeds into the ground and little leaves soon began to peep up and grow; they liked the air and sunshine so well that they were very big in a month or two. Then came buds and beautiful flowers; and the flowers blossomed all summer long, and the old ladies over the way had a bunch to brighten their room every day.

Mabel's mother kept dropping kind word seeds into everybody's heart. Mabel watched these seeds grow. They blossomed into comfort and love and bright faces and smiles and thanks.

"I'll plant kind word seeds, too; see if I don't," said Mabel. "I think the flowers are perfectly lovely!"

Eternity holds time's best, purified and perpetuated. It is a land of homes where there are no breakings up, and no ungenial traits in any member of the household.