

Handiwork of Jesus.

"I WONDER if in Nazareth
By heedless feet o'errun,
There lingers yet some dear relique
Of work by Joseph's Son.
Some carved thought, some tool of toil,
Some house with stones grown gray,
A house he built who had not where
His weary head to lay.

"It were a thing most beautiful,
Of rare and rich design;
And something very true and strong,
Made by a skill divine;
The road-side stones at sight of him
Could scarce their rapture hush;
What felt his touch and art must yet
With conscious beauty blush.

"I visit Nazareth, ask each man,
Each mound, each stone, each wind,
'I pray ye, help some precious trace
Of your great Builder find;'
Alas, ye listeners to my plaint,
The startled silence saith:
'What once was false, is now too true—
No Christ in Nazareth!'

"But, O my soul, why thus cast down!
A truer Nazareth scan;
What if thou find no time-spoiled work
Of Christ, the Son of man?—
Joy yet to thee; lift up thy head,
Cast raptured gaze abroad,
See in this vast Christ-built world
Signs of the Son of God."

The First Home.

BY S. L. PARSONS.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—The object of the great Architect and Builder, in setting in motion the wonderful world we inhabit, with its beautiful clothing and surroundings, is not for us to question or at present discuss. That he prepared it, and gave it to man for his personal use, and with which to honour his Creator, there is no room to doubt, and is sufficient evidence of his interest in our welfare.

Adam and Eve found themselves amid the cooling shades, the opening flowers, and the ripening fruits of a faultless Paradise. They were perfect in form, complete in capacity for self-government, and spotless in character. The animals sported around them, and kissed their feet in token of submission to them. At the beck of Eve, the birds delighted to light upon her hand, and sing their sweetest songs. Everything was new and pure; all things were beautiful and good; complete harmony reigned between all the creatures moving upon the earth, inhabiting the waters, or circling through the air.

Our first parents gathered their food from the trees and shrubbery that surrounded them, and slept in perfect security under their branches. Perfection and beauty were written upon life in Eden. If the occupants of the Garden of Eden were not a working people, it was because of the intimate relationship that existed between them and their Creator. When, unfortunately, that peculiar intimacy was broken up by disobedience on their part, and they concluded to try the experiment of self-control, there came ringing through the heavens a voice, which said; "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread; thorns and thistles shall the earth bring forth; the serpent shall bruise thy heel, but thou shalt bruise his head."

Previous to the withdrawal of the peculiar favour of his Creator, there had been placed in the hand of Adam the control of the entire earth. "Have thou dominion over all," was the commission. This great authority was not withdrawn

with the change of circumstances, except in so far as the late residence was concerned.

The happy Paradise they were forbidden to enter; the delicious fruits that had been their food were no longer within their reach. No doubt fruits were found, but vegetables that grew spontaneously from the ground became their principal diet. The animals no longer delighted in the presence of their master and mistress, but rather avoided them, and growled and fled at their approach; the birds were shy of the outstretched hand of Lady Eve, and did their singing in the branches. The all-wise Creator so arranged the new order of things that Adam was induced to put forth his energies to redeem some portion of the favour he had lost. The family relation was more definitely arranged and understood. A home was prepared where the family could be protected and sheltered—for they had learned a new lesson. Protection from foes and shelter from storms had become a necessity, and systematic labour became a fixed fact.

I do not find in the Bible any warrant for asserting that the Almighty prepared a house for Adam and Eve to occupy; but we are distinctly informed that—after they had conceived the idea of clothing—he prepared for them "coats of skins, and clothed them." And I think we have a perfect right to imagine that, not far from the garden, and overlooking it, was high ground near the river that ran through the garden, and on that high ground was a rock containing a cavern sufficiently large for a residence, and containing apartments for all the various affairs of the family. I imagine that there were implements found there with which Adam could till the ground as directed, and others with which Eve could direct her household duties. Probably these were not in large numbers, but were sufficient until the man could put his ingenuity to the test, and form such additional implements as their duties required.

Thus the first family home was established. Cain and Abel, and their brothers and sisters, were born and raised there, and probably they had as happy a home as most families in our own day have. Undoubtedly God gave Adam and Eve wisdom for the peculiar duties they were called upon to discharge, and I have no doubt they had as bright a set of boys and girls as have been found in any family since.

Cain was a bad boy, but he became an active and enterprising man. Of the other children of Adam we know but little, yet they all had their part to act in peopling and improving the world, and there is just as much work to be done to-day for the good of others as there ever was. It is only a little that any one of us can do, but many littles make the great. Let us each be sure that our little of precept and example is in the right scale when the weighing-time comes.

Queen Victoria and Sabbath Observance.

THE religious feeling of Her Majesty was evidenced soon after her ascent to the throne, in the case of a certain noble lord occupying an important post in the government, who, late one Saturday night, arrived at Windsor with some state papers.

"I have brought," said he, "for your Majesty's inspection, some documents of great importance; but as I shall be obliged to trouble you to examine them in detail, I will not encroach upon your Majesty's time to-night, but will request your attention to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning!" repeated the Queen. "To-morrow is Sunday, my lord."

"True, your Majesty; but business of the state will not admit of delay."

"I am aware of that," replied the Queen; "and as, of course, your lordship could not have arrived earlier at the palace to-night, I will, if these papers are of such pressing importance, attend to their contents after service to-morrow morning."

In the morning, the Queen and her court went to church, and, much to the surprise of the noble lord, the subject of the discourse was the sacredness of the Christian Sabbath.

"How did your lordship like the sermon?" asked the Queen.

"Very much, indeed, your Majesty," he replied.

"Well, then," added the Queen, "I will not conceal from you that, last night, I sent the clergyman the text from which he preached. I hope we shall all be improved by the sermon."

Not another word was said about the state papers during the day, but at night, when about to retire, the Queen said, "To-morrow morning, my lord, as early as seven o'clock, if you please, we will look into the papers."

"I cannot think," was the reply, "of intruding upon your Majesty at so early an hour. Nine o'clock will do as well."

"No, no, my lord! As the papers are of importance, I wish them to be attended to very early; but, if you wish it to be nine, be it so."

At nine the next morning the Queen was seated at her table, ready to receive the nobleman and his papers.

The Widow's Mite.

"MAMMA, I thought a mite was a little thing. What did the Lord mean when he said the widow's mite was more than all the money the rich men gave?"

Mamma thought a minute, then said: "Lulu, I will tell you a story, and, I think, you will understand why the widow's mite was more valuable than ordinary mites:—

"There was once a little girl, whose name was Kitty, and she had ever so many dolls. Some were made of china, and others of wax, with real hair, and eyes that would open and shut; but Kitty was tired of them all except the newest one, which her auntie had given her at Christmas. One day a poor little girl came to the door begging, and Kitty's mother told her to go and get one of her old dolls and give it away. She did so, and her old doll was like what the rich men put into the treasury. She could give it away just as well as not, and it didn't cost her anything."

"The poor little beggar girl was delighted with her doll. She never had but one before—and that was a rag-doll; but this one had such lovely curly hair, and such an elegant pink silk dress on, she was almost afraid to hold it against her dirty shawl for fear of soiling it; so she hurried home as fast as she could."

"Just as she was going upstairs to her poor room, she saw through the crack of the door in the basement her little friend, Sally, who had been sick in bed all summer, and who was alone all day, while her mother went out washing, to try and earn money enough to keep them from starving. As our little girl looked through the crack, she thought to herself, 'I must show Sally my new dolly.' So she rushed into the room and up to the bed, crying, 'O Sally, see!' Sally tried to reach out her arms to take it, but she was too sick, so her little friend held up the dolly, and as she did so she thought, 'How sick Sally looks to-day! and she hasn't any dolly.' Then, with one generous impulse, she said, 'Here, Sally, you may have her!'

"Now, Lulu, do you see? The little girl's dolly was like the widow's mite—she gave her all."