

"Can't; don't you see I've got all these potatoes to plant?"

"Well, I call it awful mean to have to plant taters all day Sat'day, after bein' in school at hard work all the week."

"I don't work very hard in school, sure," said Heman, slowly covering the two "hills" nearest the fence, and leaning on his hoe. True enough, he looked longingly at the poles and lines of domestic manufacture, and the pails suggesting dinner in the woods.

"Come on; don't drop taters all day."

"I notice I drop 'em into my mouth fast enough, when they're grown and cooked," said Heman with a jolly laugh.

"Where's your Uncle 'Rias, why don't he plant 'em?"

"He's out in the wood-lot, fellin' some big trees. Budd Hunt has his little saw-mill set up at Inlet-head, for a couple of weeks, an' Uncle 'Rias wants some boards sawed out."

"Come on, an' leave them taters for him to plant nex' week."

"That would be a pretty trick," said Heman, with scorn.

"Take you all day, won't it? An' you might be eatin' outdoors."

"Guess I'll do that any way, soon as Aunt D'rexy's gingerbread an' apple pie's done, guess I'll take dinner out to the wood-lot for Uncle 'Rias an' me."

There was some malevolence in this remark; these viands of Aunt D'rexy's making were famous, and Heman shrewdly suspected that a large part of the zeal for his company, fishing, was due to the thought of the good things he would bring to eat.

"Hum—m," said one boy, "fore I'd work like you do, an' they ain't your people neither."

"They are too, my people," said Heman. "Aunts an' uncles, they come next to fathers an' mothers, an' grandmothers, don't you know anything?" and he covered two more hills vigorously.

"Come on, jes' half a day, an' work at taters this afternoon."

"Can't—Joey goin'?"

"He never goes 'less you do—an' his mom's makin' doughnuts."

Heman laughed. "Well, I've got to hurry up. Wouldn't be surprised if that pile of black clouds brought suthin'."

Away went the boys disappointed and commenting, and Heman hurried along the rows thinking about shiners and 'pumpkin seed,' and how nice a dozen of little fish would smell, frying in a pan for supper! Time flew as he went up one row and down another, and the store of cut potatoes in the big basket visibly lessened, for Heman was a diligent worker. He reflected that of late 'Rias had seemed less cheery than usual, and even more zealous than ever in crowding on work. He knew too, that Aunt D'rexy often looked earnestly at 'Rias as if anxious to read his thoughts. These were sober musings, but they fitted the darkening of the day, for before Heman was aware the clear sunshine had changed to a dull brassy light, and now and then a puff of wind came along with a shrill scream. One such whirled off Heman's hat and led him a chase. When he picked up the hat he saw that the big black clouds had massed and heaped until they looked like the picture of Mount Chimborazo, as seen in his atlas, drawn by an artist who delineated from imagination rather than observation. He heard Aunt D'rexy blowing loud and shrill on the dinner-horn. She wanted him; he turned to run toward the house. A queer world this, a panel or two of rail-fence rose up into the air and waltzed about; the potato basket turned over and went trundling along the field—there was a screaming, much more shrill than the dinner-horn, and Heman reflected that freshly-ploughed land did not taste well, and that he would be a queer looking boy if ever he stood up after being rubbed along for a while face downward in the moist furrow. He appeared to be sleepy, and forgot himself. Then, there he was, scrambling to his knees, shaking earth from his hair and spitting it from his mouth, wishing he had a towel; next he stood up, and his breath, which had been gone, it seemed, came back. The sun had come out, and the shrieking noises were stilled. Seaward, the torn cloud-mountain careened, hanging low, as if to meet the waves. Yonder, between him and the house, was Aunt D'rexy, running as he had never seen her, for D'rexy was squarely built and sedate of movement. Heman ran to meet her, and after she had laboriously climbed one fence reached her, and was clasped, mud and all, to the embrace of her clean calico gown. "Now the dear, kind Lord be praised, who has saved you, my boy!"

"What was it, Aunt D'rexy? I'm all right, but the potatoes are upset, and I'll have a great time getting them together."

"Pears like it was a piece of a cyclone, from what I've heard. It didn't hit our buildings, but it took down your dove-house, and cut the top off the popple tree down the road. I wish I knew about 'Rias. 'Peared like the wind didn't go long our wood-lot way through. Went toward the school-'us."

"Well, as soon as I'm clean enough to see straight, I'll go look for Uncle 'Rias, an' ask him to come home for early dinner."

Heman made haste to wash and change his clothes, his shoes were full of stony earth. Uncle 'Rias had the two horses at the wood-lot ready to haul out his logs. "He may want me to stay and go with him to the saw-mill," said Heman; "if I don't come back soon you know it's all right, Aunt D'rexy."

Heman went up the road at a rapid pace, not that he was alarmed about Uncle 'Rias, but he was thinking what fun it would be to tell him of the antics of the fence-rails and the potato basket, and how he himself had tried ploughing up the ground with his nose! Then if Uncle 'Rias should elect to go at once to the Inlet-head, there would be no end of a fine chance to watch the anchored boats, to see what new cat-boats were being built, perhaps to have a row, and finally he and Uncle 'Rias could sit on a log at the saw-mill, and eat a "snack" of cheese and hard tack bought at the "ship's groceries" store. Better far all this than going a-fishing. As he surmounted the low hill that looked down upon the wood-lot he saw in an unfenced stump-filled field on the south of the road one of Uncle 'Rias' big grey horses, tearing around as if insane with fright, a portion of harness flying like ribbons about his back. On the north side of the road the path opening into the wood lot was strangely changed. If, as Aunt D'rexy said, the main part of the wind-storm had swept straight seaward, some of its scouting parties had done dire damage here, a tree lay partly across the road, there was a wide opening where tree tops had been reaped off like ripe heads of wheat, and spaces where some big pine falling had carried down all beneath it. Heman set out to run in good earnest. A few rods brought him to the scene of desolation. Bandy, the other grey horse, lay dead, his head crushed, and beyond him, on and under a heap of debris, of rotten wood and dry branches, fallen backward, his head very low, was Uncle 'Rias, motionless, ghastly. The quick eyes of the boy took not a minute to discern that the right leg of his uncle was crushed under the fallen body of the partly decayed tree, the wreck of whose top afforded the debris that covered him. To free his head and shoulders from wreckage and to put his head in a better position was Heman's first work; and in doing so he found that his uncle's heart still beat. Around Heman's neck hung, like a boatswain's whistle by its cord, one of those shrill sirens in which he and Joey delighted. He blew as he worked, the loudest blast he could. To his great joy a second blast obtained an answer; Joey then was somewhere on the road. Heman blew the signals of "trouble" and "hurry," and soon a plunging sound, and Joey's voice encouraging a horse, came near. Then Joey's chestnut "Ranger" reared and refused to come on; he was terrified by Bandy's dead body. Joey turned him about, tied him, and hurried forward.

"A tree's fallen on Uncle 'Rias!" shouted Heman.

(To be continued.)

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LESSON IV.—JULY 23.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

Dan. 5. 17-31. Memory verses, 24-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.

God is the Judge.—Psalm 75. 7.

OUTLINE.

1. The Crime, v. 17-23.
2. The Sentence, v. 24-29.
3. The Execution, v. 30, 31.

Time.—538 B.C.

Place.—Babylon.

LESSON HELPS.

17. What precedes should be read with care so as to understand this lesson. "Let thy gifts be to thyself"—For (1) Daniel was unselfish, and (2) gifts could be of little use, for in a few hours the city was taken and pillaged. "Thy rewards"—Or fees. A present was sometimes really wages for work done.

"I will read"—Make known, through divine help.

18. "Thy father"—Grandfather, as some say. The chronology may puzzle, but the plain truth of the narrative ought to puzzle no one. Search for the vital, permanent truth in the narrative and poetry of the Bible. "The most high God"—The language of reverence. Earthly beings should see the heavenly King, should honour and obey him.

19. Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful king, rich in wealth, armies, and a spreading kingdom. "Whom he would he slew"—The king's will was law. His frown was death to a subject and his smile was pardon. He was almost irresponsible. The old oriental king is the type of a despot.

20. "Lifted up . . . hardened"—Figurative expressions. Much of our prose is poetical in form but not noticed by us except we study etym. . . He was deposed because insane. It was a necessity to take from him the reins of government. Pride, impiety, and lack of moral restraint made him crazy.

21. "Till he knew"—He was wiser than some other men who in affliction never come to know the most high God.

22. "And thou his son"—The son was like his father in pride, but, unlike him, did not repent. His father's experience taught him nothing.

23. "The vessels of his house"—This filled the soul of Daniel the Jew with horror. To profane the sacred vessels of the Lord's house was indeed a great sin, rebellion against the King of kings. "In whose hand thy breath is" it is for God to say to us, "Live," and for him to pronounce the word "Die." "In him we live, move, and have our being." "Hast thou not glorified?" In thine heart, by thy life. A king should be to all his people an example of piety.

25. And this is the writing"—The words were not in the Chaldean character which we now call Hebrew. They were probably in the true Hebrew character. Each word has a sentence of thought. The words mean (1) numeration, (2) weighing (3) division.

HOME READINGS.

M. Belshazzar's feast.—Dan. 5. 1-9.

Th. Daniel called.—Dan. 5. 10-16.

W. The handwriting on the wall.—Dan. 5. 17-31.

Th. The temple vessels.—Jer. 52. 12-19.

F. Prophecy against Babylon.—Jer. 51. 47-58.

S. Herod's punishment.—Acts 12. 18-23.

Su. Found wanting.—Luke 12. 13-21.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Crime, v. 17-23.
 - Who was king of Babylon at this time?
 - In what pleasure was he indulging?
 - What had happened to bring Daniel to the banquet?
 - Whose successor was Belshazzar?
 - Of what sin had Nebuchadnezzar been guilty? Verse 20.
 - What penalty had come to Nebuchadnezzar as the result? Verse 21.
 - How ought this to have affected Belshazzar?
2. The Sentence, v. 24-29.
 - Who sent the hand that had written on the wall?
 - What were the words written?
 - What did the word Mene mean?
 - What meant the word Tekel?
 - What did the words Upharsin and Peres mean?
 - Wherein had Belshazzar been found wanting?
 - What was declared to be the fate of his kingdom?
 - What did the king command concerning Daniel?
3. The Execution, v. 30, 31.
 - How soon was God's sentence against Belshazzar executed?
 - What was his fate?
 - What is said in Gal. 6. 7?
 - Who took possession of his throne?
 - How did he treat Daniel? Dan. 6. 1, 2.

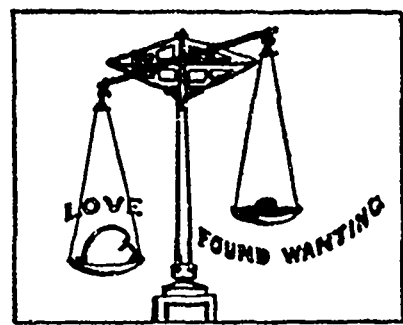
How do you know when you have the true weight? Suppose you want a pound of something; what must the grocer put in the other scale? A pound weight, to be sure. Then if the two balance, if they are just even, you know you have a pound; but if not, something is wanting.

Queen Victoria has a regiment of soldiers, called the Queen's Guard, that is made up of men of exactly the same height. If a man is wanting in five inches of this height, or one inch, he



THE HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON.

cannot belong to it. He is measured to see if he is just tall enough, and not too tall. But there is something inside every one of us that cannot be measured by a footrule or yardstick, nor weighed in scales that we can see; yet it is very important to know that there is nothing



wanting. God does the measuring and weighing. Suppose our hearts are put in one scale and love in the other, or obedience in the other, or truth, or any of the things God wants us to have to make up one of his children, how will our hearts weigh? Will we be wanting in any of these things?

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