

HARBOR LIGHTS.

Supper was just ended in Mr. Sampson's home. It had not been a pleasant meal. Baby had cried for cake; Lenny had upset his mug of milk, and been sharply reproved by his father; the room did not wear a cheerful look, as seen by the one burner of the chandelier, and Mr. Sampson shivered as he arose from the table.

"Why don't you have a fire in the grate, Jenny?" he asked, impatiently.

"I thought it best not to make a litter," Mrs. Sampson replied. "The room is comfortable when the kitchen door is open."

Mr. Sampson lighted a cigar, and his remark about "misdirected economy," muttered between whiffs of smoke, was not heard by his wife. He went out into the dark hall, and the street door soon closed in a manner that indicated the ruffled temper of the master of the house.

The table was soon cleared, and the children gathered around with books and toys.

"Can't we have more light, mother?" asked Lilly. "The words are very small on this map."

Mrs. Sampson replied by turning the burner slightly, and soon after left the room with little Harry. Her evenings were seldom spent with the children. Harry must be coaxed to sleep, and the somewhat lengthy process usually produced drowsiness, to which she yielded. She had not slept long, however, when the unusual sound of the door-bell awakened her. She heard Mary open the door, and recognized the voice that inquired for her.

"It is Uncle Otis! I wish Tom were at home," she said, as she hastily prepared to go to her visitor.

Meanwhile, Captain Otis had followed the girl through the hall, lighted only by a glimmer that came from the half-opened door in the rear. The children had stopped their noisy game at the sound of the bell, but failed to recognize their visitor, for Captain Otis had not been a frequent guest at the house of his niece. He had scarcely time to notice the disorderly appearance of the room, before Mrs. Sampson entered. Her cordial greeting, and the light from an additional burner of the chandelier, failed to remove the cheerlessness that oppressed him.

Tom was not in, he was told; and it was not until the children had retired that he asked particularly for the father.

"What keeps Tom out so late? He surely can't have business at this hour," he said.

"He is at his club," replied Mrs. Sampson. "He is seldom at home in the evening."

"Tom at a club!" repeated Captain Otis. "Why does he go to a club?"

"I really can't say," replied Tom's wife. "He seems to enjoy it more than his home."

Captain Otis said no more, and another half-hour passed before his nephew's step was heard in the hall.

"I do wish you'd keep this hall lighted, Jenny," he called, as he stumbled over his visitor's valise. "I shall break my neck here some night."

Captain Otis scarcely recognized the impatient voice, so unlike the cheerful tones he had once known; but there was no mistake in the cordial greeting of his nephew. He seemed to bring new life into the room, as he bustled about, reducing to order books and chairs that the children had left in confusion. He lighted the fire in the grate, saying, half-apologetically, "We must have a fire, Jenn; the evening is decidedly chilly."

"Breakers ahead!" muttered Captain Otis, as he was left alone in his room. "Breakers ahead! and discord among the officers!"

Captain Otis spent the morning in attending to the business that had brought him to the city, and saw little of the family until they met at a late dinner. The large parlors were now open, and a cheerful fire burned in the grate; but the company air of the rooms and of the well-furnished table seemed no less oppressive to the family than to their guest. It was not until the second morning that he found opportunity for conversation with his niece, whose childhood had been passed in his family, and in whose welfare he had ever taken a deep interest. Tom had gone to his office; the children, after much confusion, had been made ready for school, when Mrs. Samp-

son, with a weary sigh, sank into her accustomed chair in the dining-room.

"Is the tide out, Jenny?" inquired Captain Otis.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Sampson. "The life-tide is going out, too."

"But the tide flows in again, and often brings treasures, you know."

"Not here; it brings only waves that threaten to overwhelm me. I do the best I can, uncle; but Tom and the boys are getting quite beyond me."

"The ship fails to obey the helm, eh?"

"We are among breakers, uncle; I don't know for what port we are making," replied Mrs. Sampson, using the phraseology familiar to her childhood.

"Jenny," said Captain Otis, "do you remember the ship that went ashore on the rocks in the harbor one night?"

"Yes, I remember; all on board were lost."

Do you remember the cause of the wreck? You were too young, perhaps, to know; the harbor lights were neglected that night, and the ship mistook false lights for the true. Every harbor, every home, should keep its lights trimmed and burning, else every soul may be lost. Have you never lighted yours, or have they burned out?"

"Harbor lights?" questioned Mrs. Sampson.

"When I made for this port," continued her uncle, "there was little to guide me; the outer harbor was dark, and the inner one not much better. It pays to attend to these things, niece. A well-lighted home is a beacon that lights the path of many a wanderer, and sometimes draws him back when he is steering another way. Tom is making for another shore; the boys may follow in his wake."

"I see what you mean, uncle," replied Mrs. Sampson. "You mean that the house was dark and cheerless."

"Yes, and that the electric light that dims all others, was not visible. It's the wife and mother that makes the home bright."

"But, uncle, I can't possibly keep awake in the evening; I am so exhausted, I usually fall asleep with Harry."

"And leave the children to spend the evening as they please, while Tom finds cheer elsewhere? You are making a mistake, niece; throw open your parlors every evening; keep the fire and the lights burning, and you'll be the happier."

"But gas bills are so heavy, I do not see how we can afford it."

"You can not afford not to do it. Do none of your friends come in to spend an evening with you?"

"Not now," replied Jenny; "and it is a long time since I've been able to invite company."

"Tom is so fond of company, I'm not surprised that he goes to a club to find it. Keep your lights bright, and perhaps he will steer clear of the rocks, and make port again."

Mrs. Sampson was startled by her uncle's words.

When Tom came home, he was welcomed by a bright light in the hall, and a glimpse of the parlor showed him a merry group of children gathered around their mother in the cheerful room.

"Hasn't Uncle Otis gone?" he inquired, in surprise.

"He went this morning," replied Mr. Sampson.

"See what he left us!" cried the children, displaying games suited to the evening fireside.

The tea-bell called them to the dining-room.

"How festive we look to-night," remarked Mr. Sampson, noting the unusual light that was reflected from silver that seldom appeared upon the table.

"Harbor lights always have reflectors," thought Mrs. Sampson, as she glanced at the happy faces gathered around the board.

"Butter tastes better from a silver butter-dish. Don't you think so, father?" asked Jamie.

"Yes, and tea from a silver teapot," he replied. "Better use them every day Jenny; they won't wear out in our day."

The children interested their father in the new games until the evening was well spent. Mrs. Sampson, by keeping Harry up another hour, was able to return soon to the parlor, where she occupied herself with sewing, to prevent the usual drowsy feeling from overcoming her. The next evening, when Tom returned at a late hour from his

club, he was surprised to find his wife and two older children awaiting him.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"What new leaf have you turned over?"

"I've only lighted the harbor lights," Tom," replied Mrs. Sampson. "Uncle said our port was so dark that you and the boys were drifting towards another shore. Is it too late for you to change your course, dear Tom?"

"Please God, no!" replied Tom, energetically. "Uncle is right; we are in danger of making shipwreck. Keep the light bright, Jenny, and I'll steer straight for this port every time."—Selected.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS of ascertaining whether a reputed loaf of bread is really bread, or a reputed glass of water is water. One way is by chemical analysis; the other way is by eating and drinking; Upon the whole the common and experimental test is the more satisfactory and it is quite as scientific. Some people reach Christ by long and painful argumentation and searching into all the evidences of Christianity; while others simply take God at his word and come to an experimental knowledge of the truth and saving power of the Gospel. This is by far the better way. "O, taste and see that the Lord is good."—Dr. Pentecost.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON I.

JANUARY 1, 1888.] [MATT. 14:1-12.]

HEROD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VERSES 10-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus."—Matt. 14:12.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke 1:5-23.—John's Birth Predicted. Luke 1:57-80.—The Prediction Fulfilled. W. Luke 8:1-18.—John's Preaching. Th. John 1:15-37.—John's Testimony to Jesus. F. Matt. 11:1-15.—Jesus' Testimony to John. Sa. Matt. 14:1-12.—Herod and John. Su. Rev. 7:9-17.—Out of Great Tribulation.

LESSON PLAN.

I. A Troubled Conscience, vs. 1, 2. II. A Faithful Preacher, vs. 3-5. III. A Bloody Birthday, vs. 6-12. TIME.—A.D. 29, winter or early spring. Tiberius Caesar Emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate Governor of Judea; Herod Antipas Governor of Galilee and Perea.

PLACE.—John the Baptist was put to death at Marchærus, a fortress east of the Dead Sea, on the borders of Arabia. Herod's birthday feast was probably held in this fortress.

OPENING WORDS.

Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist, was the son of Herod the Great. By his father's will, with the consent of the Emperor Augustus, he became tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He reigned from B.C. 4 to A.D. 39, when he was deposed and banished by Caligula. He died at Lyons, in France. Parallel passages, Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

V. 1. AT THAT TIME—while the twelve were absent on their mission. TETRARCH—literally, "the ruler of a fourth." V. 2. THIS IS JOHN THE BAPTIST—the suggestion of a guilty conscience. V. 3. IN PRISON—in the castle of Marchærus, east of the Dead Sea. HERODIAS—a granddaughter of Herod the Great. She was first married to Philip, by whom she had a daughter, Salome, probably the one who danced before Herod. Herod divorced his wife and persuaded Herodias to leave her husband and live with him. V. 4. NOT LAWFUL—both Herod's wife and the husband of Herodias were still living. V. 5. WOULD HAVE PUT HIM TO DEATH—at the instigation of Herodias. Mark 6:19-20. V. 6. HEROD'S BIRTHDAY—it was probably celebrated in the castle of Marchærus. DANCED—alone, like the dancing-girls of the time; an indelicate and disgraceful act. (See Mark 6:22.) V. 8. CHARGER—a large dish or platter. V. 9. WAS SORRY—"was grieved." FOR THE OATH'S SAKE—an oath which ought not to have been made, and which, when made, ought to have been broken. THEM WHICH SAT WITH HIM—they were probably hostile to John. V. 12. HIS DISCIPLES—John's disciple. TOOK UP THE BODY—which had, it would seem, been thrown out unburied.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How many Herods are mentioned in the New Testament? What do you know of Herod the tetrarch? What is the title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Recite the memory verses! The Catechism!

I. A TROUBLED CONSCIENCE, vs. 1, 2.—What did Herod hear? What did he say? Why did his conscience trouble him? Why is conscience a trouble to the wicked? How may we be free from such trouble? How should we try to live? Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Cor. 1:12.

II. A FAITHFUL PREACHER, vs. 3-5.—For what sins had John reproved Herod? Who was Herodias? How did John suffer for his faithfulness? What prevented Herod from killing him at once?

III. A BLOODY BIRTHDAY, vs. 6-12.—What occurred on Herod's birthday? Who attended this feast? Mark 6:21. What promise did Herod make? What did the girl ask? By whose advice? How did the request affect the king? What ought he to have done? What awful crime did he commit? How did John's disciples show their love for their master? What did they then do?

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

- 1. That an accusing conscience causes trouble to the guilty.
2. That Christ's ministers should be fearless and faithful in reproving sin.
3. That we should carefully avoid making rash and foolish promises.
4. That a promise to do wrong, if rashly made, ought always to be broken.
5. That it is better to die in a dungeon for the right than to live in a palace in wickedness and crime.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

- 1. What did Herod think of Jesus? Ans.—That he was John the Baptist risen from the dead.
2. What made him think this? Ans.—A troubled conscience?
3. Why did Herod imprison John? Ans.—Because of John's faithfulness in reproving him for his sins.
4. Why did he not put John to death at once? Ans.—He feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.
5. What did Herod do on his birthday? Ans.—He beheaded John to please his wicked wife and her foolish daughter.

LESSON II.

JANUARY 3, 1888.] [MATT. 14:13-21.]

THE MULTITUDE FED

COMMIT TO MEMORY VERSES 16-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life."—John 6:35.

HOME READINGS.

M. Matt. 14:13-21.—The Multitude Fed. T. 1 Kings 17:1-16.—Elijah Fed. W. 2 Kings 4:38-44.—Elisha's Provision. Th. Ps. 145:1-21.—Their Meat in Due Season. F. Ex. 16:14-31.—Bread From Heaven. Sa. John 6:27-40.—Jesus the Bread of Life. Su. John 6:41-71.—His Flesh for Bread.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Compassion of Jesus, vs. 13-16. II. The Power of Jesus, vs. 17-21. TIME.—A.D. 29, April, very soon after the last lesson; Tiberius Caesar Emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate Governor of Judea; Herod Antipas Governor of Galilee and Perea.

PLACE.—A desert or uninhabited place now called the plain of Butaiha, on the north-eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, not far from Bethsaida Julias.

OPENING WORDS.

Jesus, when he heard of the death of John the Baptist, returned to Capernaum. The twelve Apostles—who had meanwhile been absent upon their mission (Matt. 10:1-15)—came to him there and made a report of their work. To obtain rest for himself and the twelve Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee to a solitary place not far from Bethsaida Julias. Luke 9:10. But work instead of rest awaited him there, as we learn from this lesson. Parallel passages, Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:5-16.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

V. 13. FOLLOWED HIM ON FOOT—passed round the head of the Lake by land. (Compare Mark 6:33.) V. 14. MOVED WITH COMPASSION—many of them were sick, and all were spiritually destitute. V. 15. EVENING—the first evening, from three to six p.m. Verse 23 refers to the second evening, which began at sunset. V. 16. GIVE YE THEM—obedience seemed impossible, but they did obey through Christ's power providing the means for them. Duty is measured by Christ's commands, not by our resources. V. 17. FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES—a very scant supply even for thirteen men. V. 18. BLESSED—gave thanks for the food, and asked God's blessing upon it. GAVE THE LOAVES TO HIS DISCIPLES—making them the agents to bear the food to the people—an emblem of their future work of bearing the bread of life to perishing men. V. 20. FRAGMENTS—pieces that had not been distributed. TWELVE BASKETS FULL—more than there was at first. V. 21. FIVE THOUSAND MEN—only one loaf to every thousand; and yet there was enough, and to spare. So it is with the spiritual food, the bread of life. (See John 6:13, 14.)

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Upon what mission did Jesus send his apostles? When did they return to him? What report did they bring? What is the title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Recite the memory verses. The Catechism. I. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS, vs. 13-16.—What did Jesus do when he heard of John's death? Why did he so retire? Where was this desert place? What did the people do? How did Jesus feel when he saw the multitude? What did he do for them? (See Mark 6:31.) Why did the disciples ask Jesus to send them away? What did Jesus reply? What did he mean by this? (See John 6:36.)

II. THE POWER OF JESUS, vs. 17-21.—What supply of food had the disciples? What did Jesus command? What did he do before beginning the meal? How should we partake of food? By whose hands did Jesus give the food to the people? How much was left? How many were fed? What does this miracle prove about Jesus? What did Jesus say of himself? John 6:35. What should be our prayer? John 6:34.

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

- 1. That Jesus cares for those that follow him.
2. That he will provide for all their wants.
3. That he suits his blessings to the needs of his people.
4. That he is the bread of life which alone will satisfy the hunger of the soul.
5. That we should seek for this bread of life more earnestly than for daily food.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

- 1. Where did Jesus go with his disciples? Ans.—To a desert place near Bethsaida.
2. What did the people do? Ans.—They went to him in the desert.
3. How did Jesus feel toward them? Ans.—He was moved with compassion.
4. How did he show his compassion? Ans.—By healing their sick and giving them food.
5. How did he show his power? Ans.—By feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes.