

THE HEROINE OF LONG POINT.

The Methodist Publishing House issues in a neat booklet the story of a brave Canadian woman, Mrs. Abigail Becker, who rescued the lives of six sailors from the wreck of the ship Conductor, on Long Point, Ontario. She subsequently saved the lives of six other persons. She had a life of adventure, her arms having been broken four times. She brought up seventeen children; of her eight boys not one uses liquor or tobacco. She received for her valour a gold medal from the American Humane Society, and autograph letters from Lord Aberdeen and Queen Victoria.

"As long as man shall love to read of the heroism of Ida Lewis and Grace Darling, so long shall all Canadians love to dwell on a heroism far greater than theirs—the unparalleled exploit of good, strong-bodied, simple-minded, warm-hearted Abigail Becker."

The following stirring ballad was written by Miss Amanda T. Jones, a lady of old Puritan stock, whose great-grandfather was one of the officers with Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham:

The wind, the wind, where Erie plunged,
Blew, blew, nor-east from land to land;
The waddling schooner dipped and plunged,
Long Point was close at hand.

The lowering night shut out the sight;
Careen'd the vessel, pitched and veer'd;
Raved, raved the wind with main and might;
The sunken reef she near'd.

She pounded over, lurched and sank
Between two sand-bars settling fast;
Her leaky hull the water drank,
And she had sail'd her last.

Into the rigging, quick as thought,
Captain and mate and sailors sprung;
Clamber'd for life, some vantage caught,
And there all night they swung.

And it was cold—oh, it was cold!
The pinching cold was like a vice;
Spoon-drift flew freezing—fold on fold,
It coated them with ice.

Now, when the dawn began to break,
Light up the sand-path drench'd and brown,
To fill her bucket from the lake,
Came Mother Becker down.

From where her cabin crowned the bank,
Came Abigail Becker tall and strong;
She dipped, and, lo! a broken plank
Came rocking close along!

She pois'd her glass with anxious ken;
The schooner's top she spied from far,
And eight she counted of the men
That clung to mast and spar.

And, oh, the gale! the rout and roar!
The blinding drift, the mounting wave;
A good half-mile from wreck to shore;
Eight human lives to save!

Sped Mother Becker; "Children, wake!
A ship's gone down! they're needing me!
Your father's off on shore; the lake
Is just a raging sea!"

Through sinking sands, through quaggy lands,
And nearer, nearer, full in view;
Went shouting through her hollowed hands,
"Courage! we'll get you through!"

Ran to and fro, made cheery signs,
Her bonfire lighted, steeped her tea,
Brought drift-wood, watch'd Canadian lines,
Her husband's boat to sea.

Cold, cold it was—oh, it was cold!
The bitter cold made watching vain;
With ice the channel labouring roll'd,—
No skiff could stand the strain.

On all that isle from outer swell,
To straight between the landings shut,
Was never place where men might dwell,
Save trapper Becker's hut.

Blew, blew the gale; they did not hear;
She waded in the shallow sea;
She waved her hands, made signals clear,
"Swim! swim, and trust to me!"

"My men," the captain cried, "I'll try;
The woman's judgment may be right;
For sink or swim, eight men must die,
If here we swing to-night."

There blindly whirling, shorn of strength,
The captain drifted, sure to drown;
Dragg'd seaward half a cable's length,
Like sinking lead went down.

Ah, well for him that on the strand,
Had Mother Becker waited long;

And well for him her grasping hand
And grappling arm were strong.

For what to do but plunge and swim?
Out on the sinking billows cast.
She toiled, she dived, she groped for him,
She found and clutched him fast.

She climbed the reef, she brought him up,
She laid him gasping on the sands;
Built high the fire and filled the cup,—
Stood up and waved her hands.

Oh, life is dear! The mate leaped in;
Himself he tries to save.
The goal seemed more than he could win,
For he was weak though brave.

Oh, Mother Becker, seas are dread,
Their treacherous paths are deep and blind,
But widows soon may mourn their dead,
If thou art slow to find.

She sought them near, she sought them far,
Three fathoms down she gripp'd them tight,
With both together up the bar
She stagger'd into sight.

Beside the fire her burdens fell;
She paused the cheering draught to pour,
Then waved her hands: "All's well, all's well!
Come on! Swim! swim ashore!"

Sure, life is dear, and men are brave;
They came,—they dropped from mast and spar;
And who but she could brave the wave,
And dive beyond the bar?

Dark grew the sky from east to west,
And darker, darker grew the world;
Each man from off the breaker's crest,
To gloomier depths was hurl'd.

And still the gale went shrieking on,
And still the wrecking fury grew;
And still the woman, worn and wan,
Those gates of death went through.

As Christ were walking on the waves,
And heavenly radiance shone about,—
All fearless trod that gulf of graves,
And bore the sailors out.

Down came the night, but far and bright,
Despite the wind and flying foam,
The bonfire flamed to give them light
To trapper Becker's home.

Oh, safety after wreck is sweet!
And sweet is rest in hut or hall;
One story life and death repeat,—
God's mercy over all.

Next day men heard, put out from shore,
Crossed channel-ice, burst in to find
Seven gallant fellows sick and sore,
A tender nurse and kind.

Shook hands, wept, laugh'd, were crazy glad;
Cried: "Never yet, on land or sea,
Poor dying, drowning sailors had
A better friend than she."

"Billows may tumble, winds may roar,
Strong hands the wreck'd from death may snatch;
But never, never, nevermore,
This deed shall mortal match!"

Dear Mother Becker dropped her head,
She blushed as girls when lovers woo;
"I have not done a thing," she said,
"More than I ought to do."

TRUSTING A FATHER'S HAND.

I happened to come down to my shop one day, and found my eldest boy, then about eight years of age, busily punching holes in a piece of leather with the instrument used for the purpose by shoemakers. The piece of leather was of little worth; but in order to prevent his trying the operation on something more valuable in future, he received a correction; and by the way of trying his confidence, he was asked to put out his little tongue, that it might, as it were, undergo a similar operation. As may be supposed, the request was not complied with, and the matter was likely to end there, when his sister, two years older than her brother, who had been eagerly watching the proceeding, said, "I will do it, pa," which she did without hesitation when requested. Resolved to put her to the test, the punch was laid on; but not showing the least appearance of flinching, it was pressed close; yet there she stood, even smiling in her father's face, who, feeling himself overcome, withdrew the instrument. Judge of his emotion when she exclaimed, "I knew you would not do it, pa." Has the Lord taught thee to trust a Father's hand?

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LESSON X.—DECEMBER 3.

KEEPING THE SABBATH.

Neh. 13. 15-23. Memory verses, 15-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.—Exod. 20. 8.

OUTLINE.

1. The Sabbath Broken, v. 15-18.
 2. The Sabbath Kept, v. 19-23.
- Time.—Perhaps about B.C. 433.
Place.—Jerusalem.

LESSON HELPS.

15. "Saw I"—Nehemiah is the person, the pious and faithful governor of Jerusalem. "In Judah"—The Persian province which had the kingdom of Judah. "Treading the presses"—The grapes were thrown into large vats and the juice pressed out of them by the feet of men. "On the Sabbath"—The Jewish Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. "I testified against them"—For Nehemiah, as a pious Jew, was an active opponent of those who used the Sabbath for gain.

16. "Men of Tyre"—Which was on the seacoast. These men were not Jews. "The children" means here the people.

17. "I contended with the nobles"—He proclaimed their guilt because they did not stop the evil. It is good to hold rulers to the duties of their office. They should be active to repress violations of law. "Public office is a public trust."

18. "Did not your fathers thus"—History is of moral value, and the example of ancestors ought sometimes to warn. Heed the lessons of the past. "Profaning the Sabbath"—The duty of keeping the Sabbath day holy is taught by the law and the prophets, and warnings and denunciations are given against those who profane the sacred day.

19. "When the gates . . . began to be dark"—The gates were closed at sunset on Friday evening, and as the ordinary officers had been remiss the ruler set some of his own servants to watch the gates. It is a pity that servants must be appointed to do the work officers of justice are appointed and paid to do.

20. "Merchants and sellers"—Generally of small wares which were portable.

21. "Why lodge ye about the wall"—As the merchants could not come within the gates on the Sabbath they exposed their wares for sale just outside the gates and along the walls. "I will lay hands on you"—In plain words he told them he would imprison them, or punish them in some effective way. As his threat was backed with power and a resolute will it stopped the evil. It is a mistake to parley long with lawbreakers.

22. "Should cleanse themselves"—The Levites were assistants of the priests, and the purification was a ceremonial one; it consisted in washings, and abstinence from wine and other things which on other occasions were lawful. Purity of soul, holiness, was expressed by personal cleanliness and white garments. "To sanctify"—To set apart from an ordinary to a holy use. Spiritual men are those whom God calls to spiritual work. "Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy"—Not to be spared because of good works, but because the mercy of God is so great. "It is of the divine mercies that we are not consumed."

HOME READINGS.

- M. Keeping the Sabbath.—Neh. 13. 15-22.
- Tu. The Sabbath appointed.—Gen. 1. 26 to 2. 3.
- W. Sabbath to be hallowed.—Jer. 17. 19-27.
- Th. Sabbath-breaking denounced.—Ezek. 20. 10-20.
- F. Blessings in keeping.—Isa. 56. 1-7.
- S. Sabbath joy.—Isa. 58. 8-14.
- Su. Christ's teaching.—Luke 16. 10.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Sabbath Broken, v. 15-18.
How was the Sabbath broken by the Jews?
What did Nehemiah do when he saw this?
What foreigners profaned the day, and how?
To them what did the governor say?
What had the fathers of the "nobles" done?
What prophet had warned the fathers, and how?
Jer. 17. 21-23, 27.
What evil were these people bringing?
What commandment had they broken?
Golden Text.
2. The Sabbath Kept, v. 19-22.
What order was given about the city gates?

Why were the gates closed at dark?
Lev. 23. 32.

Who were put in charge of the gates?
Who lodged without the walls?
What threat did the governor make?
What was the effect of his words?
What were the Levites told to do?
What prayer did Nehemiah make?
When was the Sabbath instituted?
Gen. 2. 3.

For whom was it instituted?
Mark 2. 27.

How should the Sabbath be kept?
Isa. 58. 13.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. The duty of Sabbath-keeping?
2. The sin of Sabbath-breaking?
3. The blessedness of Sabbath observance?

OYSTERS ON TREES.

The other day I heard somebody speak of "oysters hanging upon the branches of trees on the borders of the Chesapeake Bay."

"That sounds like a fairy tale," thought I to myself.

I determined to investigate. So I said, "I always supposed oysters grew under the water. I never knew they hung in clusters on tree branches like apples. Curious sort of oysters those must be which grow on trees along the Chesapeake?"

"Chesapeake Bay has the best kind of oysters," said the Talking Man. "The reason they are sometimes found growing on tree branches is this: The spawn of the oyster floats about on the water, tossed by wind and waves. It has the quality of attaching itself to any solid substance it touches.

"Now, the branches of the trees often droop into the water. They do so along the borders of the Chesapeake the same as on the banks of any other river or bay. At high-tide such branches will be covered with water, and when the tide goes back, the branches come to the surface again.

"The spawn sticks to those boughs when they are beneath the waves. In a few days the tiny oysters begin to develop, and before long, at every low tide, the branches can be seen hanging out, with little oysters growing all over them. Sometimes a branch which is often under water, will be nearly covered with small oysters. It looks very odd, of course, but it's a common enough sight down there.

"Grow? They don't grow very large to be sure. To attain perfection an oyster must be always under water, and these hang half the time out of it. When they are exposed too long to the hot sun they die. Their weight often causes them to fall off.

"Little oysters are sometimes transplanted. Not off tree branches, but from the beds at the bottom of the bay. They are planted in oyster beds in other places where in a couple of years they grow to maturity."

"It sounds funny to talk of picking oysters off of trees," said I, "or even to see them grow there."

"Funny enough. But they do grow there. I've seen them lots of times," said the Talking Man. "That's the way queer stories get about. Somebody hears of a thing and doesn't understand the sense of it. And most people never stop to ask what it means. They either repeat the story for a marvel, or say they don't believe it."—Harper's Young People

BROTHERS SHOULD NEVER QUARREL.

What a blessed thing, says a wise man, if all children could remember that brothers should never quarrel. God has made them of one blood and of one life, and they should always be kind and tender to each other. This meaning is illustrated by the following:

A little boy, seeing two nestling birds pecking at each other, inquired of his elder brother what they were doing.

"They are quarrelling," said he.

"No," replied the child, "that cannot be, they are brothers."

LOST-PUNCTUATION POINTS.

Here is a verse out of which the punctuation points have been lost. Let the boys and girls find them and put them in their right places.

A funny old man told this to me
(Tis a puzzle in punctuation you see)
"I fell in a snowdrift in June" said he
"I went to a ball game out in the sea
I saw a jellyfish float on a tree
I found some gum in a cup of tea
I stirred the milk with a big brass key
I opened my door on my bended knee
I ask you pardon for this" said he
"But 'tis true when told as it ought to be"