

# Happy Days

VII.]

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## THE BIBLE WELLS

J. H. D'ELLE

PALESTINE is not a land of many flowing streams and never has been. The Jordan runs north and south until it is lost in the lifeless sands of the Dead Sea. The streams that flow into it from the north are insignificant, and often during the summer season are water-courses — wadies — are called. This is the case of the Brook of Olives and the Brook of Bethany, over which Jacob passed as he went back and forth between Bethany to the north. This lack of permanent streams, and water sources sufficient to outlast the long summer season, gave wells that we in this country do not appreciate.

It may properly be said of Palestine as a land of wells and water. To-day many wells are dry and most of the cisterns are empty.

Do you remember how that when Abraham found that he and Lot could not dwell together because their flocks became so large, he gave his younger son the choice as to where he should go. And Lot looked down over the plain of the Jordan and at once said he would go there, because the land "was better everywhere." That was the point, where there was most



water there life would be easier and riches more readily acquired.

Many of the most interesting stories of the Bible are connected with the Bible wells. A jealous wife causes her husband to dismiss from his home a bondswoman and her son. The poor woman is given some bread and a jar of water and is cast out. She wanders with her son in the wilderness until the jar is empty and she

sees no means of filling it. And when she can no longer endure the cries of the thirsty child, and cannot satisfy his thirst she puts him under a bush and leaves him there that she may not see him die. But God does not mean that she shall suffer thus, and he calls to her and tells her that the child will live, and he "opened her eyes and she saw a well of water." The jar was soon refilled and the life of her child was spared.

A young man had been on a long journey. One day, while the sun was still high in the heavens, he comes to a well in a field where flocks of sheep are feeding and a stone is laid over the mouth of the well. Presently he sees a woman advancing toward the well followed by her thirsty flock. The man rolls away the heavy stone from the well's mouth and lets down the bucket, filling the stone trough that was beside the well, and waters the sheep. This was the first meeting between Jacob and Rachel and this act of courtesy beside Laban's well

was the beginning of the devoted love of Jacob for the wife for whom he served seven years, and then another seven years, and whom he cherished until death parted them and he buried her near Bethlehem.

A man is travelling with his companions northward from Jerusalem to Galilee. At noon one day he comes near to a village that nestles between two high mountains. He sends his comrades on to the town to