

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

CHATTERBOX JUNIOR. (Toronto: Willing & Williamson.)—A year of this well-known children's periodical, bound in illuminated cover, with a beautiful coloured frontispiece, makes a very handsome Christmas present.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE JOURNAL.—With the first number for the season, which has just appeared, this lively and vigorous publication enters upon its ninth volume. It is issued once a fortnight during the session under the direction of the Alma Mater Society of Queen's.

VENNOR'S WEATHER ALMANAC FOR 1882. (Toronto News Company.)—Mr. Vennor's general forecasts of the seasons, based on meteorological knowledge and close observation, have been found sufficiently correct to be useful. It is when he comes down to weeks and days that he fails.

THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE JOURNAL.—This "organ of student opinion," originated last year as a private enterprise, enters upon its second volume with a very full editorial staff, under the auspices of the Alma Mater Society of the Montreal Presbyterian College. It is published monthly during the College session.

STORIES OF ADVENTURE TOLD BY ADVENTURERS. By Edward E. Hale. (Toronto: Willing & Williamson. Price \$1.)—These are no day dreams, but real adventures—truth stranger than fiction—well told and tending to create a thirst for further information. Those boys who fall in with such books as this, and are attracted by them, are likely to grow up into well-informed men.

LITTLE FOLKS' EVERY-DAY BOOK. (Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.; Toronto: Hart & Co.)—Those children who get possession of this book will find it a very pleasant companion. It contains a nice rhyme and an illustration for every day in the year, two printed pages alternating with two blank pages to be used as a diary throughout the book, and each month begins with a full page coloured picture.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND MIDSUMMER SONGS. (Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.; Toronto: Hart & Co.)—This exquisite volume would be an acceptable gift to any ordinary child either at Christmas or at any other time. It sings pleasantly of innocent child life, the cheerful fireside, and the beautiful and breezy outdoors. The illustrations are charming, and the general get-up is very elegant.

SONG SERMONS. By Philip Phillips. (Montreal: Dawson Bros.; Toronto: Hart & Co.)—The compiler of this manual of sacred song is perhaps best known as "the singing pilgrim." The work is specially adapted for evangelistic purposes, and would answer well for the ordinary prayer meeting. It contains twelve complete services of praise and Bible readings. There are two editions of it—one with the words and music, the others with the words only.

A PAGEANT AND OTHER POEMS. By Christina G. Rossetti. (Toronto: Willing & Williamson. Price \$1 25.)—The "Pageant" is a song of nature, dramatically marshalling the months of the year, each appropriately attended. It occupies thirty-two pages of the book, the remaining 176 pages being taken up with shorter pieces of miscellaneous character—religious and secular, joyous and sad, grave and gay. The author is already favourably known.

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE. (New York: The Century Company.)—The December number of this magazine (late "Scribner's Monthly") has for frontispiece a portrait of its late editor, Dr. J. G. Holland, and the opening article is a pretty full biographical notice of him. Among the illustrations we also find an engraving from a cast of the face of Abraham Lincoln, taken during life, and two portraits of President Garfield—one taken when he was sixteen years of age, and the other in 1880.

AROUND THE HUB A BOY'S BOOK ABOUT BOSTON. By Samuel Adams Drake. (Toronto: Willing & Williamson. Price \$2.)—Mr. Drake is well known as a writer on historical subjects. In this volume he has succeeded in telling pretty much all that can be told about the city of Boston, past and present, in such a way that boys who get hold of the book will be apt to read it. The illustrations, which are very numerous, along with good printing and paper and a tasteful exterior, add much to the attractiveness of the book.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XLIX.

Dec. 4.
1881.

BALAAM.

Num xxv
10-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."—James i. 8.

HOME READINGS.

M. Num. xxi. 10-35. Sihon and Og overcome.
T. Num. xxii. 1-41. Balak sends for Balaam.
W. Num. xxiii. 1-30. Balaam's Parable.
Th. Num. xxiv. 1-25. Balaam's Prophecy.
F. Mic. vi. 1-16. Balaam to Balak.
S. 2 Pet. ii. 9-22. The Way of Balaam.
Sab. James i. 1-17. Double-minded Man.

HELPS TO STUDY.

After the events which formed the subject of our last lesson the Israelites, passing by the territory of Edom for the reason mentioned, encountered the Amorites, defeated them, and occupied their cities. The territory of the Amorites was situated on the east side of the River Jordan, and was bounded on the north and south by the tributary streams Jablok and Arnon. This part of the country had formerly belonged to the Moabites, but the Amorites had taken it from them (chap. xxi. 26), hence it is spoken of as if it formed part of the land of Moab (as in chap. xxii. 1), although the actual limit of the country occupied by that people at the time was far to the south. The Israelites were not troubling the Moabites, but Balak, the king of the last mentioned, did not at all desire the proximity of such a powerful force, and he sent for Balaam to pronounce a curse upon the invaders. Balaam came, and after several unsuccessful attempts to obey his employer's behest—the curse in his mouth being always turned into a blessing—the episode which forms the subject of our present lesson occurred.

The following division of the lesson will probably be found convenient: (1) *An Angry King*, (2) *A Reluctant Truth-teller*, (3) *A Bright but Distant Vision*.

I. AN ANGRY KING.—Vers. 10-11. And was there not a cause? Balak had employed Balaam at a high price to curse Israel, and Balaam had not only failed to do so, but he had blessed Israel. Was not this a glaring breach of contract? Yes, the king of Moab had reason to be angry with the eastern soothsayer, but he had still greater reason to be angry with himself. When he found that he could not get a person to execute his project, its gross wickedness ought to have flashed in upon his mind and caused him to hang his head in shame.

Smote his hands together. This might have been in accordance with a mode common to all ages and countries, of expressing indignation or other strong feelings, or it might have been the usual eastern signal by which attendants are called. Perhaps Balak hastily resolved to order Balaam's head to be cut off, and then changed his mind. Some colour is given to this view by the fact that we afterwards find him telling the culprit to flee.

I called thee to curse mine enemies. It was a common notion among the heathen of that day that such persons as Balaam could, by means of sacrifices, call in the aid of supernatural powers to accomplish any required end. No doubt they regarded those sacrifices offered by God's own people as on a level with the incantations of the magicians.

And, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. He had declared them blessed, and foretold their prosperity. The king, thinking in his ignorant superstition that locality had something to do with the matter, had taken Balaam to three different points, probably following the Israelites in their advance towards the Jordan, but the result was unchanged.

Therefore, now flee thou to thy place—like a criminal running away from justice—like a person relinquishing a post for which he is totally unqualified, and returning to a position ("thy place") in which he will be more "in harmony with his environment"—like a strange dog that has got in somebody's way and is roughly ordered to "go home."

Lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour. The usual infidel sneer. Balak does not appear to have understood or believed that Balaam's obedience to Jehovah was a forced obedience. "How those men," says H. Clay Trumbull, "who are wise in their own conceit, and who think more of the things of this life than of those of eternity, do pity the poor creatures who have none but God to take care of them, and who fail to sell out everything that is worth living for, when they might have got hard cash in return for it all. Why, there are modern Balaks who really think it would have been better for a man to have made a million of dollars in stocks or trade, by 'giving himself up to business,' than to have lived on from hand to mouth, winning the love of his home, dear ones, and of needy neighbours, by untiring service in their behalf through his utter devotion to Christ and Christ's loved ones. There are those who think it very foolish for a man to scruple at 'the ordinary methods in politics' or the prudent and common subservience to men of place and power, when by so slight a surrender of principle or of personal independence he could have . . . had anything he would ask for from the 'boss of the ring.' They see that the trouble with these poor fellows is that they will do as the Lord directs; but they pity them all the more for that. They shake their heads sadly and say with unmistakable regret: 'We thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour.' These descendants of Balak are in every community."

II. A RELUCTANT TRUTH-TELLER.—Vers. 12-14. Balaam had come from the banks of the Euphrates, where Abraham had passed the day of his youth, where Shem had lived for five centuries, and where there still remained some corrupted knowledge of the name and worship of the true God in the midst of prevailing idolatry. He is not called a

prophet in the Old Testament, but a "soothsayer" or "diviner." He was credited with the power of cursing and blessing; and the questions whether he actually possessed such power or not, and if he did what was the source of it, have given rise to much discussion; but whatever power he may have been possessed of previous to his appearance in sacred history, it is plain that in pronouncing blessings upon Israel he was divinely inspired—employed by God, much against his own will, to give utterance to truthful predictions.

From the biography of this bold, bad man, Dr. C. S. Robinson draws the following lessons:

(1) God keeps the steady hand of His control over even those who sometimes think themselves quite safely outside of His jurisdiction.

(2) It is possible that even a bad man shall do God's will, and serve Him in high historic crises.

(3) Mere natural endowments or spiritual gifts are quite insufficient for practical good, when the heart of the possessor is not right in God's sight.

(4) An otherwise attractive character is sometimes ruined by one vitiating element.

(5) Principle, and not feeling alone, is the basis of all true religious character.

(6) See the sadness of a lost chance for a soul; a wasted opportunity for repentance; a crisis of existence with a hope for eternity in it neglected, and the despairing, chilling, and

(7) It is quite useless to hope that a death-bed repentance and a salutary end will render the darkness of an undevout life satisfactory and safe.

III. A BRIGHT BUT DISTANT VISION.—Vers. 15-19. Balaam's prophetic words foretell the conquest of the surrounding nations by the Israelites, but they do not stop there; they reach forward into what was at that time the far-distant future—even to Gospel times, and perhaps to the last judgment.

I shall see Him, but not now. Abraham saw the day of Christ from afar, and was glad; Balaam saw it also, but it brought no joy to him. To the faithful patriarch, although the day was distant, the Saviour was near; but that was not the case with the unbelieving prophet.

I shall behold Him, but not nigh. "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. i. 7). Balaam, in his first prophetic utterance regarding Israel, had said: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his (chap. xxiii. 10); and the words have often been quoted by thoughtless people as the expression of a most pious sentiment; but they only express a vain wish, for the speaker evidently excludes himself from the class that he calls "the righteous," although he would like to share their lot in the end. The way to die the death of the righteous is to become one of them, and live their life. Somebody says that "good words are worth much." So they are, in the ordinary intercourse of life, although even there they are greatly improved by a backing of good deeds; but as an index of character, fair speeches, without a correspondingly pious life, are utterly valueless. Notwithstanding the beautiful language that came from the lips of Balaam, and the brilliant vision that his eyes for a few moments gazed upon, he is reckoned in God's Word among those who are described as "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2 Pet. ii. 15-17); and these words, "not nigh," so near the end of his last prophecy, sound sad—sad as the despairing wail of a lost soul.

OPPORTUNITY is rare, and wise men will never let it go by heedlessly.—Bayard Taylor.

DON'T judge a man by the clothes he wears; for God made one, and the tailor the other.

MR. GEORGE LAWRENCE, who has laboured so usefully in Spain, has prepared and printed in that country a Family Reference Bible in Spanish, printed in large, clear type, economical and portable.

OUR S. S. PAPERS.

SABBATH SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN.

Beautifully illustrated. Published every month. In the SABBATH SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN prominence is given to our own Home and Foreign Mission Work, thus seeking in early life to interest the "Children of the Church" in the Church's great work—the conversion of the world. Subscription rates as follows.

4 Copies.....	\$1 00 per annum.
10 "	2 00 "
20 "	3 00 "
30 "	4 25 "
40 "	5 50 "
50 "	6 50 "

For 100 copies and upwards, at the rate of \$12 per 100, or 12c. per copy per annum.

GOLDEN HOURS FOR THE YOUNG.

A non-denominational illustrated paper, also published monthly; rates same as above.

EARLY DAYS: Illustrated.

A paper for Junior and Infant Classes, two numbers issued each month; rates also as above.

The attention of Superintendents and Teachers throughout the country is directed to the above. Orders for the coming year now received. Address

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON,
5 Jordan Street, Toronto.

NOTE.—Do you take THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, containing the Exposition of the Sabbath School Lesson for teachers? Subscription price \$2 per annum, or in clubs of 10 and over \$1.65, or in clubs of 20 and over \$1.30 each.

Remember that a Teacher sending in 10 names with the remittance for this paper, can obtain 20 copies of any of the Sabbath school papers for the year as a premium, which he can then furnish to the school; or a person sending 20 names with the remittance can have 30 of the Sabbath school papers, free for the year.