

29. Salute him not. The commentators compare Luke 10: 4, very pertinently. It is not that the saluting would occupy any appreciable time, but salutation is the forerunner of conversation, and one bent on speed should avoid every temptation to loiter.

31. The child is not awaked. Some commentators conclude from this expression that the child was not actually dead.

33. And prayed. Prayer was the only remedy in such a case as this, Elisha knew; prayer like that of Elijah, the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man," which "availeth much."

34. And lay upon the child. Prayer does not exclude the use of other means. Elisha may have been divinely directed as to those which he should employ, or he may have consciously imitated the act of Elijah (1 Kings 17: 21,) only prolonging it, because it had no immediate effect. It is clear that he did not work the miracle with the same rapidity or with the same ease (so to speak) with which Elijah wrought his parallel one.

35. The child sneezed seven times. . . . and opened his eyes. These were the first acts of restored respiration, and they are ascribed as successive steps. Headache was the beginning of his illness, and this is wont to be relieved by sneezing.

LESSON III. APRIL 15, 1877.

NAAMAN THE LEPER. 2 Kings 5: 1-14.

1. The proud general. Naaman (pleasantness). - Captain. Commander-in-chief; a post needing great physical endurance as well as courage.

Had brought away captive. . . . a little maid. We are now introduced to the second personage mentioned in the story of Syrian the leper. She is as obscure as the first is exalted.

3. She said unto her mistress. This brave little maid had faith that the prophet of her God and of her native land could recover her master from his foul malady.

5. A letter. Naaman, on communicating the matter to his royal master, was immediately furnished with a letter to the king of Israel, and set out to Samaria, carrying with him, as an indispensable preliminary in the East, very costly presents.

7. When the king of Israel had read the letter, he rent his clothes. According to an ancient practice among the Eastern people, the main object only was stated in the letter that was carried by the party concerned, while other circumstances were left to be explained at the interview. This explains Jehoram's burst of emotions,—not horror at supposed blasphemy, but alarm and suspicion that this was

merely made an occasion for a quarrel.

9. With his horses, his chariot. This simple stroke of the pencil paints quite a striking and significant picture. Naaman, you see, travels in great state. Though he was a miserable leper, with whom the meanest of the people would have disdained to change places, he surrounded himself with all the appendages of wealth and rank.

10. Go wash in Jordan. Travelling with Oriental pomp, with his chariot and horses, attended by a princely retinue of servants, Naaman doubtless expected to make a decided impression upon the humble man of God. He would have him know that it is no ordinary person who visits and consults him. It is the great general of the Syrian army, the favorite of the sovereign, a rich and distinguished personage, who solicits the prophet's aid.

11. He will surely come out to me. In the East a code of unwritten law prescribes exactly how visits are to be paid, and how visitors are to be received, according to the worldly rank of the parties. No doubt according to such a code, Elisha should have gone out to meet Naaman at the door of his house.

12. Abana and Pharpar; or "Amana and Pharpar," according to another reading. It is generally agreed that the Abana must be the Barada, or true river of Damascus, which, rising in the Anti-Libanus, flows westward from its foot and forms the oasis within which Damascus is placed. There is no reasonable doubt of the identification, notwithstanding the complete difference of name. With respect to the Pharpar, there is great difficulty in deciding. Various secondary streams water the Damascus plain, but none stands out pre-eminently from the rest as a "river of Damascus." Of the whole, the Awaj has perhaps, the best claim to be viewed as the second river, and pending further investigation, may be accepted as most probably the Pharpar.

13. And his servants came near, etc. It was a happy thing for Naaman that he had such good advisers. It does not always fall to the lot of great men to be thus guided. Naaman listened to the counsel of his attendants. His own good sense confirmed it. He followed the direction of Elisha. With a simple faith giving up all his preconceived notions, humbly submitting himself to the guidance of the prophet, he went and bathed in the Jordan. Seven times he repeated his ablutions, and at last the plague spot vanished from his body, the ulcers were healed, and his diseased flesh made fair and sound as that of a child. He came very near the loss of his cure. Had he been left to follow his own impulse and the promptings of his own proud heart, he would have died a miserable death.