returned, etc. This description sets forth the constant remembrance of the villagers that she was a foreigner, and their admiration of her fidelity to Naomi. *Came to Bethlehem in .. barley harvest ;* that is, in April. In the remainder of this charming story, it is told how Ruth went to glean in the fields of the rich Bethlehemite, Boaz, who was attracted to her and made her his wife. Their son was Obed, the grandfather of David (ch. 4 : 13-17), and thus Ruth had a place amongst the ancestors of Jesus.

Light from the East

"My God, Thy God"—In those days every tribe or people had its own god (or gods). Just as the Hebrews acknowledged one Master, Jehovah, so the Moabites knew but one ; they called him Chemosh. Israel was Jehovah's people ; so Moab was Chemosh's people, and the Moabites were his sons and daughters, Numbers 21 : 29. A king of Moab, Mesha, mentioned in 2 Kgs. 3 : 4, erected a great flat stone with a long inscription commemorating the deliverance which Chemosh had wrought for his people (compare the "book of the wars of the Lord," Num. 21 : 14). It appears from the Old Testament that human sacrifices were offered to Chemosh on occasions of great national emergency ; the king of Moab once shut up in his city, and unable to cut his way out, offered his eldest son upon the wall. The effect was apparently extraordinary ; Chemosh's fury burst upon Israel, and Israel had to flee discomfited, 2 Kgs. 3 : 27. Jeremiah speaks of priests of Chemosh (ch. 48 : 7) ; and Mesha (in the inscription) uses the phrase, "Chemosh said to me," which suggests a prophetic oracle, and perhaps prophets. The religion of the Moabites may well have been not unlike that of Israel.

THE LESSON APPLIED

The story of this book is set "in the days when the judges ruled." It was a wartime period of history. But in this story of Ruth, which is placed immediately after the Book of Judges, we pass from the noisy conflict of camps and battlefields, into the quiet of domestic scenes. Instead of a chronicle of wars, we see obscure lives passing through cycles of sorrow and change. Homemaking was going on, and that is always real history. For years the newspapers have been full of descriptions of wars and leaders and great public events, but these are not the things that are nearest to actual life : it is the funerals and marriages, the homemaking and grandchildren, these all over the land are the matters of deepest interest, though they receive scant notice in the public press. Whatever the crisis in the nation, individual interest centres in home life.

The Group of Three, vs. 14, 15. Ties of friendship may become stronger than the bond of blood. The example of Ruth's devotion to Naomi shows a Moabitish woman willing to leave her kindred for her friend. There was no blood relationship between them, for Ruth was only a daughter-in-law to Naomi. Orpah was fond of Naomi, no doubt, but not to the extent of making any sacrifice. She would meet the requirements of good form, but nothing more. She accompanied the traveler a respectable distance, wept and kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but returned. "Ruth clave unto her." Ruth would not desert Naomi, even though they were only related by marriage.

It is a difficult relationship, that of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and when the son and husband dies the bond of union no longer exists. Every language spoken has its stock of cruel proverbs, satires and lampoons at the expense of the mother-in-law. It is the stock-in-trade of the jokesmith. Ruth and Naomi go far to redeem the relationship from obloquy. Their quality of character overcame any difficulty of relationship. Their friendship was not official, but personal. A unity of spirit may be stronger than a family kinship. Many have found more real brotherhood in Christian fellowship than in family associations. Christ trusted more to unity of spirit than to kinship of blood. Whosoever does his will, the same is his brother.

An Example of Fidelity, vs. 16, 17. The words in which Ruth expressed her devotion