

## Our Story.

## BARBARA STREET.

A FAMILY STORY OF TO-DAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "OUR NELL," "A SAILOR'S DAUGHTER," ETC.

## CHAPTER IV. (Continued).

So giving orders for the jacket to be put on one side to await further instructions, he set out for Lowerbury, and having seen many interesting sights by the way, and enjoying the exercise in the morning air as only young blood can do, he at last found himself entering Barbara Street. What a dingy place it was for that bright girl to live in, he remarked to himself, with something like indignation on her behalf. It was of the worst London type of street. No little slips of garden in front of the houses, no, not one tree broke the monotonous yellow-brick ugliness. Little suburban urchins trundling their hoops on the pavements, slatternly servants scrubbing their doorsteps, the butcher-boys crying "Meat" down the street; this was the outlook Barbara Street afforded. "It was a positively loathsome haunt," said Waterhouse to himself. What was it at that moment that made him, as he came in sight of No. 47, stop dead on the pavement where he stood? He was struck with so altogether novel and titillating an idea that he chuckled audibly. But it required a moment's consideration. That moment given, he walked boldly up to the door and knocked. Now this quite unforeseen proceeding was occasioned by the reading of the familiar legend, "Apartments," in the window, as he supposed, of the house in question. Had he taken a more careful survey of the surroundings, he would have discovered that that window was on the wrong side of the door of No. 47, and therefore must belong to the next house. His confidence, after his resounding rap-a-tap-tap, would not in that case have remained so serene.

Inside the house there was some scuffling to be heard. Visitors were never expected in that house, and in the morning such a thing was unheard of. Still, one of the family was always kept ready to present herself, innocent of aprons and working gowns, for Sarah was never allowed to attend the front door until some far-removed section of the day, when she was "cleaned." Her appearance was not to be depended on at any earlier period. This morning the victim thus immolated on the altar of the proprieties chanced to be Grace. She opened the door to—amazement! The stranger was confused, as he well might be, seeing that it was plainly evidenced in Grace's stiff little greeting and unsmiling face that she considered he had taken a liberty. But he had his refuge.

"I hope you took no harm yesterday," he began; "but the fact is, that was not what I called about. I see that you have rooms to let, and I thought they would suit me."

No gleam of fun sparkled from Grace's serious orbs, though under considerable provocation, as she replied:

"Oh, no, you have mistaken the house. You must apply next door. They do let rooms at No. 45. And I took no harm at all, thanks to your kindness."

Waterhouse, seeing no opening for further speech, raised his hat and turned to depart, feeling rather small. But he was suddenly recalled.

"Will you kindly wait a minute?" said Grace, in a changed and eager tone. "Come in, if you please."

Waterhouse now found himself inside the house, from which he had just felt himself finally shut out. He was ushered to an up-stairs drawing-room, and requested to sit down, and then Grace disappeared, saying that she would fetch her mother. Waterhouse, left alone, found himself considerably amused, but also rather disgusted, with the change he found in Grace, who was certainly no longer the friendly, pleasant creature she had appeared the day before. But if the change was due to what she might have considered his impertinence in calling, it would soon pass away. He examined his surroundings, and discovered that he could make himself quite comfortable if that was to be his room. It was a fair size, and that was the important point, and, in addition, there was no superfluity of nick-nacks scattered about which a man could knock over and break on occasion. Happily, his necessities had not been developed as far as daddos and tones of colour. There was also plenty of light, the room having two long windows, which were comfortably draped with red curtains, the darts in which escaped Waterhouse's masculine observation. He walked up to one of the windows and looked out into the street, which he had previously, and only a few minutes ago, stigmatised as a "loathsome haunt."

Seen with a foreground of red curtain and glossy evergreens, which stood in pots on the window-sill, he imagined that it did not look so bad—the reality being that he was no longer looking at it neutrally, as an isolated object for observation. It had already become part of that scenery which is woven with our personal action, and takes its colour from it. Barbara Street was now merely a frame for that pleasant picture of domestic comfort in which he already conceived himself figuring.

In the meantime Grace, having found her mother, had drawn her into an unoccupied room, and shut the door.

"Now, mother," she said, upon that, "our lodger is come."

"Our lodger! What do you mean, child?"

"I mean that I have got our lodger up-stairs in the drawing-room, hard and fast, with the door shut on him."

"Really, Grace, what a delight you take in mystifying me!"

"There is no mystification in it. You know you admitted only last week that if we could hear of somebody without publishing our shame on the house-tops, it would be an admirable thing to let our drawing-room floor. Well, a gentleman has rushed into our very arms, decoyed by the people next door, and I have secured him."

"A gentleman! No, Grace, that I could never consent to. I said if we could meet with a lady, through friends—"

"My dearest mother, my gentleman would bear off the palm from your lady at a thousand points. He will be much less trouble—that is always understood—and will probably dine in town. And we can keep him at a distance, and he won't be always poking his nose into our concerns, as lady lodgers do. Then he has plenty of money, and will pay well, and you know how badly we want a carpet; and, only think! you could take Kitty to the seaside in the summer, and she does look so thin and pale."

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Grace did not see signs of wavering to the extent she wished in her mother's face, so she altered her tone to one more serious, and almost reproachful. She looked at her mother gravely, and said:

"You owe this to us, mother."

The tone of the words had a great effect upon Mrs. Norris. She began to look distressed and painfully uncertain.

"We have no one to disgrace or to annoy," continued Grace, pursuing her advantage, "and all I ask is that you will let us try it."

"But how will you manage the work, my dear?"

"Leave that to me," said Grace; and, tucking her mother's hand under her arm, she said:

"Come up-stairs, and make the bargain with him, dear."

She added, just as they reached the drawing-room door, in a very matter-of-course tone:

"It is the same gentleman who brought me home yesterday."

Mrs. Norris was startled, and would have drawn back, to review the position in the new light thus cast upon it; but her artful daughter, almost as she spoke, opened wide the drawing-room door, and thus cut off retreat.

Waterhouse rose, and bowed. His landlady-to-be was certainly a very dignified-looking person; but so much the better—he would like the whole family to be admirable.

With a grave bend of the head Mrs. Norris said:

"Pray be seated."

She also sat, and Grace, too, near her; the latter with an anxious little frown in her forehead.

Mrs. Norris, however, looked quite placid and calm, and began in a tone which showed her to be mistress of the situation. To betray any vacillation of agitation in the presence of the stranger would be to compromise her dignity, and that was an experience quite foreign to her.

"I have not been in the habit of letting rooms," said she, "but I should not be unwilling to do so. I suppose you would have no objection to the exchange of references?"

"Certainly not. Here is my card, and I will write the address of my bankers on the back."

"This is the sitting-room you would occupy, and the bedroom is at the back. There is another small room on the same floor which you could use in any way you please."

Waterhouse bowed.

"As to terms—should you dine at home?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so," said Waterhouse, puzzled.

"I don't quite know where else I could dine; but," he added, hastily, fancying he observed a slight cloud pass over the lady's face, "I should be often out. I belong to a club, and I have a good many acquaintances in London."

Waterhouse did not perceive that he had entirely dissipated the cloud by this speech. Mrs. Norris, in whose mind observations of his manner and appearance in combination with these latter remarks caused considerable misgiving, now said:

"I fear you are accustomed to better attendance and a different kind of establishment from ours, and I really think it will be wiser for me to say at once that I do not think you would be comfortable here."

Waterhouse laughed good-humouredly.

"I can assure you you are quite mistaken. I have been used to all kinds of establishments, down to a bullock wagon and a Kaffir hut, and I am not sure that I don't prefer cooking my own food and roughing it generally to what's ordinarily considered more comfortable. However, I don't compare this room to a Kaffir hut. What's the matter with it? It seems to me very comfortable."

Waterhouse, who had hardly dared to steal more than a glance at Grace, with the seal-skin jacket on his conscience, and her very chilling demureness before his eyes, now caught a glimpse of fun in her eyes which considerably encouraged him. But it was Mrs. Norris who spoke.

"I was not so much afraid that the rooms would not suit you, but that our one servant would not be able to give you the necessary attendance."

Here Grace, unable longer to restrain herself, interposed, with a gravely judicial air:

"But, mother, if Mr. Waterhouse thinks otherwise, a trial might at any rate be made."

She longed to throw in the weight of a reassuring nod to her mother, but that was impossible. The slightest little gesture with her eyelids was the utmost sign permissible. Even that fine demonstration was not, had she known it, lost upon the stranger, who mentally recorded the fact that Grace had stepped in on his behalf.

"Certainly I think so," he said, with a bow toward Grace.

"As to terms, then," said Mrs. Norris, who had been going through a rapid calculation and comparison with her neighbours; "I think perhaps a guinea a week."

"That I am convinced would be too low; I should not think of taking the rooms under two," said Waterhouse, energetically, who had mentally resolved to pay double whatever sum Mrs. Norris should mention.

Again Grace's self-control did not prevent an exhibition of feeling. She blushed. It was a startling idea, that of receiving two guineas weekly, into the household exchequer. Obviously, however, the generous arrangement could not be accepted without demur. Mrs. Norris said that two guineas was too large a sum. Mr. Waterhouse upon that went into a sort of good-humoured rage.

"Upon my honour," he said, "the rooms will be worth that to me, and it would be unfair to pay less. I shall give a great deal of trouble—not a doubt of it."

There was now nothing left to do but to fix the date of taking possession, and to show the stranger out. After which, Grace flew about the house as on wings, and gave vent to her feelings in many a quip and crank and wreathed smile.

(To be continued.)

## DOGS AND TEMPERANCE.

ONE bitter cold day last winter the policeman walking up and down Fairmount Park saw a faithful dog sitting beside a sack of flour. His drunken master had left him to guard it, and then had gone away to forget all about it. Pitying the poor fellow they tried to call him off to a more sheltered place, but he would not move, nor would he suffer anyone to touch the bag. Hour after hour passed by, and the shivering, faithful watcher was nearly frozen at his post, yet he would not desert. Finally his head dropped, and it was plain that he had become insensible; so humane hearts had him quickly taken into the guard-house, while willing hands helped to restore him again to life. If they could have given him a better master it would have been a double charity. If that dog could vote, do you think it would be on the side of prohibition?

## SUNDAY EVENING WITH THE CHILDREN.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."—St. Jude.

LAST Sunday we were thinking about the love of God and of how God loves us, whether our conduct gives Him pleasure or pain. He loves us always, and always with the same real, deep love; and now I want you to think about the great practical good it will do you to believe this.

First, then, it will set the heart right, and meet its greatest want, and that is the main thing. While we don't believe that God cares for us, we don't care for God; but when the fact of His care, His love, His deep, warm, full love to us lays hold of our hearts, then we must care; we cannot find it in our hearts not to care—no, long to please Him.

Yet the heart does not continue always in the same mood. Longing to please God changes at times into that wretched feeling, "It's no use." Tens of thousands of sincere hearts at times feel this, and despair. They want to be good; they try to be good, but they fail. Nobody sees their desire; everybody sees their failure. Many things help to bring this feeling on, and few things more than the harshness and injustice with which they are judged.

Even good and loving friends, often with best intentions, speak unadvisedly with their lips. Their own hearts, too, turn enemies and unjustly condemn them. "It's no use," they cry in bitterness and tears, and they "give it up." This becoming better is always hard work, and at times it seems to be so useless to try that we give up even trying; but the useless becomes useful, the hard less hard, when we add God to the number of lookers-on—when we think of God in His grand loveliness as the chief among all whom we would please; He is so considerate and patient, so slow to anger, so plenteous in mercy. He has no rough-and-ready way of measuring us, no ignorance, no hardness. He is sure to be justly merciful. Yes, my dear children, in a hard world like this, and with hard hearts like ours, we shall give up trying to be better and shall grow worse unless we can look up and be true to the great and good God. Without God, even the truest souls are without hope. In the weak moments of the heart it is He who keeps us from falling.

Now let me tell you a story which will help you still better to understand what the love of God does for us. I have read tales of certain farmers who, having their flocks among mountains, are called sometimes to rescue one of their sheep from danger. The sheep has somehow managed to climb from point to point up the rocks, and to wander away upon the high ledges which run along the jagged face of a deep precipice, and it has wandered on and on upon its dangerous way till the narrow rocky path has become much too narrow for it to turn round; indeed, if it moves at all it will fall, to be dashed to pieces hundreds of feet below, and there it stands and bleats. Hearing the bleating of its distress, and looking up, the farmer sees, high above his head, almost out of sight, the endangered and helpless wanderer. The rescue is a most difficult and perilous task, and this is the way in which it is managed. A few strong men, going round by the back of the hill by a way they know, ascend to the very top of the precipice, taking with them a long, strong rope, and from there they let it down to the level below, where a man who is going to do the work of deliverance is waiting; then tying himself firmly to this rope, he shouts, "All right." At this signal the men begin gently to draw the cord, and the climber begins his climb; and as he climbs the rope continues to be drawn up, and is thus kept always tight; and so, the men above draw, and the man below climbs. Now and again he is in great danger. Then he cries out, "Hold!" Then the fingers of the men above clasp with firmer grip around the rope; for they know that the climber is at a point where his foot is in great danger of slipping, and the height he must have reached is terrible, and his head may turn giddy as he looks down into the sheer depth below his feet. A slip now might end in his fall and death. Cautiously he moves on, passing the dangerous point quite safely; for strong arms and strong hearts hold him from above. Many times he is in danger, and many times he shouts "Hold!" then "Pull!" then again "Hold!" and the men above hear and answer him, and so he climbs up and up the high rocks, and along the narrow ledges, and he is helped to rise and kept from falling. At length he reaches his desire; the sheep is secured, and he returns as he came, all the while kept from falling by the sympathy and care of the men at the rope above.

Now, trying to be better, my child, is just like such climbing; it is fairly called rising to a higher life because it is getting nearer Heaven, and because it is attended with all the hardships, difficulties, and dangers of a climb. But it is like that climb in this, above all, it is helped from above; the love of the good and compassionate God is like that cord. Tied about the heart, it helps us to climb; loneliness and its burden are gone; it keeps us from falling. This is what I want you to do—bind about your heart a belief in the living care and love of God, then set about the climb. And when you feel in danger, when flesh and heart fail, cry, "Hold—hold—Thou me up." The cry of loving trust rises to the Father, and, like strong arms, His ready love will help and comfort you.

Jesus, when a young child, bound that cord about His heart, and never let it go; and so He carried His wish to please God on from childhood into youth and manhood; all difficulties, He completely conquered; all dangers, He passed unharmed; and so, as he grew in stature, He grew in goodness and in gladness, till at length His climb was done, and He rested with God.—Rev. E. Waugh.

## NOT AFRAID TO DIE.

ALMOST the only printed matter found in the far North when the relics of Sir John Franklin's expedition were discovered in that icy region, was a leaf from Todd's *Student's Manual*, with this dialogue on it:

"Are you afraid to die?"

"No."

"Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?"

"Because God has said, 'Fear not; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.'"

The poor victim perhaps treasured the page, read and re-read it, and gazed on it until the mists of death crept over him. He was not found; but the page told those who were searching how one, at least, of those brave seamen had died.—*The Presbyterian Journal*.

## Sabbath School Work.

## LESSON HELPS.

## THE SECOND TEMPLE.

Lesson VIII., Feb. 21, Ezra 1, 1-4; iii., 8-13 memorize verses 2-4.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"They praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid."—Ezra iii., 11.

**DATES.**—The Jews returned from exile B.C. 539. The second temple was begun May, 534, and completed after 19 years; in March, 515.

**PLACE.**—Babylon and Jerusalem.

**RULERS.**—Cyrus, King of the Persian Empire, 558-529. He began as sole ruler of Babylon in 539.

**PROPHETS.**—Haggai, an old man, and Zechariah, a young man, prophesied, 521-518, in aid of the rebuilding of the temple.

**PSALMS.**—Ps. lxxv, lxxxv, cvii., and cxxxvi. belong to this period. The Psalms of Jegeres (Ps. cxxxv-cxxxix) some regard as sung as the workmen went up daily to build the temple. Ps. xlviii., lxxxi., cxxxviii., cxlvi.-cl. are supposed to have been sung at the dedication of the temple.

**EZRA.**—A Jewish scribe who lived in Babylon, and came to Jerusalem for a time about 80 years after the return.

**BOOK OF EZRA.**—(1) It is a continuation of Chronicles. (2) The first part was compiled by Ezra, the latter written by him.

**THE CAPTIVITY.**—It began in 604, B.C., and lasted 70 years. It was caused by the idolatry of the people. Their trials in captivity rooted out idolatry forever from the Jews; as soon as this was settled, they were allowed to return. It produced a selected stock with which to begin anew, for (1) the best of the people were made captives, and (2) of these and their descendants the most religious and heroic would return. The captivity led to new study of the Scripture, and better education in religion, and deeper spirituality.

**HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.**—1. *Jeremiah* fulfilled; Jer. xxv., 12; xxxix., 10. *The Lord stirred up Cyrus*; probably through Daniel, who may have showed him the prophecies of Isaiah xlv., 76-78; xlv., 1-4. 2. *Changed me*; see Isa. xlv., etc. 4. *Whoever remained*; the heathen population were to aid the return. *Freewill offering*; the vessels of the temple which Cyrus gave (Ezra i., 7-11).

**THE RETURN.**—About 50,000 people returned (see Ezra ii., 1, 64, 65) with 8,136 beasts of burden. They took with them 5,400 gold and silver vessels of the temple (i., 7-11). Their leader was Zerubbabel of David's royal line. Their journey would require more than four months (vii., 9). On their arrival they made a great offering of 61,000 gold darics—\$275,000, and 5,000 minas of silver—\$135,000.

8. *Second month*; May. 10. *Trumpets*; for calling assemblies, like our church-bells. 11. *By course*; responsively. 12. *Went*; because there was little hope of making as beautiful a temple as the former one. The temple was not completed for 19 years (vi., 15).

**SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.**—The captivity, its cause and length.—Its effect on the people.—The prophecy of Jeremiah (xxv., 12; xxxix., 10).—The prophecy of Isaiah (xlv., 26-28; xlv., 1-4). Cyrus.—The proclamation.—The numbers who returned.—The gift of Cyrus (i., 7-11).—The journey from Babylon to Jerusalem.—The rebuilding of the temple.—The delays and hindrances.

LEARN BY HEART.—Ps. cxvii. or Ps. cxxx.

## QUESTIONS.

**INTRODUCTORY.**—In what country did the events of our last lesson take place? What people were captives here? Who was now King of Babylon? Who was Ezra? What can you tell about the Book of Ezra?

**SUBJECT: A GREAT REVIVAL OF RELIGION.**

I. **THE CAPTIVITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE.**—When were the children of Israel carried captive to Babylon? Why did God allow this evil to come upon them? (2 Chron. xxxvi., 14-20.) What was the effect of this affliction on the people? How long did the captivity last? (2 Chron. xxxvi., 20, 21.)

Show how three things would aid in making the new kingdom better than the old: (1) their love of idolatry taken away; (2) the selection of those carried captive (2 Kings xxiv., 14, 16); (3) the kind of persons who would be most likely to return.

When may a church be said to be in captivity? Why does God allow such trials and afflictions to come upon His people? How do these purify the church?

II. **GOD MOVING ON THE HEARTS OF MEN** (vs. 1-3).—Who was Cyrus? What had been foretold of him? (Isa. xlv., 26-28; xlv., 1-4.) Was Daniel alive at this time? (Dan. x., 1.) May he have showed these prophecies to Cyrus? What had Jeremiah foretold? (Jer. xxv., 12; xxxix., 10.) Had God been moving upon the hearts of the people? What proclamation did Cyrus make? Who were to help those who would go? What was Cyrus' freewill offering? (i., 7-11.)

Does God still move on the hearts of men to lead to a better life? Are worldly men led to give aid to the Gospel (as scientific and literary men, etc.)?

III. **THE RETURN TO THE PROMISED LAND.**—How many persons returned to Judea? (Ezra ii., 64, 65.) How many beasts of burden did they take? (Ezra ii., 66, 67.) What treasures did they carry? (Ezra i., 7-11.) How long was the journey? (Ezra vii., 9.)

IV. **REBUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD** (vs. 8-13).—What offering was made soon after their arrival? (ii., 69.) When did they begin to rebuild the temple? What was their first work? (iii., 2-5.)

What were the ceremonies of laying the foundation? Why did the old men weep? Why did the younger rejoice? Were both right? What glory did the old have that the new lacked? What greatest glory came to the new? (Hag. ii., 7-9.) How long was it before the temple was finished? (vi., 15.) What two prophets gave great aid?

May there be taken the same two views of all changes in God's kingdom? Will God let permanent evil come upon His Church? Why is so much made of the service of song (i., 65; iii., 10, 11). What are we taught in this lesson about the necessary conditions, and the means of revival?

PELOUSEY.

The attention of Ministers, Sabbath School Superintendents, Teachers, and all engaged in S. S. work, is directed to the fact that the following is another volume of the General Assembly's S. S. Committee respecting Registers and Records.