

for her sake cast off his own wife, the daughter of Aretas. This crime involved him in a disastrous war with Aretas, as well as in the murder of John the Baptist. 3. Sin never walks singly, but is quickly followed by other sins.

**18, 19. John had said.** The prophet who had rebuked the sins of the people did not spare those of the king. **Unto Herod.** The rebuke was given directly to Herod, and was not a denunciation of him while absent. **It is not lawful.** Because both Herod Antipas had a wife and Herodias a husband living, and because they were within a degree of relationship in which the law of Moses forbade marriage.

**Herodias had a quarrel.** "Set herself," [Rev. Ver.] or cherished a settled hatred. **Would have killed him.** The original is stronger, and indicates a settled determination to kill John. 4. See the settled antagonism between good and evil character.

**20. Herod feared John.** The king, with an army at his back, afraid of one skin-clad man, whom he held in his own jail! 5. A man of base nature cannot help looking up to the character nobler than his own. **Just... holy** Just in dealing with men, holy in his relation to God. **Observed him.** Rather, as in the Rev. Ver., "kept him safe," that is, from Herodias. **When he heard him.** Herod had many opportunities to meet John, for his headquarters were at Machærus during a war with Aretas, the ruler of Arabia. **Did many things.** The Rev. Ver. has "was much perplexed," between the calls of his conscience and the influence of his guilty companion.

**21, 22, 23. A convenient day.** A day fitted for the purpose of Herodias to accomplish John's death. **Herod... made a feast.** Perhaps at Machærus, within the walls where John was a prisoner. If at Herod's capital, Tiberias, several days must have elapsed between the events here narrated. **Lords.** The nobles of his little realm. **High captains.** The officers in his army. **Chief estates.** Prominent and influential men. **Daughter of... Herodias.** The child of her former husband, Philip, named Salome. **Came in and danced.** The dances at such banquets were performed by women only, and were of a very indecent character. The fact that on this occasion a princess was willing to dishonour her rank made her actions all the more fascinating to the drunken nobles and the debauched king. **Them that sat.** The words indicate that they were reclining, according to custom, around the tables. **He swore unto her.** Probably the wild dancer exacted an oath as an additional sanction to the royal promise. **Unto the half.** 6. How much will a sinner barter away for a moment's pleasure. 7. There are many who give not only half but all they possess for the pleasures of sin.

**24, 25. Said unto her mother.** 8. How great the influence of a mother for good or evil! **The head of John.** The half of a kingdom was not worth so much to a wicked woman as the gratification of her own hate and revenge. **Straightway with haste.** Lest the king's ardour might cool and his vow be with-

drawn. **By-and-by.** An expression which once meant "immediately," but does not now represent the meaning of the original, which the Rev. Ver. rightly gives as "forthwith." **In a charger.** A large plate, or platter. Not satisfied to have her enemy slain, she must receive the bloody head into her own hands.

**26, 27. Exceeding sorry.** Regret, chagrin, anger, and alarm were all mingled in the king's feelings. **For his oath's sake.** A perverted conscience, showing more regard to his own word than to an innocent man's life. **Their sakes.** A king, yet afraid of the mocking jests of those who sat around his own table! 9. It is better to follow conscience than popular opinion. **An executioner.** "A soldier of his guard." [Rev. Ver.] **Beheaded him.** He whom Jesus had called a greater than the prophets, and the noblest man of earth, was thus slain in early manhood to gratify the whim of a dancing girl! Yet his life, like every true life, was not wrought in vain!

**28, 29. The damsel.** Salome's part in this transaction reveals as to her character: (1) Early depravity of morals; (2) Insensibility; cold and unfeeling; (3) Weakness, if not wickedness: thoroughly under her mother's influence. **To her mother.** She is said to have pierced with a needle the tongue which had spoken the truth against her. **His disciples.** The few followers who still clung to the prophet in his prison. **Laid it in a tomb.** Matthew (14, 12) relates that they bore the sad news of their master's death to Jesus.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. Psa. 37, 12.

#### OUTLINE.

1. A King's Fear, v. 14-20.
2. A King's Folly, v. 21-35.
3. A King's Crime, v. 36-29.

#### LESSON HYMN.

No. 777, New Hymn Book. 7s & 6s.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
Stand in his strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you;  
Ye dare not trust your own:  
Put on the Gospel armour,  
And, watching unto prayer,  
Where duty calls, or danger,  
Be never wanting there.  
Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
The strife will not be long;  
This day the noise of battle,  
The next the victor's song.  
To him that overcometh  
A crown of life shall be;  
He with the King of glory  
Shall reign eternally.

No. 454, New Hymn Book. S. M.  
Soldiers of Christ, arise,  
And put your armour on;  
Strong in the strength which God supplies  
Through his eternal Son:  
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,  
And in his mighty power,  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts,  
Is more than conqueror.