

"Come, boys and girls, get in. Load up the old sleigh, and go down to Mr. Fenton's with us. We'll have a glorious time, and we can all get back before school commences. Come!"

Alas, in our moments of excitement and hilarity, how soon was the admonition of a kind father forgotten!

"Good!" ejaculated Harry Siggars, buttoning up his coat and drawing on his mittens. "Girls, get your cloaks and shawls, and bundle up, and we'll have a half-hour's fun fit for a king."

In less than five minutes the long sleigh was well filled with a laughing, merry crowd, and we were ready to start. Billy Smith stood up in front to hold the pole and two of the larger boys took their places on the sides to steer. Herb Martin stepped behind and pushed the sleigh two or three rods as fast as he could run, and then leaped aboard. We were fairly under way. Before we had passed over 10 rods, I began to see that we had undertaken a dangerous ride. On we flew, gathering speed faster and faster with every rod we passed over, until the keen air blew in our faces, and the trees and fences seemed to dash past us at an amazing rate of speed. What if we should happen to meet a loaded vehicle? I could not help shuddering at the thought. The boys who were acting as steersmen were stout fellows, who knew their duty well; but I noticed they already had hard work, and the sleigh, with its heavy load of human freight, was getting beyond their control. We had not taken into consideration the icy road, and the load that was propelling the smooth steel sleigh-shoes with almost irresistible power.

We had a good mile of down grade to ride, and scarce a quarter of the distance had yet been passed. A short way below us the road made an abrupt turn to the right, round a spur of the steep hill-side. The ground had slid away on the lower side of the road around this turn, and an almost sheer precipice yawned below for more than 150 feet. Could we make the turn? We had little time to think. A loaded sleigh had passed along the road the night before, and the runners had cut deep furrows in the soft slush, which was now frozen like adamant. Doubtless these aided greatly in keeping our sleigh in its proper position. We dashed around the dangerous turn like wildfire. I shuddered as I caught an instantaneous glimpse of the tall tree-tops away below us, and lower still the clusters of willow that lined the icy shore of the river.

At the same moment a column of white steam shot up from the foot of the bank directly below us, and the shrill shriek of the locomotive rang fearfully in our ears. It was the up mail-train, sounding its approach to the station.

The road extended along the steep hill-side in a southwest direction for half a mile or more; when it crossed the railroad, near the foot of the descent. In many places the rocks had been sliced down to 40 or 50 feet to form the road-bed, and a precipitous cliff extended below to the railroad track. Neck and neck we flew along, even with the great puffing iron monster below. It was a wild race for life; for if we met the train at the crossing no earthly power could save us.

The engineer saw us, and promptly sounded the danger signal—sharp and distinct. It rang alarmingly in our ears, like the knell of approaching death. The steersmen grasped the side of the sleigh with the energy of despair, and setting their teeth together, made a last concentrated effort to check our lightning-like career. But the moment their feet touched the surface they were thrown upward, nearly jerking them from their positions, and

the mad run-away sleigh dashed on as before.

The engineer seeing our situation—as we afterwards learned—opened the throttle and threw on every pound of steam the engine was made to bear. Fearing for our lives, he made the effort to pass the crossing before we reached there. It was an awful moment. The sleigh-track spun out behind us like silver ribbons, and the stumps and corners of fences seemed to dash past like flashes of lightning. Little pieces of ice from the road-bed flew spitefully in our faces, and the wind blew so hard we could scarcely breathe.

Oh, how forcibly did father's kind words of warning come back to our recollection now, and pierce our disobedient hearts with mental anguish! Thoughts of home and eternity passed vividly through our minds in quick succession. The girls clasped each other's hands, and with staring eyes and bated breath tremblingly awaited the dread moment. A moment only we had to think; and we were at the crossing, and the crisis was at hand.

The sleigh struck the iron rails just ahead of the cow-catcher, and with a sudden shock, leaped forward and upward. There was a frightful clanging and hissing around us, and a deafening screech from the steam valve, as we leaped the track. The hot breath of the fiery monster fairly swept in our faces as we dashed before him; and he even left his mark, in the shape of a long and deep indentation, on the rear of the sleigh-box.

The girls uttered a wild shriek of despair, and two of them fainted in each other's arms. Billy Smith sank down, pale and trembling, and the steersmen tottered and shook as though their almost palsied limbs were struck with deadly weakness.

It was all over, however. We had won the race; we were at the bottom of the hill, and we were safe. The engineer and firemen swung their hats, and a score of handkerchiefs fluttered at the car-windows, as they dashed past us; but we were too much frightened and excited to return the congratulation.

Our rate of speed diminished rapidly as we crossed the little flat, and, shortly after we struck the ascending grade, ceased altogether. The shock to our nervous system had been considerable; but nevertheless we soon recuperated, and while the girls slowly wended their way back to the school-house, we drew the sleigh to its destination.

We returned to the school-room that morning ten minutes late. The teacher had heard the story of our narrow escape, but did not mention it to us then. Perhaps our blanched faces and nervous glances revealed the fact that we had learned a lesson we were not soon to forget.

Aye, so it was! For weeks after that exciting event I often saw in my dreams the great hissing iron steed just dashing upon me, and with the alarming scream of the steam-whistle I would give back the answer with a despairing shriek, and awake trembling with mortal terror. Father kindly forgave us when he heard of it, but it was the last of our riding down hill; and from that day to this I cannot witness the sport anywhere near the railway without recalling my fearful experience, when so many of us passed through such a narrow escape from a death so horrible.

—A wealthy man, displaying one day his jewels to a philosopher, the latter said: "Thank you, sir, for being willing to share such magnificent jewels with me." "Share them with you, sir? What do you mean?" "Why, you allow me to look at them; and what more can you do with them yourself?"

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, June 12.

The Walk to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 13-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And they said one to another, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Commit vs. 26-27.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

Our last lesson was on the crucifixion and death of our Lord,—our present gives us one event of His risen life. The intervening Scriptures inform us of the act of the soldier in piercing His side, His removal from the cross, His burial, the sealing of the tomb, His resurrection, and some of the circumstances that render so memorable that eventful morning. The incident of our present study occurred near evening of the same day.

LESSON NOTES.

(13.) *And behold*—words introductory to some highly important statement. *Two of them.* One of these was Cleopas, a disciple; the other is supposed by some to have been Luke himself. *Went that same day (the first day of the week) to a village called Emmaus*—from Jerusalem about sixty furlongs (7½ miles).

(14.) *All these things.* All (vs. 18-24) for the things meant.

(15, 16.) *Jesus Himself*,—the resurrected Lord, under a different aspect from that under which He had been seen in the morning (Mark xvi. 12); and *went with* (in company with) *them. Their eyes were holden.* They were not permitted to recognize Him. It was the Lord's purpose not to be known just then.

(17.) *What manner of communication*,—in other words, of what are you conversing? *As ye walk and are sad.* Their dejection and grief were apparent, hence this remark elicited no surprise on their part.

(18.) *Cleopas, answering, said—Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?*

(19-24.) *What things?* The Lord's asking this question was no affectation of ignorance, but for the purpose of leading those men to open their minds fully to Him; and thus affording Himself an opportunity for naturally and unobtrusively instructing them in relation to Himself and the things that seemed to them so inexplicable and confusing. *Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests (chief of the priests) and our rulers (the Jewish Sanhedrim) delivered Him (to the Romans) to be (in order to be;—the Jews had no power to inflict the death punishment) condemned to death; and have crucified Him.* The act of crucifying, though really performed by the Romans is here spoken of as having been done by the chief priests and our rulers. These were the specially responsible parties (Matt. xxvii. 25); hence (see Acts ii. 23, 36, vii. 53.) *But we (we who loved Him) trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel (from Roman servitude), and besides all this to-day is the third day, &c.*—an expression of utter hopelessness in regard to the deliverance of the nation. *Yea, and certain women . . . made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre: and when they found not His body they came, saying, &c.*

This *astonishment* shows that the disciples were unprepared for their Lord's rising. They had heard Him say He would rise, yet they had had no faith that His words would be fulfilled. *Him they found not.* It was indisputable that His body was gone,—quite true that living witnesses had declared they had seen Him, but there was no faith to accept the report for *Him they saw not!* How merciful was the Lord to condescend to their obstinacy of unbelief, and show Himself to so many persons and under so many different circumstances.

(25.) *O fools!* This has not the offensive sense that with us attaches to the word. It simply means unreasoning, unreflecting ones. *Slow of heart to believe, &c.*—not only slow of head, but slow of heart. There was a lack of both intellectual discernment and heart-readiness to believe what the prophets had said.

(26.) *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?* *Ought* implies duty, obligation. Had Christ any duty or obligation in this matter? Yes; because He had voluntarily assumed it. He had covenanted with His Father to do all the work He had undertaken (Ps. xl. 7). By virtue of this

covenant, His people had been chosen in Him for countless ages (Eph. i. 4). His death had, accordingly, been an accepted fact from the foundation of the world (Rev. xiii. 8). He had assumed man's nature and announced to men His purpose to save them (Matt. xviii. 11; John xii. 47); and, therefore, He *ought to have suffered those things. And to enter into His glory. Ought He also to do this?* Yes; because the work He was pledged to perform could not be successfully accomplished otherwise (John xvi. 7-11; Acts ii. 30-36; iii. 21).

(27.) *Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself* (see Gen. iii. 15; Dent. xviii. 15; Is. lvi). The whole Old Testament is little more than the simplifying and elucidating of what is found in these references.

(28.) *Made as though he would, &c.*—that is, He kept on His way as one would who intended to go further.

(29.) *They constrained* (urgently entreated). *Abide with us*—an invitation;—*to-ward evening—day far spent*—arguments for His remaining with them. *He went in.*—Matt. xviii. 19.

(30.) *As they sat* (reclined) at meat, He took bread, &c., &c. Though a guest, the Lord took the position at table of a host, and served His entertainers—see John xiv. 23.

(31, 32.) *And their eyes were opened*,—that is, He caused Himself to be seen. *And He vanished* (disappeared) *from their sight.* Thus, to the other evidences which He had given them, and which they at once recognized as from Himself, was added visual evidence,—they had seen the Lord. *Did not our hearts burn*,—as if they had said—why, we ought to have known it was He, while He talked with us by the way. Who else could have moved us so? Who else could so have opened the Scriptures to us? Thus Christ had first informed their inner consciousness, and then, as if to "make assurance doubly sure," had revealed Himself to their bodily perceptions.

SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

Christ reveals Himself to the hearts of all who hold spiritual communion with Him; and this revelation is so palpable and real that it has a more permanent and convincing effect than sight alone could have. Christ is always nearer to us than we suppose. Unbelief thinks of Him as far away, overlooking us, forgetting us; but by and by some tender warning of the heart, some gentle stirring of the Spirit, some quiet inflow of Scriptural consolation reveals the fact that He has indeed been beside us, communing with us, and gently revealing Himself to our spirits.

QUESTION SUMMARY.

(For the Children.)

(13.) Who were going to Emmaus? (see v. 19, also note.) (14.) What were they talking about? (15.) Who joined them in their walk? (16.) Did they know Him? Why not? What is meant by *their eyes were holden*? (see note.) (17.) What did Jesus ask them? (18.) What was Cleopas' reply? Why did he seem so much astonished? (19-21.) Why did Jesus say—*what things?* when he knew all about it? (see note.) Read or repeat the answer of Cleopas. What did Cleopas call Jesus? Who did he say crucified Him? Did he mean that they had really nailed Him to the cross themselves? (see note.) What did He say that they (the disciples) had trusted? What did He mean by that? (22, 23.) Who did He say had made them astonished—full of wonder? By telling them what? (24.) Did any go and see if the women's story was true? Did they find it true? Did they believe it? Why not? Because they had not seen Him themselves? (25-26.) What did Jesus say to them? (27.) Whom was He teaching them of? Out of what writings did He teach them? If the Old Testament is so full of Jesus, ought you not to study it very carefully? (28.) When they reached Emmaus, what did it seem that the Lord intended to do? (29.) Did they urge Him to stay with them? Did He do so? (30.) What did He say and do at table? (31.) What happened? What is meant by *vanished*? What did the two disciples say between themselves? Did it seem to them they ought to have known Him sooner? Why? Does Jesus ever speak to your hearts? Yes: He does by His word, by your teachers, and in many other ways. Will you not then listen, and give Him your hearts now?