

THE BOYS OF COULTON.

BY EMMA WILMOT

COULTON was a new town of the West, and, like most Western towns, was full of business enterprise. The boys had caught the spirit, and made odd pennies, and even dollars now and then. Nat Walton had a goat cart, and on Saturdays he hauled produce for the different stores. Even the goat seemed to move faster than goats in the East. It was not a case of all work and no play, however, for Nat's voice often rung out with the rest as they played ball or leap-frog in the school-yard. Everybody in Coultton was getting along. There was the vegetable-patch back of each dwelling, and the blackberry and raspberry bushes, which never grow wild there, showed tall in the background.

But one day a strange thing happened. The noon train from Kansas City set down at the little station a woman dressed in heavy mourning and a little boy whose well-worn clothes told a tale of need. Soon a small cottage back of Main Street was rented, and a dress-maker's sign tacked up beside the front door. "A bad move," said those who noticed the sign. "Our women make their own dresses."

The pale, delicate-looking boy was entered at the public school, and his playmates all liked him, though they saw he could not stand it "rough and tumble" as they did. Cold weather set in, the winds blew keen across the prairies, and he still wore the same clothes. One day he fainted in the school-room, and Nat, with a comrade, was sent to carry him home. After they had seen him put to bed, they left, stopping outside the door to look at each other in dismay.

"I wouldn't have believed it!" said Nat.

"Nor I," replied his comrade. "I—I say," with a quick breath of horror, "Nat, they're starving to death! Something has to be done right off."

"I know," said Nat, "we'll ask help from the 'A.'"

So at recess they told their plan to a few of the boys, and spent the dinner hour in going from store to store, stating the case.

When school was out that afternoon they called with Nat's wagon, and received the donations. Such a pile as they had!

"Did you call on Mr. Ford?" asked one of the boys.

"Call on old Ford? I guess we didn't. He's the stingiest man in the town."

But just then Mr. Ford came to the door, a queer expression on his wrinkled face. "You're not through, are you, youngsters?" he said. Suppose you fill up the cart with flour for the widow. There are the bags; help yourselves."

For a moment the boys looked at each other in astonishment, and then went to work. The goat had never before pulled so heavy a load, and refused to move; but one of the boys pushed the rear of the cart, one tied a rope around the bags and helped pull, while Nat coaxed the goat on with a cap full of pop-corn; and at length away they went, Mr. Ford in the doorway watching them. Somehow his gift meant more to them than all the rest, it was so unexpected.

A special meeting of the town board was called on the next night, while the boys, unconscious of what they had done, slept as only boys can; and Mr. Ford, rising in his place, said: "Gentlemen, you have all seen what the boys of Coultton have done for the Widow Moore. In framing our constitution we neglected making any provision for the poor, not dreaming that there would be any occasion for it. We might have known better, for we are distinctly told that 'the poor you have always with you!' The boys, gentlemen, have taught us our duty. A poor-house is a reflection on the town that supports it. Churches and poor-houses do not harmonize. Nevertheless, I put the motion before you that a poor-house be erected in our midst."

Then he sat down. There was a stirring time in the council that night, but they voted down the motion for a poor-house,

and instead established a poor fund, which some of them, in an attempt at wit, called "The Lord's Account," and so framed the constitution that no poor house could ever be erected in the town. So the boys taught them how to care for their destitute.

By the way, young people, Christmas will soon be here. Are there any poor people about you whom you ought to help? You will not be so selfish as to forget them, will you?

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

LESSON III. [Oct. 20.]

RUTH'S CHOICE.

Ruth 1. 14-20. Memory verses, 16, 17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.—Ruth 1. 16.

OUTLINE.

1. Ruth, v. 14-18.
2. Naomi, v. 19-22.



THE BOYS OF COULTON.

TIME.—This incident occurred in "the time of the judges," two centuries or so before the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy. Possibly Gideon was judge, but the dates are exceedingly uncertain.

PLACE.—The land of Moab, east of the Dead Sea; and Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah.

INTRODUCTORY.

Ruth was a Moabitess, a descendant, therefore, of Lot, and probably a worshipper of idols till her friendship with a godly woman brought her to a knowledge of the true God.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Ruth's choice.—Ruth 1. 14-22.
- Tu. Preceding events.—Ruth 1. 1-10.
- W. Finding favour.—Ruth 2. 1-12.
- Th. Kindness of Boaz.—Ruth 2. 13-23.
- F. Christ's friends.—John 15. 12-19.
- S. The greatest love.—Eph. 3. 14-21.
- Su. Inseparable love.—Rom. 8. 33-39.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Ruth, v. 14-18.
 - To what nation did Ruth belong. Verse 4.
 - Of what people was her mother-in-law? Verse 2.
 - Where had the women started to go? Verse 7.
 - What had Naomi urged her daughters to do? Verse 8.
 - What did they each do?
 - What did Naomi urge Ruth to do?
 - What was Ruth's reply?
 - What supreme choice did Ruth make? (Golden Text.)
 - What people did she thus choose?
 - Who was the God whom she chose?
2. Naomi, v. 19-22.
 - To what place did the women come?
 - How long had Naomi been away from Bethlehem? Verse 4.

What effect had their coming on the people?

- What did Naomi say about her name?
- How had she gone out and how returned?
- What is God's design in affliction? 2 Cor. 4. 17.

At what time of the year was this return?

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

- Where in this lesson do we find—
1. True love illustrated?
 2. True devotion shown?
 3. True faith declared?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

Whose story is told by the Book of Ruth? The story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. 2. Who was Ruth? A heathen girl of Moab. 3. What was her destiny in Jewish history? To be an ancestress of Christ. 4. What was the moving principle of her life? Fidelity to her loved ones. 5. In what words did she express her loving purpose? Golden Text: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The true catholic Church.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

How may we best use the Word of God for private benefit?
By using all the helps that may enable us to

could never wear the beautiful dress of Christlike charity, which makes her so lovely, if she did not love him. There she wears the jewels which he bids her. He said, 'Be courteous.' So this beautiful jewel fastens her lovely dress. Is it any wonder that every one loves her? See how Peter's injunction about a woman's adorning: 'Let it not be that outward adorning . . . but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.—*Epworth Herald.*

Better Things.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD.

BETTER to smell the violet cool than sip the glowing wine;
Better to hark a hidden brook than watch a diamond shine.

Better the love of a gentle heart than beauty's favour proud;
Better the rose a living seed than roses in a crowd.

Better to love in loneliness than to bask in love all day;
Better the fountain in the heart than the fountain by the way:

Better be fed by a mother's hand than eat alone at will;
Better to trust in God than say: "My goods my store-house fill."

Better be a little wise than in knowledge to abound;
Better to teach a child than toil to fill perfection's round.

Better suspect that thou art proud than be sure that thou art great;
Better to sit at a master's feet than thrill a listening state;

Better to walk the road unseen than watch the hour's event;
Better the "Well done!" at the last than the air with shouting rent.

Better to have a quiet grief than a hurrying delight;
Better the twilight of the dawn than the noon-day burning bright.

Better a death when work is done than earth's most favoured birth;
Better a hill in God's great house than the king of all the earth.

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understand it, with prayer that the Holy Spirit may show us its meaning, and apply it to our hearts.

John 5. 39.

What is the public use of God's Word? For teaching and preaching in public.

SADIE'S BEAUTIFUL DRESS.

BY MRS. E. J. RICHMOND.

"WHAT a pity it is that Sadie is such a flirt!" said Nellie Porter.

"Sadie a flirt?" replied Mary Brown. "Why, she is my ideal of a lovely young Christian."

"Nevertheless I shall not take back my words. Do you not see that she is the centre wherever she is. Everybody listens for her words as if they were pearls, and the young men seem just fascinated. Yet she is not so beautiful."

"I never thought of that, Nellie. When she enters a room I've noticed that all evil speaking is hushed, and only kind words are spoken. She is a real bit of sunshine."

"Shall I tell you the secret, dears?" said grandma, who had been listening. "Sadie's face is no prettier than yours. Her beautiful dress makes all the difference."

"Oh! oh! grandma! Her dress! And this from you, who say that what we are is so much more important than what we wear?"

The young girls' faces were filled with amazement and perplexity. Grandma laughed.

"Yes, dears," she said, "and what we are determines what we wear. Sadie