

## BIRD TAIL.

This reserve is under the care of Rev. John McArthur. In response to a reference from this mission, your committee was instructed last year to enquire into the subject of Indian marriages in order that it might be made less easy for an Indian to discard at will a wife whom he may have had perhaps for years, and to marry another woman. This matter has been a very real grievance especially on this reserve. It is a pleasure to report that, chiefly through the assistance of Mr. J. A. Markle, the Indian agent at Birtle, a marriage according to the Indian custom is declared to be legally binding, and machinery is now put within the reach of Indian agents, so that if an unprincipled Indian deserts his wife, he is liable to prosecution under the criminal code. This declaration will have a good effect throughout our whole Indian population.

## ROLLING RIVER.

For nearly two years Mr. Wright has had charge of this reserve. Though the people are still heathen, their attitude towards the missionary and his message is becoming more encouraging. Mr. John Black assisted Mr. Wright as interpreter during the past summer, but lately he has been transferred to the Lizard Point reserve.

## LIZARD POINT.

This is one of the reserves until lately under the care of the Rev. Mr. Fielt, and his resignation has rendered a new arrangement necessary here also. Mr. John Black, as has just been reported, has been placed in charge of this mission.

## PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE.

The new building mentioned in the last report as being required for this school, is now in progress of erection, and in a few days it will be finished. The attendance at this school is now larger than ever, being at present thirty-three. During the past summer six of the larger girls were, for part of their time, out at service among families in the town, and they have given great satisfaction. The new building will be a great help to the school. The little Indian congregation, so closely connected with this, is still faithfully tended, and is giving evidence of God's blessing.

## SUMMARY.

This work extends over twenty-two reserves, with fifteen mission centres. There are six ordained missionaries, and some thirty-five lay workers of different classes. Services are held at thirty places, and in four different languages. There are seven boarding and industrial schools, and three day schools, with a total enrollment of 304. This work is carried on at an estimated cost for the current year of \$19,667.

As this report shows, there is life and growth over the whole field. From the nature of the work the progress is necessarily slow, but it is nevertheless real and substantial, and we have abundant reason for thanking God for what He has done in the past and taking courage for the future.

## FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

## International S. S. Lesson.

## LESSON XI.—DAVID AND JONATHAN.—DEC. 15.

(1 Sam. xx. 32-42.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—Prov. xviii. 24.

CENTRAL TEXT.—True Friendship.

ANALYSIS.—THE TEXT, v. 32-34.  
TOKEN, v. 35-40.  
CARDS, v. 41, 42.

TIME AND PLACE.—About B.C. 1062. (1) The royal palace at Gibeah, four miles north of Jerusalem. (2) A field near Gibeah.

INSTRUCTORY.—After David's victory over Goliath, He was brought before Saul. Then it was that Jonathan's soul "was knit with the soul of David." Jonathan bestowed his military dress and arms upon David, as a public mark of honor. David's popularity, however, made Saul envious, and he tried to destroy him. Finally, David fled to Samuel's home. Saul pursued David, but God's Spirit prevented him from harming him. Returning to Jerusalem, David consulted with Jonathan, who promised again to intercede with Saul. They renewed their covenant, and David went into hiding to await word from Jonathan as to the result of his intercession.

THE TEXT, v. 32-34.—To gain a real conception of the character and causes of the friendship existing between David and Jonathan the chapters intermediate to last lesson and this should be carefully read. It was to David as the boy deliverer of Israel that the son of Saul first felt his warmly affectionate nature drawn. He saw in the shepherd lad, so far beneath him in rank, though more

than his equal in genius and versatility, not only courage but a true heart, a humble spirit, and wonderful common sense. In Jonathan David also found all the qualities of a brave soldier, as well as a merciful, unselfish and strongly affectionate nature. There was a feature of Jonathan's friendship unparalleled in classic history,—it was the friendship of the heir to a throne for his strongest and most formidable rival.

The picture shown us in the first part of our lesson has about it all the elements of tragedy. Jonathan was seated at the table with his father the king, and no doubt many of the courtiers. Saul was enquiring concerning the whereabouts of David, and was roused to anger at the unconcealed friendship of his son for this dangerous outlaw. He felt that so long as David lived his throne was insecure and the succession of his heir uncertain; and thus he gave vent to his rage and fear in a declaration that this Bethlehemite must die. But Jonathan's love for David was greater than his desire to reign, and in anxiety for his friend's safety he forgot that in him was the greatest obstacle to his succession; hence his simple minded question, "Wherefore shall he be slain?" This blind indifference to self-interest irritated Saul beyond measure, and for answer he hurled his javelin at the heart of his own son; but blind rage is less mighty than blind love, and the weapon missed its mark. It was answer enough for Jonathan, and he rose and left his father's table with fierce anger, because he was grieved for David. It was the choice between royal favor and a fugitive's friendship. He chose the latter, and lives to-day as the noblest example of unselfish fidelity.

THE TOKEN, v. 35-40.—David and Jonathan had a tryst in the morning out in the fields around Gibeah at the stone Ezel. So faithful to his word the king's son made his way to the meeting place taking with him a little lad. David was in hiding, awaiting the signal agreed upon to tell him his fate. Might he return or must he flee? So the question ran through his mind. If the arrows shot by Jonathan fell short of him, it meant that the royal palace was still open to his presence, if they fell beyond it meant that he must part from his friend and take his refuge in the surrounding hills. How anxiously he waited for the sign. With a sad heart Jonathan drew back his bow string, and let fly the arrow; it hurled through the air and fell far beyond the hiding place of David, another flew, and still a third, and as the archer shouted to his lad who had run for the darts, "Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make speed, haste, stay not!" the hidden one knew that the warning was to him, and henceforth the life of a fugitive must be his until God chose to still the hand of the enemy.

THE TEARS, v. 41, 42.—Jonathan sent the boy back to the city with his bow and arrows, so that he might say farewell to David alone. He was not satisfied to part from him with but a signaled message; love overcame prudence, and in a moment they were clasped in each others embrace. It was a demonstrative expression of friendship, somewhat warmer than our western conventionality approves, but it came from great hearts such that the conventions of no age or hemisphere could restrict. If our own friendships were more fully expressed sometimes, there would be less heart starvation than there is in this modern money making age of ours. Many a nature has been chilled and ultimately frozen for lack of a little of that demonstrativeness so beautifully pictured here. Let us take time and trouble to be friendly. One smile, one tender caress in life is worth a river of tears shed over the breathless clay.

## Application and Illustration.

## GLEANINGS.

THE DUTY OF WARNING.—One of friendship's highest duties is to warn. This is also the sternest test of friendship. If my friend dare tell me wherein I am wrong, and how I can make myself right, I shall press him to my heart as a friend indeed. But if he fear my frown, or shrink from hurting me, or hesitate to take the trouble and the risk, he is no friend to me, nor deserves to have me for a friend.

A LESSON FROM THE LAD.—We do not know the full measure of all we are doing. Had the lad been asked, "What are you doing?" He would have replied, "I am picking up arrows for the king's son." That is the end of his tale so far as he knows. He did not know that through him was telegraphed to a breaking heart that the king was determined against him. It is so with us. We see part of our work. There is a side of it we know nothing about. What a mysterious life is this! We are observed we are set in order, we are made instruments.

CHRIST OUR FRIEND.—"David . . . fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times," v. 41. David was the real king, yet he humbled himself. How this reminds us of our Lord in the manger, in the garden, and on the cross. Beloved, let us appreciate what our Lord suffered for us and believe in Him as "a lover that sticketh closer than a brother."—Pr. xviii. 24.