

## THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

LESSON XII MARCH 19, 1876.

ABSALOM'S DEATH. 2 SAMUEL 18: 24-33.

(B. C. 1023.)

24. AND DAVID SAT BETWEEN THE TWO GATES.—How was the news of Absalom's death to be broken to his father? Ahimaz offered to be the bearer of the tidings. But Joab would not intrust him with the commission, and preferred to send one Cushie, an Ethiopian servant with the message. This, however did not satisfy the high-priest's son, so extorting a permission from the captain of the host, the fleet courier ran; and arrived first at the gate of Mahanaim; where a scene occurred which lets us see into the unfathomed depths of a true parent's heart. Fastened and almost fascinated to the spot the king is still in the same place in which he had parted from his troops in the early morning.

25.—IF HE BE ALONE.—TIDINGS IN HIS MOUTH.—Because several runners would have shown themselves if it had been a flight.

AND THE WATCHMAN SAID. When the watchman saw by the running of the first that it was Ahimaaz, recognizing him probably by the swiftness of his running, and announced it to the king, he replied, "He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings," because Joab would not have selected him to bring any other than good news.

28 33. Ahimaaz then called out to the king, "Shalom!" i.e., Hail, and fell down before him to greet him reverentially, and blessed be Jehovah, thy God, who hath given up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king." In answer to the king's inquiry, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Ahimaaz spoke as if he had been sent off before Absalom's fate had been decided or could be known. "The king's servant" is the Cushite, whom Ahimaaz saw just approaching, so that he could point to him. The death of Absalom was indicated clearly enough in the words of the Cushite in verse 32, "The enemies of my lord the king," etc. The king understood the meaning of these words. He was agitated and went up to the balcony of the gate and wept, and said walking about, "My son Absalom, my son," etc.

To understand this passionate utterance of anguish, we must bear in mind not only the excessive tenderness, or rather weakness, of David's paternal affection towards his son, but also his anger that such and his generals should have paid so little regard to his command to deal gently with Absalom. With the king's excitable temperament, this entirely prevented him from taking a just and correct view of the correct crime of his rebel son, which merited death, and of the penal justice of God which has been manifested in his destruction.

THE excellent scheme proposed by the Home Mission Board of our Church a year ago, was recently brought before the notice of the Colonial Committee. In their reply it was stated that "the Committee enter with the deepest sympathy into the proposed scheme for raising Ministers stipends to £200 *stg.*" and they cordially agreed to give grants in aid. Any one who knows the circumstances of this colony understands perfectly well that the amount fixed more than twenty years ago, £150 *stg.*, would go just about as far then as £200 *sig.* now. It is a fresh proof of the extreme thoughtfulness of the Church at Home that they have, in so kind a manner, contributed at once to the comfort of our ministers and to the stability and usefulness of our Church.

At the quarterly meeting of the Pictou Presbytery a committee consisting of Messrs. Herdman, Coull and Hislop, was appointed to manage our Foreign Mission Contributions, it being understood that while we co-operate with the sister Church in Foreign Missions, it is desirable that the collections of our congregations be kept in a separate account, Jas. Hislop, Esq., Pictou, being Treasurer.

ERRATA.—At the foot of page 20, the words "burden and heat of the" are omitted before "day." Page 25, "East River one Sabbath in May, Mr. McKichen" should be "Earltown."