

The Family

OUR OWN

"If I had known in the morning how nearly all the day I would be so busy, I should have been more careful, darling. Not given you needless pain; but we've our own. With lock and key. We might never bring back again.

BEREAN NOTES

LESSON X. BITTER WATERS SWEETENED. Exod. xv. 22-27. Topic: Water for the thirsty. Golden Text: "And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev. xiii. 2.

GENERAL STATEMENT

Upon the overthrow of the Egyptians the Hebrews sing songs of triumph. (Exodus xv. 1-21.) and then pursue their journey. After three days of thirst they come to the bitter waters of Marah. B. C. 1491.

II. NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

1. NO WATER, verse 22. 1.) Into the wilderness. So, literally, and the beginning of a new paragraph. FROM THE SEA. From the halting place where they had shouted their triumphal song, verses 1-21. This spot is generally considered to be the little oasis Ayas Musa, (Coesed's wells), two hours from Suez. WILDERNESS. In Num. xxxiii. 8, "wilderness of Eham," this being the south-west part of the great desert of Shur. Suez literally, a well—referring to the well like mountains Er Rahab and of Teh, which border on this desert plain.

2. BITTER WATER, verses 23-24. 1.) Disappointment. MARAH, bitter-ness. Doubtless it entailed with Ayas Musa. The modern name signifies a small pool, the water of which sinks into the soil little by little, leaving the residue unfit to drink; a description eminently applicable to the spring in question. Desert of the Zedua; 2.) Murmuring—AGAINST MOSES. Only three days before, their shouts of praise to God doubtless equalled the roaring of the sea; now they already forget God and his wondrous doings. How weak their faith; how mighty the faith of Moses, and yet both leaders and people suffered equally.

3. SWEET WATER, verses 25-26. 1.) Prayer for help. CHIED UNTO THE LORD. God alone could help. Moses believed, (a) In God's willingness; (b) In God's Omnipotence. 2.) Divine Interposition. THE LORD SHOWED SPEEDY ANSWER. A sign. Name and nature unknown. God chose to endow some ordinary plant with supernatural qualities. Thus the springs were sweetened by Almighty power, and in answer to prayer. (8.) A Divine Ordinance. There before the miracle was forgotten. PROVED. Moses' faith stood the test; all Israel failed. IF THOU WILT. They shall be proved, tried; in all their journeyings they shall find tests as stern as that at Marah. Do MOUNT. Wrong doing destroyed the Egyptians. Thus have many other nations been ruined. Prov. xiv. 34. Perdition is full of the din of war. "To obey better than sacrifice." 1 Sam. xv. 22. HEALTH. Sin brings bitterness and death. God delights to do to all his bitterness into sweetness, and to heal all our maladies. Psalm xxviii. 3. Christ is the great Physician. Jer. viii. 22; Matt. ix. 12-13. He is our "BRANCH." Jer. xxiii. 5; Zech. iii. 8; and "plant of righteousness." Ezek. xxvii. 29. He will give us to eat of the "tree of life." Rev. ii. 7; xlii. 2.

WELLS OF WATER, ver. 27. 1.)

The palm grove. ELIM—literally, trees that bring forth water. Probably Elim is identical with Wady Ghazal, which contains palm-trees in great numbers, and a perennial spring. 2.) Rest by the fountains. No trials at Elim; no desert, no bitterness. On the way to the Holy City the pilgrim finds many an Elim. Believers in Jesus draw from "wells of salvation," Isa. xlii. 3; they have "living waters" abundantly bestowed. John 4. 12, 14; 7. 38; and they shall dwell forever by the "river of water of life." Rev. 22. 1.

ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES

In this short passage we have a striking contrast. The first two verses tell us of the triumphant songs and joyous dances in which Israel celebrated their great deliverance; and in the next three we see the same Israel disappointed and discontented. It is a picture of another place in the experiences of the spiritual pilgrim. I. Great as was the joy of the Israelites on the morning that followed the Passover night, it was surpassed by their exultation when they not only found themselves with the Red Sea between them and the land of their captivity, but also saw their relentless foes dead upon the sea-shore. And great as is the sinner's joy when he feels that the blood of the Lamb has been sprinkled on his heart, and his guilt been put away, it is exceeded by the indescribable sense of freedom when he finds that he is no longer under the dominion of sin. His besetting "lusts" proved him, (see preceding note), but simply trusting in his "Strong Deliverer," he has gone straight on in the right path, and to his amazement, has found that those pursuing sinful habits, those fierce and urgent temptations, have lost their power! Now, like the Ephraimite, he can "walk at liberty." Now, like the Ephraimite, he goes "on his way rejoicing."

THE DOLLAR WE DON'T SPEND

We have to calculate pretty close at our house, you know; and the whole family are called into council when an important expenditure was to be made. Well, the other evening we were considering the small remnant of the quarter's salary, and Mrs. Dobbs was trying to reckon how it could be made to cover everything. There was her new dress, and a new coat for me, and a new carpet for the best parlor, and a new hat for our (at present unmarried) daughter, besides a great many other things, with which I will not occupy your valuable space. The main point was the new dress and Mrs. Dobbs was thinking of this shade, and scrutinizing that pattern, when she could not help but say, "I don't know what you are doing; but I think you are spending a good deal of money."

House and Farm

ODD JOBS

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PRUNING FRUIT TREES

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10 The Broken Hyacinth

SUNDAY-SCHOOL SONGS

Bishop Jones never came nearer the truth than when he said, at the anniversary of the Sunday-School Union. "The song literature of the modern Sunday-school contains one grain of sense, one melody, one of religion, and seven of nonsense." We have only to open the Sunday-school songbooks at random to substantiate the bishop's assertion. There is some good in these manuals. They would be marvellous of folly or monotony if there were not; but the objectionable predominates. Here and there we meet with a respectable song; now and then we come across a valuable one; or encounter a noble and useful strain; but a very considerable portion of the verse, probably as high as the bishop estimates it, is the sorriest of trash, the veriest nonsense, penned by a fifth-rate rhymester, faulty in rhetoric and grammar, violating without compunction the simplest principles of composition, lame in theology, and often utterly wanting in religion or healthy sentiment. The lowest style of ditty is substituted for Scriptural "spiritual songs," silliness is mistaken for simplicity; prose, garbled with rhymes and capitals, passes for poetry, and rhapsody for inspiration. Here is a cantering specimen of fantastic rhapsody:

OUR CHILDREN'S PORTION

Pick up the minutes, young folks, says Professor Tryall, for they are excellent pickings. How now, Professor, do you mean to give us a lecture? Not to-day, for Dr. Beetle, I see, claims that. But I was thinking of a boy who always found time to do everything. "Why, you see," said the little fellow, "I pick up the minutes, and they are first-rate pickings." So they are. There was a little errand-boy in London Nutcracker, who learned Greek while waiting for parcels, and continued to make such good use of the minutes he saved, that he became a learned man. Pick up the minutes and then use them well.

PRUNING FRUIT TREES

It appears to me there is a vast deal of unnecessary confusion upon this subject. Surely, in the advice to