

change, and my new position might almost be called the first step in a business-like literary career.

Here I not only did editorial work, but I wrote stories and essays, and such work was greatly stimulated by the feeling that unless some glaring fault should appear in them, they would surely be printed. All my associates in the office did editorial work, but they also wrote stories and essays, and this induced a feeling of fellowship which was greatly helpful to me.

More time passed on, and I left the office of the weekly periodical in order to enter that of a monthly magazine. Here the field of literary opportunity opened widely ahead. The magazine offered me the chance of printing work of greater pretension, and possibly of greater value, than that which could be admitted into the crowded columns of a weekly paper; and it was of great advantage to me in giving me a thorough acquaintance with that vast mass of literary production, much of it of excellent quality, which never sees the light of the printed page.

Long-continued reading of manuscripts submitted for publication, which were almost good enough to use, but not quite up to the standard of a magazine, cannot but be of great service to any one who proposes a literary career.

Bad work of course shows us what we ought to avoid, but most of us know, or think we know, what that is, while to the best work access is always open. But the great mass of literary material which is almost good enough to print is not seen except by the editorial reader, and its lesson upon him is lost in a great degree unless he is, or intends to be, a literary worker.

Just before I entered the office of the magazine, I was greatly interested in writing for a comic paper, and for this I composed a Christmas story in which the elements of the fantastic so permeated the real life of the characters, that the tale was a decided extravaganza. This comic journal died just before the intended appearance of the story, and I was greatly pleased to have the manuscript accepted by the editor of the magazine to which I soon after became attached.

For some humorous stories which I should have liked to write, there had seemed to be no medium at all. Nearly everything which went into a comic paper was required to be terse and short, and I wanted to write humorous stories which should be as long as ordinary magazine tales.

I had previously met with discouragement in this line. The editor of a prominent magazine to which I had sent a humorous story, returned it with no objection except that he could find nothing in the traditions of his periodical which would warrant him in printing matter of that character, and I had come to believe that the traditions of all the magazines would forbid publication of stories strictly humorous. So when I found that a standard magazine was willing to open its pages to such matter, if it were considered good enough, I truly rejoiced.

After this I wrote a number of humorous tales, and published them in the periodical on which I was employed; and in the course of time I collected a series of these short tales, enough to make up a volume, and put them into a continuous form.

As this series had been accepted by my editors, and had been received with a fair amount of favor by the reading public, I felt that there would be no difficulty whatever in finding a publisher willing to issue it in book form.

In this I was mistaken. Two publishers informed me that although they would publish the stories very well for a magazine, although they liked them very much, they would not publish them in book form for them. It was then that I wrote a story suitable for publication, and

another thing to write one which could be advantageously printed in a volume.

But the third publisher to whom I applied, issued the book, and he found the venture satisfactory; and out of this experience I learned a valuable lesson.

I found that a literary worker during his apprenticeship must learn to serve three masters—his editors, his book publishers and the reading public; and he must also understand that work which may suit one of these masters may not be acceptable to the others, and it must be his aim, therefore, to produce material which shall suit all three, except indeed in the case of those who propose to confine their work either to periodical or book publication.

Of course, no man can truly serve two masters, and it is still more difficult to serve three; but the literary apprentice must learn to do this as well as he can if he expects to succeed as a master workman.

Just when a writer has attained the right to call himself a master workman is very difficult for him or any one else to say, but there generally comes a time—just as his majority comes to an apprentice to a trade—when he must go out into the regular working world as a regular worker, whether he be thoroughly trained in his business or not.

In my case the transition from editorial work, in which I was always obliged to learn something whether I would or not, to the sphere of strictly literary work, where I sought to learn as much as I could, but might learn nothing, was very gradual. My reading of manuscript and making up of pages continued, and I began to devote the greater part of my time to the writing of books, and the first became fewer and fewer. At last I ceased editorial work, and I suppose it may be said that I here ended my apprenticeship.

But I find that although the three masters who were formerly my instructors are now my employers, their functions have not greatly changed. They are as exacting as ever, and there is no law of any trades-union which can prevent them from discarding the work of an old worker if it is not as good as that of a young beginner.

This is something, I think, which it would be well for all writers to remember.—'Youth's Companion.'

THE BROKEN BARGAIN.

'I have almost seen the world turned upside down in answer to prayer,' said an aged Christian believer. She then related the following incident:

'One day, some fifteen years ago, when the war had made the holding of property somewhat risky, my husband came to me and said, "I have bargained away our place in Jay street. The purchaser was so anxious to seal the bargain that he has given me a hundred dollars to make it sure, although I told him that my word was as good as my bond. We have agreed that whoever breaks the bargain loses the hundred dollars."

'I was surprised,' said the old lady, 'for my husband generally consulted me in such matters.'

"So you have really sold the property, have you," I asked, feeling anxious, for the following reason: A few months before husband had lent out a large sum of money, and was likely to lose it all, and it immediately occurred to me that the sum received for the property in question would be likely to go much the same way.

'In answer to my inquiry my companion said, "Yes, the place is bargained away, and probably to-morrow we will be in together to obtain your signature to the deed."

'I knew husband seldom altered his mind when it was once fixed, but I was so afraid of loss, the previous heavy one being before me.

'The bargain was made and sealed, but God was able to alter it if He chose.

'I went into my room and locked the door, and then laid the case before my Father in heaven. I told Him that He best knew whether it was for our best good to become poor, and related all my fears to Him, and asked His help—would He direct all, and if best prevent the sale?

'There I rested, and my anxiety left me, for I knew if God ruled for us all would be well. I had left it with Him, and waited for His answer.

'I heard nothing more about the sale for the two days following, so on the third day I said to my husband, "Mr. L., your seemingly determined purchaser, has not completed that sale after all, has he?"

"No," he replied thoughtfully; "there was something singular about the matter; he was so set on obtaining the property on the one day, and on the morrow came to me and said: "Mr. F., I cannot buy your place."

"Why," I asked, "don't you like it?"

"Oh, yes, very much. I cannot account for the change of mind, but must draw back from the sale. The hundred dollars is accordingly yours. I will rent your place, though."

"I answered him that I did not wish to keep his money when I had had nothing for it, and offered to return it."

"Then keep it on the rent," said he.

"I immediately agreed to his proposal in regard to the renting of the place, and he is to take possession in a few days."

'We still retain that property that I prayed so earnestly over,' said our aged friend, 'and what seemed strange to husband was clear to me, for I knew God had heard me.'

The word is plain, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'—'American Messenger.'

C. E. PRAYER MEETING TOPICS AND DAILY READINGS.

GOD, OF MAMMON?

The fleshpots of Egypt. Ex. 16: 1-15.
Lot's choice. Gen. 13: 1-18.
Lot's wife. Gen. 19: 15-26.
Mammon rebuked. Neh. 5: 1-13.
'Touch not.' 2 Cor. 6: 3-18.
Carnally minded—death. Rom. 8: 1-14.

Oct. 11.—God, or Mammon?—Matt. 6: 19-24.
A temperance meeting suggested.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

LESSON II.—Oct. 11, 1896.

I Kings 3: 5-15.

SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE.

Commit to Memory Vs. 11, 12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.—Psalm 111: 10.

THE LESSON STORY.

Now David was dead and Solomon was king of Israel. He loved the Lord and walked in the ways of his father David, only he offered his sacrifices on the high places, which David did not do. David chose rather to offer his sacrifices where the ark was kept.

Gibeon was the great high place where Solomon made his greatest offerings and where God blessed him more than in any other place. It was here that the tabernacle and the brazen altar were, and here the Lord came to Solomon in a wonderful dream by night. This is what the Lord said to him: 'Ask what I shall give thee.'

Although Solomon was asleep he made a very wise request of the Lord. He asked for wisdom and understanding, so that he might know how to rule the people well. It pleased the Lord that Solomon had not asked a gift for himself, but that he had thought how he could best help and bless others. And so he gave him not only what he asked, but he also gave him riches and honor, so that he should be the greatest of all kings living.

Then Solomon awoke, and he came to Jerusalem and offered up burnt offerings and made a feast to all his servants. How wise was the choice which Solomon made, and how wise we shall be if we make the same choice!—Berean Lesson Book.

LESSON OUTLINE.

I. Solomon Choosing Wisdom. Vs. 5-9.
II. The Choice Pleasing to God. Vs. 10-12.

III. Other Blessings Added. Vs. 13-15.

HOME READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 3: 1-15, Solomon's Wise Choice.

T. Prov. 2: 1-22, The Safety of Wisdom. W. 2 Tim. 3: 14-17, The Source of Wisdom.

Th. James 1: 1-17, How to Get Wisdom. F. Prov. 9: 1-12, The Call of Wisdom. S. Job 28: 12-28, The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom.

S. Prov. 3: 1-18, Wisdom More Precious than Rubies.

Time.—B.C. 1015; Solomon about eight-teen years old.

Place.—Gibeon, about six miles north of Jerusalem. Here the old tabernacle remained until Solomon's temple was built.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

David died B.C. 1015, after a reign of forty years. 1 Chron. 29: 26-28. Solomon, who had been associated with him in the kingdom for some months before his death, succeeded him. Very early in his reign Solomon held a great religious festival at Gibeon. There the Lord appeared in a dream and invited him to ask for what he needed. Solomon asked for wisdom to govern his people aright. The Lord was pleased with his choice and granted him not only exceptional wisdom, but also great riches and honor, and promised him long life upon condition of obedience. Beside the Home Readings, read 1 Kings 3: 16-28, and 2 Chron. 1: 1-13.

QUESTIONS.

When did David die? How long had he reigned? Who succeeded him? About how old was Solomon when he became king? For what purpose did he go to Gibeon? How did the Lord appear to him there? What did God say to Solomon? What was Solomon's request? How did the Lord receive it? What did he give to Solomon? What did he promise?

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES.

1. God wants us to choose what we will live for.
2. Young persons without experience need guidance in life.
3. The best thing we can choose is wisdom from God.
4. God is pleased to give us the good things we ask for.
5. When we choose aright God adds other blessings.—Westminster Question Book.

ILLUSTRATION.

'Ask.' V. 5. 'Why don't you have this road opened and graded?' a land owner said to an alderman, as they met where a new street was much needed. 'Why don't the people petition to have it done?' 'Do you never open and grade streets unless the people ask for it?' 'Very seldom.' God says, 'Ask.'

'What do you do when you feel cross and naughty?' they asked of a little five-year-old girl. 'I shut my lips and my eyes tight and think a little prayer to Jesus to make me feel right,' the sweet child said.

'How are you getting along?' asked a lady of a woman employed to wash an iron. 'Doesn't that look nice?' she responded, pointing to a shirt. 'I never ironed a shirt like that before. I prayed about it all the while that I might do it right.'

Be humble. V. 7. 'Humility is a mark of wisdom and greatness. The purest gold is the most ductile. A good blade bends well.' The highest piety and the deepest humility are ever associated. A celebrated Persian judge, who lived in the reign of Caliph Hadee, one day after a persevering effort to obtain facts relating to a certain case, declared himself incompetent to render a decision. 'Pray,' said a pert courtier, who heard his declaration, 'do you expect that the caliph is to pay you for your ignorance?' 'I do not,' was the quiet answer, 'the caliph pays me well for what I do know. Were he to attempt to pay me for what I do not know, the treasures of his empire would not suffice.' Never be ashamed to acknowledge 'I do not know.'

Choose wisely. V. 11. Choice determines character. To each one comes the call, 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.' Josh. 24: 15. To every one God says, 'I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life.' Deut. 30: 19. And he tells us a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and understanding than silver. Prov. 22: 1; 16: 16. Mary was condemned for choosing the good part which should never be taken from her. Lu. 10: 42. A reward awaits those who esteem the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of the world, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Heb. 11: 25, 26. They who choose wisely are God's chosen ones.—Arnold's Practical Commentary.