

SATURDAY NIGHT.

any a kiss has been given, how rare, how many a caress, how many a word—how many a promise broken, how many a heart has been broken—how many a loved one has been taken into a narrow chamber, how many a babe has gone from earth to how many a crib or cradle stands empty, which last Saturday night witnessed the rarest of all treasures of the week is life. A week is a his-week marks events of sorrow or joy of which people never heard. To the family man of business! To you heart erring wanderer! To cheer that awaits the wrong-lifer's breakers! Go home to love, man of toil! and give one of the joys and comforts fast flying from your book with complex figurative workshop your busy store. Those you love, for God only at the next Saturday night will forget the world of care and of life which have furrowed the forehead close around the family. Go home to those you love, and be in the loved presence and return the loved embrace of yours. Strive to be a better man and God for giving his weary child a stepping stone in the river as Saturday night.

A NOBLE BOY.

I saw a boy do something that made me feel good for a while, it makes my heart fill with gladness and good feeling even when I write about it. But let me tell you what it was. As I was walking through a street of a large city, I saw an old man who seemed to be blind walking without any one to lead him. He was very slow, feeling with his

walking straight to the highest curbstone, said I to myself. "It is very high, too; I wonder if he won't tell him and start him in the right direction!"

When a boy about fourteen years of age was playing near the corner, I saw him run up to the old man, and said, "Let me lead you across the street." By this time there were three or four others watching the boy. He helped him over one crossing, then he helped him over another to the lower street. Then he ran back to help another.

This boy thought he had only done a kindness, while I knew that he had made three other persons happy, and better, and more careful of the kindnesses to those about them. The three or four persons who were watching the boy, turned to follow the noble example he had set. I know that I felt more kind and forgiving toward every one on my days afterward.

When one that was made happy by the boy himself. For it is impossible to do a kind act, or to make any one happy, without being better or ourselves. To be good, and do to be happy.—Ruth Hudson.

giving a vote of condolence to the Queen, the Premier in a most pathetic incident, which will live in the history of these countries. After describing the character of the Princess Alice he says, "My lords, there is something very touching in the immediate death of her. The physician who had her to watch over her sufferings, enjoined her under no circumstances whatever to be tempted into suicide. Her admirable self-reliance carried her through the crisis of her complaint in safety. She died and observed the injunction of the physician, but it became her duty to break to her son, quite a youth, the death of his youngest sister to whom he was devotedly attached, and she was so overcome with misery that she clasped him in her arms and received the kiss of death. I hardly know a subject more touching, or one which poets and professors of the fine arts, whether in painting, sculpture, or in gems, might find fitting to commemorate." Earl Lytton, who seconded the vote, read a glowing extract from a letter of the Prince of Wales: "So good, so clever. We had gone through such a time together—my father's illness when my own—and she has succumbed to the pernicious malady which had been watching her husband and children, she tenderly watched with unflinching care and attention. The Queen wept bravely, but her grief is deep and words." England has reason to be grateful for a Court which has shown such a noble example of true womanhood.

Memory long will live alone all our hearts, as mournful light, broods above the fallen sun and dwells in heaven half the night.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 445. LESSON IV. THE BUILDERS INTERRUPTED; or, A Persistent Work. January 26.

EXPLANATORY.

Verse 7 *Sabbath*. The most prominent of the foreign opposers to the plans of Nehemiah. Though of Moabite extraction, he was a resident of Samaria, where he held some office under the Persian government. In the restoration of Jerusalem he foresaw the failure of Samaria as the chief city of Palestine, and hence was a bitter enemy to all the efforts toward advancing the interests of the Jews. He appears to have been allied by marriage with the family of the high priest Eliashib, (Neh. 13, 28) and to have been supported by a party in Jerusalem. *Tobiah*. An Ammonite of servile extraction, who had risen to a position of influence, and was in some way connected with the Jewish high-priest. (Neh. 13, 4) *Arabians*. According to Dr. Crosby, one of the nations whom the king of Assyria had settled in Samaria after the deportation of the Ten Tribes; but supposed by most of the commentators to refer to the wild desert-wanderers on the south of Palestine, who would naturally dislike the growth of any power on their borders. They were led in their opposition by one *Gashmu*, or *Gashmu*. (Chap. 6, 1.) *Ammonites*. A roving people whose home was east of Jordan, and north of the brook Jabbok. Always unfriendly to Israel they had been active allies in its destruction, and now dreaded the restoration of its power as a menace to their own independence. *Ashdodites*. Philistines dwelling on the sea coast in and around the old city of Ashdod. They were the hereditary foes of Israel, until their city was destroyed and their political existence ended by Jonathan 150 B. C. 1. "No sooner does God's cause begin to rise than foes, quiet before, arise against it." Satan is always active when there is prospect of a revival. 2. "The opposition of nearly all people to the Gospel is generally some motive in selfishness or jealousy." *Walls were made up*. Literally, "a bandage was applied to the walls of Jerusalem," as if a wound of fracture were being healed. *Breaches* of places where the wall was pierced or broken down. *Wool*. In Jerusalem raised from the dust they read the sure tokens of their own humiliation. 8. "The followers of Satan have good reason to dread the growth of God's church."

8, 9. *Conspired together*. Though jealous of each other, they forgot their enmities in a greater hatred of God's people. 4. "So Pilate and Herod, the worldly and the wicked, are ever united to destroy Christ." To hinder it. Literally, "to do it evil." While any one of these tribes attacking Judah would appear to be acting from jealousy, their united opposition might be made to appear as if proceeding from loyalty to the Persian government. *We made our prayer*. How often Nehemiah betook himself to the Christian's mightiest weapon, "all prayer!" 5. "The saint is mightiest against his enemies when he is on his knees." *Our God*. The Jews always believed that Jehovah was their God exclusively. no others having any claim upon his grace. 6. "While he is the God of all men, he is in a peculiar sense the God of his own people: the invisible Church of Christ." *Set a watch*. 7. "Trust in God must not supersede effort, the Christian needs to watch as well as pray."

16, 11, 12. *Judah said*. Nehemiah had to face discouragements from within as well as threatenings from without. A large part of the people had no heart for the work, some of the nobles were in constant correspondence with the enemies, (chap. 6, 17-19) and even the high priest had relationship with foreigners, and gave them favors. Chap. 13, 4, 5, 28. 8. "It is harder to overcome lukewarmness than opposition." No defense is so hard to beat down as a "mud fort." *Strength decayed*. "From the extent of the work, the weight of the task, and the weakness of the laborers, their physical powers were exhausted." This was the sentiment of the discouraged portion of the people. *Rubbish*. Before the walls could be begun, the accumulated debris of one hundred and thirty-five years must be cleared away. *The Jews which dwell by them*. Those living in the villages bordering on these adversaries, therefore better acquainted with their plans, are probably affected by their influence. 9. "Those who are surrounded by sinners are in danger of infection by their example."

10. "To keep the heart firm we must dwell in Zion, the citadel of strength." *Ten times*. Equivalent to our expression, "again and again." *From all places*. The latter part of this verse is very obscure. A better rendering than that in the text is "From all places ye shall return to us." The Jews from the border villages endeavored to persuade such of their townsmen as were working on the wall to leave it and return home. 11. "It is harder to resist the persuasions of discouraged and fearful friends than the attacks of enemies, but the workers for God must be prepared for both."

13, 14, 14. *The higher places*. A mistaken rendering. It should be "the exposed places." The passage should read, "Therefore set I in the lowest parts at the place behind the wall, in the exposed portion," that is, where the walls, being unfinished, were open to attack, Nehemiah stationed armed defenders. 12. "Workers must expect sometimes to be warriors." *By their families*. Arrayed, as were the builders, in groups of families, so that each builder was inspired by seeing his friends around him. 13. "There is great encouragement in the path of duty and of trial in the comforting presence of those whom we love." *I looked*. 14. "A leader of God's workmen must not only direct, but also inspect, giving his orders, and then observing that they are fulfilled." *Be not afraid*. 15. "No man has real occasion for fear, so long as he is in the path of duty." *Remember the Lord*. 16. "Such a moral power goes with the consciousness of God's presence that one man with God is mightier than many against him." *God hath brought*. 17. "The best human precautions are of no avail unless God be on our side." 18. "Let us never fail to see God's hand in every success." *We returned*. Showing that on the expectation of attack there had been a cessation of the work in rebuilding.

16, 17, 18. *My servants*. This refers to Nehemiah's immediate followers, a sort of body-guard, part of whom engaged in the work, while the rest acted as sentries. *Habergeones*. An old expression for "coats of mail." *With one of his hands wrought with the other held a weapon*. Not to be understood literally, but as expressing the condition of readiness, with weapons within reach. *Sword girded*. Which might be, without greatly interfering with the work. *He that sounded the trumpet*. Ready to give the alarm at a moment's notice.

GOLDEN TEXT: Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. Neh. 4, 9.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION: The divine care.

The next lesson is Neh. 8, 1-8.

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