

brought back that his two sons were dead, and the Ark of the Covenant taken, here it was that he fell backward from his seat, and his neck was broken.

All these she told, and many more. Then she pointed to the gleaners in the fields, and told the children to notice how carefully Israel still kept the commandment given so many centuries before: "When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard, thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger."

At Jacob's well, where they stopped to rest, Joel lifted Jesse up, and let him look over the curb. The child almost lost his balance in astonishment, when his own wondering little face looked up at him from the deep well. He backed away from it quickly, and looked carefully into the cup of water Joel handed him, for more than a minute, before he ventured to drink.

The home to which Abigail was going was a wealthy one. Her father, Reuben, was a goldsmith, and for years had been known in Jerusalem, not only for the beautifully wrought ornaments and precious stones that he sold in his shop near the Temple, but for his rich gifts to the poor.

"Reuben the Charitable," he was called, and few better deserved the name. His business took him every day to the city; but his home was in the little village of Bethany, two miles away. It was one of the largest in Bethany, and seemed like a palace to the children, when compared to the humble little home in Capernaum.

Joel only looked around with admiring eyes; but Jesse walked about, laying curious little fingers on everything he passed. The bright oriental curtains, the soft cushions and the costly hangings, he smoothed and patted. Even the silver candlesticks and the jewelled cups on the side table were picked up and examined, when his mother happened to have her back turned.

There were no pictures in the house, the Law forbade. But there were several mirrors of bright polished metal, and Jesse never tired watching his own reflection in them.

Ruth stayed close beside her mother. "She is a ray of God's own sunshine," said her grandmother, as she took her in her arms for the first time. The child, usually afraid of strangers, saw in Rebecca's face a look so like her mother's that she patted the wrinkled cheeks with her soft fingers. From that moment her grandmother was her devoted slave.

Jesse was not long in finding the place he held in his grandfather's heart. The old man, whose sons had all died years before, seemed to centre all his hopes on this son of his only daughter. He kept Jesse with him as much as possible; his happiest hours were when he had the child on his knee, teaching him the prayers and precepts and proverbs that he knew would be a lamp to his feet in later years.

"Nay! do not punish the child!" he said, one morning when Jesse had been guilty of some disobedience. Abigail went on stripping the leaves from an almond switch she had broken off.

"Why, father," she said, with a smile. "I have often seen you punish my brothers for such disobedience, and have as often heard you say that one of Solomon's wisest sayings is, 'Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.' Jesse misses his father's firm rule, and is getting sadly spoilt."

"That is all true, my daughter," he acknowledged; "still I shall not stay here to witness his punishment."

Abigail used the switch as she had intended. The boy had overheard the conversation, and the cries that reached his grandfather as he rode off to the city were unusually loud and appealing. They may have had something to do with the package the good man carried home that night,—cakes and figs and a gay little turban more befitting a young prince than the son of a carpenter.

"Who lives across the street?" asked Joel the morning after their arrival.

"Two old friends of mine," answered Abigail. "They came to see me last

night as soon as they heard I had arrived. You children were all asleep. We talked late, for they wanted to hear all I could tell them of Rabbi Jesus. He was here last year, and Martha said he and her brother Lazarus became fast friends. Ah, there is Lazarus now!—that young man just coming out of the house. He is a scribe, and goes up to write in one of the rooms of the Temple nearly every day.

"Mary says some of the copies of the Scriptures he has made are the most beautifully written that she has ever seen."

"See!" exclaimed Joel, "he has dropped one of the rolls of parchment he was carrying, and does not know it. I'll run after him with it."

He was hardly yet accustomed to the delight of being so fleet of foot; no halting step now to hinder him. He almost felt as if he were flying, and was by the young man's side nearly as soon as he had started.

"Ah, you are the guest of my good neighbour, Reuben," Lazarus said, after thanking him courteously. "Are you not the lad whose lameness has just been healed by my best friend? My sisters were telling me of it. It must be a strange experience to suddenly find yourself changed from a helpless cripple to such a strong, straight lad as you now are. How did it make you feel?"

"Oh, I can never begin to tell you, Rabbi Lazarus," answered Joel. "I did not even think of it that moment when he held my hand in his. I only thought how much I loved him. I had been starving before, but that moment he took the place of everything,—father, mother, the home love I had missed,—and more than that, the love of God seemed to come down and fold me so close and safe, that I knew he was the Messiah. I did not even notice that I was no longer lame, until I was far down the beach. Oh, you do not know how I wanted to follow him! If I could only have gone with him instead of coming here!"

"Yes, my boy, I know!" answered the young man, gently; "for I, too, love him."

This strong bond of sympathy between the two made them feel as if they had known each other always.

"Come walk with me a little way," said Lazarus. "I am going up to Jerusalem to the Temple. Or rather, would you not like to come all the way? I have only to carry these rolls to one of the priests, then I will be at liberty to show you some of the strange sights in the city."

Joel ran back for permission. Only stopping to wind his white linen turban around his head, he soon rejoined his new-found friend.

His recollection of Jerusalem was a very dim, confused one. Time and time again he had heard pilgrims returning from the feasts trying to describe their feelings when they had come in sight of the Holy City. Now as they turned with the road, the view that rose before him made him feel how tame their descriptions had been.

The morning sun shone down on the white marble walls of the Temple and the gold that glittered on the courts, as they rose one above the other; tower and turret and pinnacle shot back a dazzling light.

It did not seem possible to Joel that human hands could have wrought such magnificence. He caught his breath, and uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

Lazarus smiled at his pleasure. "Come," he said, "it is still more beautiful inside."

They went very slowly through Solomon's Porch, for every one seemed to know the young man, and many stopped to speak to him. Then they crossed the Court of the Gentiles. It seemed like a market-place; for cages of doves were kept there for sale, and lambs, calves, and oxen bleated and lowed in their stalls till Joel could scarcely hear what his friend was saying, as they pushed their way through the crowd, and stood before the Gate Beautiful that led into the Court of the Women.

Here Lazarus left Joel for a few moments, while he went to give the rolls to the priest for whom he had copied them.

Joel looked around. Then for the first time since his healing, he wondered if it would be possible for him to ever take his place among the Levites, or become a priest as he had been destined.

While he wondered, Lazarus came back and led him into the next court. Here he could look up and see the Holy Place, over which was trained a golden vine, with clusters of grapes as large as a man's body, all of purest gold. Beyond that he knew was a heavy veil of Babylonian tapestry, hyacinth and scarlet and purple, that veiled in awful darkness the Holy of Holies.

As he stood there thinking of the tinkling bells, the silver trumpets, the clouds of incense, and the mighty songs, a great longing came over him to be one of those white-robed priests, serving daily in the Temple.

But with the wish came the recollection of a quiet hillside, where only bird-calls and whir of wings stirred the stillness; where a breeze from the sparkling lake blew softly through the grass, and one voice only was heard, proclaiming its glad new gospel under the open sky. "No," he thought to himself; "I'd rather be with him than wear the High Priest's mitre."

It was almost sundown when they found themselves on the road homeward. They had visited place after place of interest.

Lazarus found the boy an entertaining companion, and the friendship begun that day grew deep and lasting.

(To be continued.)

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.  
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JULY 18, 1896.

THE REWARD OF PERSEVERANCE.

At one of the mills in the city of Boston a boy was wanted; and a piece of paper was tacked to one of the posts, so that all the boys could see it as they passed by. The paper read: "Boy wanted. Call at the office to-morrow morning."

At the time named there was a host of boys at the gate. All were admitted; but the overseer was a little perplexed as to the best way of choosing one from so many, and said he: "Now, boys, when I only want one of you, how can I choose from so many?"

After thinking a moment he invited them into the yard, and driving a nail into one of the large trees, and taking a short stick, told them that the boy who could hit the nail with the stick a little distance from the tree should have the place.

The boys all tried hard; and after three trials, each failed to hit the nail. The boys were told to come again next morning; and this time, when the gate was opened, there was but one boy, who, after being admitted, picked up the stick,

and, throwing it at the nail, hit it every time.

"How is this?" said the overseer. "What have you been doing?"

And the boy, looking up with tears in his eyes, said: "You see, sir, I have a mother; and we are very poor. I have no father, sir, and I thought I would like to get the place, and so help all I can; and, after going home yesterday, I drove a nail into the barn, and have been trying ever since, and have come down this morning to try again."

The boy was admitted to the place. Many years have passed since then, and this boy is now a prosperous and wealthy man; and at the time of an accident at the mills he was the first to step forward with a gift of five hundred dollars to relieve the sufferers. His success came by perseverance.—Exchange.

Outdone by a Boy.

He looked very small for a boy of ten. As he stood before a group of men, and asked for work with a modest air, "I will do your errands," he said, "with care."

They laughed, and with words that shall be unsaid they faked till his face with pain grew red.

"You are built," said one, "on a limited plan—

You never will make a full-grown man. Then another—"I'm sure it's not very wise

To expect much work from a chap of your size."

The youngster looked at the bearded men—

"I'm small," said he, "and I'm only ten. And you are grown up and know a lot. But I can do something that you cannot."

"What's that?" they cried, "It will strike us dumb,

To be cast in the shade by young Hop o' my thumb,

"I can keep from swearing," the boy replied.

And the little form grew dignified.

He turned, but he did not hear one say, "That's a sermon I'll not forget to-day."

PUMPING MACHINES.

"Two many pumping machines at Cousin Clara's," said a lady. "I cannot allow my little boy to go there alone; they quiz him like lawyers about our affairs. Of course we have our little secrets that we like to keep in the family, but what Henry knows they extract from him, merely out of idle curiosity."

"O, I hate to call there," said a young lady, alluding to a family in the town where she lived. "Mrs. G— and Madge are so inquisitive. They'll ask me where I got my dress, how much I paid a yard, how many yards I had, who made it, and a dozen other questions about that and anything else new that I chance to have on. And when they've exhausted my clothing they'll take up mother's in the same fashion. We only go there once a year. They haven't half so many friends as they would have if they weren't so inquisitive. People don't like pumping machines."

It is true that inquisitive people rarely have many friends. Idle curiosity, a desire to pry into the affairs of others, begets rudeness, which repels even a child.

"Aunt Caroline presses me awfully with questions," declared a little nine-year-old-girl the other day.

"How so?" inquired a friend.

"O, she asks if papa and mamma get cross, and if Aunt Frances is going to be married, and everything like that; and it makes me feel nervous-like. I don't like to go there."

Aunt Caroline had thought to quiz her with impunity. But the little girl was quick to discern a pumping machine.

We might say that the pumping machine is a gossip in training. Don't pry into other people's personal affairs. Don't "wonder" about them, don't think about them, don't talk about them. Pertinent curiosity is almost the sure mark of a vulgar mind.—Youth's Companion.