

AN AMBITIOUS ARTIST.

What are you painting, under the trees,
Where the grasses wave in the soft spring
breeze?

Such a big jar! Dear me, I'm afraid
You'll have to give up, my quaint little
maid.

Trying to paint it, for truly I doubt
If your brush and your colors will ever
hold out.

It is so large, and you are so small
You'll never be able to paint it all!
Better to choose—don't you think so,
too?—

Something that isn't as big as you,
And do it well, than to daub away
With your tiny brush on such widths of
clay!

It isn't always wise to try
The very biggest thing you spy.
Begin with little—and then, you know,
You can do the big things when you
grow.

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN.

LESSON IV.—JANUARY 22.

THE FIRST MIRACLE IN CANA.

John 2. 1-11. Memorize verse 11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.—
John 2. 5.

THE LESSON STORY.

When Jesus had his five disciples with him he had begun the building of the Christian Church in a way that others could understand, for all Jews who were teachers (rabbis) had disciples. After three days they went with him back to Galilee, and there he found an invitation to a wedding at Cana, a little city among the hills. His mother was to be there. Did he say, "No, I have my work to do"? Not at all. He took his disciples and went to Cana. Perhaps the bride and groom, or their parents, were friends of Jesus and of Mary, and it would have been unkind to stay away. A Jewish wedding sometimes lasted for a week, and there was plenty of food and wine and mirth. A strange thing happened at this wedding—the wine gave out before the feast was ended! They were in great trouble about it. Mary had great faith in the power of her Son to do what he would, though as yet he had done no miracle. She spoke to Jesus about the lack of wine, and then she whispered to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." So when Jesus told them to fill the six stone water jars with water, they did it. Afterward he told them to draw some from the jars, and carry to the master of the feast. When the master had sipped a

little of it he said that they had kept the best of the wine for the last of the feast. Jesus had turned the water into wine all at once. He does the same thing when he sends water up through the grapevine to the fruit, from which it is afterward made into wine, but this showed that he had divine power to work a miracle.

QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGEST.

Who were the first disciples of Jesus? John, Andrew, Simon, Philip, and Nathanael.

Where did they go with Jesus? Into Galilee.

How long had they been disciples? Three days.

What did Jesus find? That he must go to a wedding at Cana.

With whom did he go? With his mother and with his disciples.

What happened? The wine gave out.

What did Mary do? She spoke about it to Jesus and to the servants.

What stood near? Six large water jars.

What did Jesus do? He told the servants to fill them with water.

What did it become? Wine.

Who served it at Jesus' word? The servants.

What did the master of the feast call it? The best of the wine.

LESSON V.—JANUARY 29.

JESUS AND NICODEMUS.

John 3. 1-15. Memorize verses 14, 15.

GOLDEN TEXT.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John 3. 16.

THE LESSON STORY.

Nicodemus was a "man of the Pharisees," "a ruler of the Jews," and yet he loved and honored Jesus in his heart. Poor man! All his friends among the Pharisees hated Jesus, and were full of pride and of the love of self. What could he do? If he had followed Jesus as those simple fishermen had done he would have been cast out of the temple and the synagogue and despised by all. He wanted the truth, and yet he was too timid to leave all to follow it; so he came to Jesus by night to be taught. He called Jesus "Master," and a "teacher come from God," but Jesus looked deep into his heart, and saw how much he needed the Spirit of life to make it new, and said these solemn words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Then how surprised was Nicodemus! "How can a man be born when he is old?" he said. Then Jesus explained that wonderful thing that we call conversion—regeneration, or getting a new heart. Even Jesus could not explain it so that Nicodemus could understand, for he was too

learned in the old way of thinking to turn easily to the new way. Jesus tried to help him by something he could hear. Perhaps the wind was blowing among the olive trees outside the window, and making the little hanging lamp flicker. Jesus told him that the wind was blowing where it would; they could hear it, but they could not tell where it came from, or where it was going. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

He said much more which you will read and love him for, when you are older. Ask somebody to tell you the story of the serpent in the wilderness.

QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGEST.

Who came to talk with Jesus? Nicodemus.

What did he think of Jesus? That he was a teacher from God.

What did Jesus tell him? That he must be born again.

What did he mean? That he must have the life of the Spirit in his heart.

Could Nicodemus understand him? No.

Why? Because he had learned to think in another way.

Can you see the wind? No, but I can feel it.

Can you see the life in a tree? No.

How do you know that it is there? Because it grows.

Can you also believe in the life of the Spirit? Yes.

What was the brazen serpent a sign of? Christ, our Saviour.

For whom was he lifted up? For all men.

ROBBY AND THE BUBBLES.

"You must not throw your ball, Robby," said mother.

"Why not, mother?"

"Because baby is asleep, and you will disturb him. He is not well, you know."

Robby went and looked at the dear little fellow asleep in his crib.

"I love him," he said. "I'll not wake him."

He took his picture-book and sat down. But he had seen all the pictures very often before.

Mother went to the kitchen and brought back a bowl and pipe.

"Here, dear," she said, "you can blow some bubbles."

It was great fun. The bubbles were streaked with green and gold and red and purple. They sailed high in the air.

When he was done, he said, "Mothers are always doing nice things for little boys."

And mother said, "Little boys can be very sweet to their mothers when they try."

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.