

A CURIOUS CHINESE MANIA.

The tail-cutting mania has at last reached the capital. For the last year or two we have heard of the excitement caused by it in various Southern cities, but till now we have been exempt. During the past few days, however, the whole city has been stirred up; lost cues and paper men have been in everybody's mouth, if they have had little existence elsewhere. There can be no doubt that a few unfortunates have had their much-loved, and by them esteemed most essential, appendages curtailed, and rumor has multiplied the number a hundred-fold. In the Northern city it is said the Southern city has suffered vastly the most, while in the Southern city the report flies that a large proportion of the Northerners are tailless. The same is true of the East and the West. As this is a city of magnificent distances and without rapid transit, the reports have time to grow very large in passing from one portion to another.

The *modus operandi* is supposed to be for the dealers in the black art to make paper men sufficient for their purposes, and then by certain incantations they endue them with life, subject to the control of their masters, and ready to execute their commands, either in secretly cutting off cues or breaking out in open revolt.

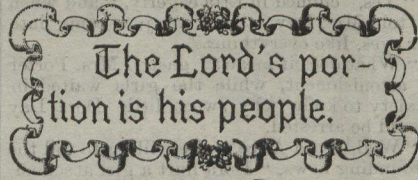
But why should the loss of a little hair cause such excitement and fear? Not so much for the loss itself as for what it is supposed to indicate and portend. The people imagine the paper men are the agents, that the magic-working members of secret societies are the instigators, and that it portends speedy death. Some say that three days is the limit, others say seven days, others still grant a life-lease for a hundred days, and there are some who think that if a certain charm is at once prepared and swallowed, it has sufficient potency to counteract the evil influence and cast out the death-power already working in the system. But here, as elsewhere, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." One cannot doubt the resources or the readiness of the Chinese when we see the number of remedies and safeguards proposed. I will mention one or two as samples. Certain characters, found in no dictionary and to which no meaning is attached, but are said to have been made known by geni, are to be written and put up over the door or braided in with the hair. This charm, is to be written on yellow paper and with vermilion ink. If it is mixed with blood drawn from the comb of a cock, the charm will be doubly infallible.

It is said also that these paper men cannot stand water. In the eighteenth year of the Emperor Chia Ch'ing, 1814, so the story runs, the professors of black art made a great disturbance here in Peking, coming very near getting possession of the palace and overthrowing the government. The first that was known a man who was taking coal into the palace in the evening was killed, when suddenly the whole palace was found swarming with strangers, many of whom were found perching on the beams and on the various projections of the buildings. The Crown Prince bravely seized his firearms and attempted to shoot some of them, but at first failed. He then went to the chief eunuch and asked for balls, but he would not give him any. The prince then tore some buttons off from his clothes and succeeded in killing two of the assailants, when suddenly, by the miraculous interposition of Heaven, there fell a great shower of rain and destroyed all the intruders. In the morning the ground was found covered with paper men. With full faith in this story a great many people now fill a vessel with water and place it inside their doors at night, expecting the paper man, if he comes, to be overcome by the sight of the water, or, by the vapor which rises from it, to fall in and be transformed into paper. I have not heard, however, that any have been caught in the trap.

The government, I hear, has offered a reward for the apprehension of any member of the secret societies. Some are reported to have been arrested on suspicion, and if so, will very likely suffer, even if innocent, as the officials will deem a display of severity of importance. Placards are posted up throughout the city. They profess to be put up with the benevolent design of telling the people how they may guard against the danger; how the charm should be written and used, or at what temples offerings should be made. But as this tends to bring a rich harvest to the charm-vendors and the priests, one is not only inclined to consider these placards as advertisements issued anonymously, but also to suspect that these persons have had a hand in getting up the excitement, even if not actually guilty of the tail-cutting.

There is no general excitement against foreigners or native Christians, as though the paper men came from them, though one placard appeared attempting to implicate them. This has been sent to the foreign Ministers for their action. The people attend the mission chapel quite as much, and seem to listen as quietly and attentively as before the excitement.

Rain has been falling all day to-day, and if it does not destroy the paper men it will be invaluable for the crops. This is the second rain this spring, which, together with the snow which fell during the winter, gives such good hopes of a harvest that the high prices of provisions have begun to decline in this section. But there is still much suffering among the poor, and we know it is much more severe further South. Many are actually starving in Shantung, and others are leaving their homes to seek for work and food in other places.—*Cor. N. Y. Observer.*



DEUT. 32 : 9.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1877, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON XI.

SEPTEMBER 9.

PAUL AT EPHESUS. [About 55-57 A. D.]

READ Acts xix. 1-12. RECITE vs. 3-6.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—Acts xix. 1-12. T.—1 Cor. iii. 1-11. W.—Acts viii. 9-24. Th.—Matt. iii. 1-12. F.—1 Cor. xiv. 1-15. Sa.—Heb. iii. 7-19. S.—Mark xvi. 14-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.—1 Thess. i. 5.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Holy Ghost gives grace and power.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Paul was accused before Gallio (a brother of the famous Seneca), proconsul at Corinth, but his Jewish accusers were dismissed with contempt by Gallio. Paul some time after left Corinth for Syria; he stopped on his way at Ephesus, having left Aquila and Priscilla there, and promising to return; he sailed to Caesarea, went to Jerusalem and to Antioch in Syria. After remaining at Antioch some time he started on his third missionary journey (lasting about four years), and reached Ephesus.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Notice how Paul instructs John's disciples, and how divine power is given to him in his work for Christ in this noted seat of idolatry.

NOTE.—*Eph-e-sus*, a chief commercial and free city of the East; capital of the province of Asia; situated on a plain near the sea; in Paul's time had three noted buildings: (1.) *Temple of Diana*, one of the Seven Wonders of the world, was 220 years in building; was of the purest marble, 425 feet long, 220 feet wide; supported by 27 columns 60 feet high, cut out of Parian marble, each column being given by a king, and 36 of them carved by the famous sculptor Scopas; the massive doors were of carved cypress, the halls filled with famous statuary and paintings; in the centre an image of the goddess Diana. (2.) *The theatre* said to be the largest of its kind, and excavated out of rock upon the side of Mount Orion; built by the Greeks, and capable of holding 50,000 spectators. (3.) *The stadium*, or circus, 685 feet long, and 200 feet wide; the place for races, wrestlings, fights with wild beasts, etc. Ephesus is now in ruins. *A-pol-los*, a Jew of Alexandria, learned in the Scriptures, eloquent; preached at Corinth, Ephesus, and other places; Luther conjectures that he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. *Ty-ran-nus*, a teacher of a private Jewish school, or a Greek teacher of rhetoric and philosophy at Ephesus.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I) PAUL AND JOHN'S DISCIPLES. (II) PAUL'S PREACHING AND MIRACLES AT EPHESUS.

I. PAUL AND JOHN'S DISCIPLES. (1.) APOLLOS, see Notes; UPPER COASTS, old English for "districts," hence "inland districts." Acts xviii. 23. (2.) HAVE YE, etc., "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when [not 'since'] ye believed?"—(A)ford; WE HAVE, etc., "We did not hear whether there is a Holy Ghost."—(A)lexander. (3.) JOHN'S BAPTISM, John the Baptist, Matt. iii. (4.) CAME AFTER HIM, John i. 15. (6.) SPAKE WITH TONGUES, Acts ii. 4; x. 46; PROPHESED, preached by inspiration. Acts ii. 17.

I. QUESTIONS.—State the title of the last lesson. Of this lesson. State the events mentioned as occurring between them. On which of his missionary journeys was Paul at this time? When had he before been at Ephesus? For how long? Who were left there? Through what countries did he now reach Ephesus? Where was Apollos at this time? Describe his character. What disciples did Paul find at Ephesus? How question them? State their answer. Paul's further question. Their reply. Paul's view of John's work. The new baptism. Into whose name? The effect on them? Where similar effects are noted? The number of these disciples?

II. PAUL'S WORK AND MIRACLES AT EPHESUS. (S.) DISPUTING, PERSUADING, arguing, convincing, proving. (9.) DIVERS, old English for "several," "many;" WERE HARDENED, Rom. ix. 8; SEPARATED THE DISCIPLES—that is, from the Jews in the synagogue; SCHOOL, TYRANNUS, see Notes. (10.) TWO YEARS, after removing to the school of Tyrannus; Paul preached three years in Ephesus, see Acts xx. 31; ASIA, see Notes.

(11.) SPECIAL MIRACLES—that is, uncommon, extraordinary miracles. (12.) FROM HIS BODY—that is, after touching him with them; HANDKERCHIEFS, called also "napkins" in Luke xix. 20 and John xi. 44; strictly, "sweet-cloths" for wiping the sweat from the face; APRONS, such as artisans and workmen wore.

II. QUESTIONS.—In what building did Paul first preach at Ephesus? How long? State the subjects of his preaching. Why did he leave the synagogue? Where go to preach? Who were taken with him? How long did he preach in this school? How long in Ephesus? How widely was the gospel spread there by him? What kind of miracles did he perform? By what means? State the two kinds of afflicted persons healed.

What facts in this lesson teach us—

- (1.) The importance of receiving a special gift of the Holy Spirit?
- (2.) That hearing and resisting the gospel hardens men in sin?
- (3.) That Jesus has power to destroy the evil spirit in men now?

ILLUSTRATION.—*Handkerchiefs.* In the East handkerchiefs are wrought with the needle by women, as tapestry and embroidery are worked among us. Young women of the East make them as presents for their fathers, brothers, and lovers. They are almost constantly carried in the hand in those warm countries to wipe off the sweat.

Work of the Holy Spirit. "To unconverted persons a great part of the Bible resembles a letter written in unknown characters. The blessed Spirit's office is to give the key and clue to those sweet mysteries of grace which were before as a garden shut up or as a book written in cipher."—(T)opladý

Power of the Holy Spirit. "Tell me," said a father to his son, "what difference you can detect between two needles, one of which has received electricity, whilst the other has none. Electricity renders the one needle a magnet, which will enable man to find his way across the trackless ocean. As this needle, so may that soul be which has received the Holy Ghost; on the ocean of a sinful world it shall point wanderers to the safe harbor of everlasting rest."

LESSON XII.

SEPTEMBER 16.

POWER OF THE WORD. [About 56-57 A. D.]

READ Acts xix. 17-28. RECITE vs. 17-20.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—Acts xix. 17-28. T.—Acts ii. 37-47. W.—1 John i. Th.—Isa. iv. 6-13. F.—Rom. xv. 20-32. Sa.—2 Tim. iv. 16-22. S.—Acts xvi. 16-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.—Heb. iv. 12.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Word of God triumphs.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Some Jewish magicians attempted to imitate the miracles of Paul at Ephesus, but were overcome of the demons, and the name of Jesus was magnified.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Read Acts xix. vs. 13-41, to get the whole of the narrative; notice that the Ephesian converts gave good proofs of their sincerity by burning their bad books rather than selling them for a great price.

NOTES.—*Books*, written rolls of parchment containing secret directions for sorcerers and magicians, and sold at a great price. *A-cha-i-a*, the southern portion of the Grecian Peninsula; Greece proper, as distinguished from Macedonia; in Paul's time it was a Roman province governed by a "deputy" or proconsul; Gallio became proconsul about A. D. 53. *E-ras-tus*, one of Paul's helpers, was at Corinth, 2 Tim. iv. 20; another Erastus was treasurer at Corinth, and is referred to in Rom. xvi. 23. *De-me-tri-us*, a wealthy silversmith of Ephesus. *Silver shrines*, probably small silver models of the Temple of Diana.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I) THE REVIVAL AT EPHESUS. (II) THE MESSENGERS TO MACEDONIA. (III) MOB OF THE IDOL-MAKERS.

I. THE REVIVAL AT EPHESUS. (17.) THIS, the evil spirits' attack on the Jewish sorcerers, vs. 14-16; WAS MAGNIFIED, honored, extolled. (18.) SHEWED THEIR DEEDS, explained and exposed their superstitious practices. (19.) CURIOUS ARTS, secret tricks; books, see Notes; FIFTY THOUSAND PIECES, literally "five myriads of silver," probably 50,000 drachmas, equal to about \$8,000. (20.) MIGHTILY, by force the word grew.

I. QUESTIONS.—Who tried to imitate the miracles of Paul? With what result on themselves? What effect had it on others at Ephesus? Whose name was magnified? State the meaning of "magnified." How many believed? Of what class? What did they confess and expose? What burn? The value of the works burned? What grew and prevailed? What is meant by "the word grew?"

II. THE MESSENGERS TO MACEDONIA. (21.) PURPOSED, planned in his mind; MUST . . . SEE ROME, see also Rom. xv. 23, 29 (probably written after he left Ephesus). (22.) MINISTERED, serving or aiding him; ERASTUS, see Notes.

II. QUESTIONS.—Whither did Paul plan to go? When did he reach Rome, and how? Acts xviii. 16. Who were sent into Macedonia? Where did the apostle stay? Describe "Asia."

III. MOB OF THE IDOL-MAKERS. (24.) DEMETRIUS, SHRINES, see Notes; CRAFTSMEN, artisans, silver-workers. (25.) THIS CRAFT, this trade. (26.) THROUGHOUT ALL ASIA, the Roman province of Asia; MUCH PEOPLE, literally "a sufficient crowd;" NO GODS, Ps. cxxv. 4-8, Acts xvii. 29. (27.) SET AT NAUGHT, or "come to nothing" or to shame; TEMPLE . . . DIANA,

"Gain was his first plea; his second was false piety mixed with pride."—(J)acobus. (28.) FULL OF WRATH, anger; false religionists are often full of wrath.

III. QUESTIONS.—What arose in Ephesus before Paul left? Who led the silversmiths? Why were they aroused? How did Demetrius first appeal to them? v. 25. State his charge against Paul. His second plea to his fellow-tradersmen. What were the shrines? Describe the temple of Diana. How did the tradesmen show their excitement and anger?

What facts in this lesson teach us—

- (1.) That the power of Christ will overcome enemies and strengthen friends?
- (2.) That true converts will forsake unlawful business and destroy their wicked works and possessions?
- (3.) That gain and self-interest may blind men to true religion?

ILLUSTRATION.—*Do nothing rashly.* "The counsel of the town-clerk at Ephesus was, 'Do nothing rashly.' A gentleman was accustomed to say, when pressed to do anything of consequence in haste, 'Let us first advise with the town-clerk of Ephesus.' One may do that in haste which he may repent at leisure—may do what may cost him hundreds of pounds, besides the trouble which he would not have undergone for thousands."—(C)otton Mather.)

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THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER OF THE DOMINION Monthly contain the beginning of an illustrated article by Col. Gray, entitled "On the Stickine." The Stickine is a river in Alaska, up which Col. Gray recently made a trip, the account of which he presents to our readers.

GOOD HEALTH AND AN EVEN TEMPER ARE two of the best accomplishments young ladies can have, and these are necessary adjuncts to a beautiful face. The marks of a peevish disposition are not long in stamping themselves on any face, naturally the most beautiful. But who can help feeling peevish when ill-health comes? Very few, indeed, more especially when it is entirely unnecessary. A bad cold, if obtained in carrying words of comfort to a sick friend, is endurable; but it is difficult to enjoy one taken through an act of bravado. Just so when young ladies become invalids through obeying the dictates of that fashion which says: "Put on corsets and lace them as tightly as possible," and others of a similar kind, they find that everything has been lost and nothing found. With the growth of the knowledge of the human system, fashion will begin to obey sanitary laws. The publishers of DRESS AND HEALTH have done much to direct public attention in this matter. This little book has met with a cordial reception in England, Ireland and Scotland, as well as in Canada, and the sixth thousand is now ready for sale. For 30 cents each copy will be sent post free to any address in America.

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