

Our Young Folks.

DANDELIONS.

Where did you gather your grains of gold,
Hoarding them up in the dark-brown mould,
Under the lid of the grass-grown sod?
Oh! but who showed you this gold of God?

Never by culture of human hand
Spreading your beauty athwart the land,
Kissed by the ambient morning air,
Mayhap the angels your gardeners were.

Delicate clusters of seeds with wings,
Catching the wind-skirts, the fairy things,
Leaping at will to the grass-grown ground,
When a new place for a nest is found.

Oh! but your beauty of gold and grey,
Ever and ever it seems to say,
Flowing and soft in the sunlit dew,
Doth not your Father care more for you?

HOPE FOR HIM.

How often do we hear a parent say of a mischievous boy: "I would not mind so much if I could only believe him." Whatever his other traits, truth is essentially the touchstone of a boy's character. The following is a case in point:—"I don't know that you will be able to do much with him," said a father to the principal of a school, to whom he had brought his son as a pupil, "he is so full of mischief." "Does he tell the truth?" asked the principal. "Can I always depend upon his word?" "O, yes," said the father, "he is honest, he will tell the truth, even when it is against himself; you may depend upon that." "Then we can manage him," said the principal. "He will make a reliable, manly man."

JERUSALEM.

How wonderful it seems to us that we are really in Jerusalem, you can scarcely imagine—a city about which cluster a thousand memories of our Saviour; and Palestine, a country where nearly every inch of the ground is a sacred spot. We reached Jaffa on Tuesday morning after a lovely sail of two days from Alexandria, the blue Mediterranean kindly favouring us as other seas have done, and being calm and smooth all the way. Jaffa looked very picturesque as we approached from the sea, standing on its rocky cliff, and we found it no less picturesque on a nearer acquaintance, though decidedly dirtier. It is full of narrow, crooked streets, with steps going up and arched doorways, and we saw many a bit fit to make a charming water-colour. The blue, blue sky, and some old, ruined arch, with green vines climbing over it, or patches of lichen here and there, and some old man or woman sitting in its shadow, were enough to drive an artist wild. We only stayed there half a day, starting the same afternoon in carriages for Jerusalem.

The distance is nearly forty miles, so we did not make it all in one day, but went about twelve miles that afternoon and stopped for the night at Ramleh, where is an old Crusader tower from the top of which is a beautiful view of the hills of Judea, Benjamin, and Ephraim, and the plains eastward to the sea. Our guide pointed out many sites of places famous in Bible days. We saw Gath where Goliath was born and also saw the place where Samson caught the three hundred foxes and tied fire-brands to their tails. We crossed the Plain of Sharon where the fields were covered with the brilliant roses of Sharon; but, as you know, they are not roses at all, but red poppies. Through the valley of Ajalon where Joshua commanded the moon to stand still, and up the hills of Judea twenty-five hundred feet, we came to the Holy City, built on four hills and surrounded by battlemented walls pierced by seven gates. Our hotel is just outside of the walls and not far from the Jaffa Gate, and from our window we can see the village of Bethlehem, six miles away to the southward, and around to the east we can see Olivet and the Garden of Gethsemane, the valley of Kedron and Jehoshaphat, the tombs of Absalom and the Virgin.

One thing surprises us here—to find Palestine on such a small scale. Places seem so near together, and you can see so very much in so very little time. One of our most delightful personal experiences has been our trip of three days to Jericho and the Jordan, with two nights spent in camp on the site of ancient Jericho. We went on horses, and were all very tired with the six or seven hours a day spent in the saddle. But everything else was so enjoyable, and you have no idea how comfortable they can make one in camp. We had the prettiest tents, white outside, and lined inside with gay-coloured Arabian stuff, Turkish rugs on floor, iron beds and comfortable bedding, wash-stand with two tin basins and pitchers, brass candlestick, etc. The dining tent, larger than the rest, had a long table covered with a nice, white tablecloth, a vase of flowers at each end, and camp chairs for us to sit on. We had regular *table d'hôte* dinner nicely cooked and served. The servants were all so kind and pleasant, and we had besides on this trip a mounted guard sent by the sheik to protect us against robbers. He wore a caffieh on his head, carried a curious long sword, and rode a fine Arab steed—a handsome roan—and altogether he was so picturesque that I was quite proud to have him in our train.

We went to the Dead Sea, about ten miles from Jericho. Then we went to the Jordan, and found it a muddy stream swollen by spring rains. We saw the place where the Israelites crossed on dry ground, and also the spot where our Saviour was said to have been baptized. Elisha's fountain was a pretty little spring right near our camp, and we saw a part of the old wall of Jericho which fell down when Joshua blew the trumpet. Jerusalem is a most interesting city, but I'm sorry to say not much cleaner than any other Oriental city. The streets, many of them, are arched entirely over, and are as dark as Egypt, narrow and winding and up and down stairs.

THE STORY OF ISAI DAI.

Many years ago a missionary in India baptized a convert from idolatry, calling him Isai Dai, which means the servant of God. Isai Dai afterwards became an active preacher of the Gospel, suffering many things because of his renunciation of his paternal religion.

One day when he was journeying on foot he was attacked in a forest by robbers.

"Who are you?" they asked him, abruptly.
"I am a preacher," replied the man. "And you, friends, who are you?"

"That's none of your business," was the rough reply.
"And don't say 'friends' to us; we are all your enemies. Where is your money?"

"I have not much, only five *annas*."
He gave them what money he had, and a watch which a missionary had given him a year before, adding, "You have not found my most precious treasure."

The robbers, surprised at this, commanded him to give it up at once.

"In one minute," was the reply, and then Isai Dai began to sing a Christian hymn.

The robbers listened in attentive silence. When the hymn was finished he began to tell them about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, saying that He was the greatest treasure in the world. When he ceased the head robber said:—

"Friend, you have found the key to our hearts. You have conquered us; but you must come with us."

Then, giving back his coat and his watch and mounting the preacher upon a horse, they hastened away to their home, where the head robber was Mayor.

Arrived there he said to the preacher: "You must stay here. My wife is sick, and if you are a man of God you must cure her."

"By the grace of God," replied Isai Dai; "I can do it no other way."

Having already had some experience in sickness, he made a medicine, and praying to God with all his heart, the woman in time recovered.

After twenty days the mayor said: "Now you are free to return to your own home. But you have benefited us much, therefore take these two *liras* (eight dollars and twenty-five cents) and go." And the preacher went in peace to his home.

WAS SHE?

In a west-end horse-car the other day sat a girl dressed as a well-dressed girl should be. If she owned diamonds she had left them at home. She wore good and simple clothes and had a quiet, self-contained manner. Beside her sat another girl, with diamond ear-rings, a much-feathered hat, and a general air of thinking nothing too good for her. The two girls were talking, and it soon appeared that they had come from the same school. Presently the conductor came along.

The girl with the diamond ear-rings gave him a nickel, and mentioned the street where she wished to stop with an air that was nothing short of arrogance. Then the low voice of the well-dressed girl, said, gently: "Will you please stop at Arlington Street?" and the other, who had said Berkeley Street, exclaimed "After all, I'll get out when you do." When they left the car, the well-dressed girl said a gentle "thank you" to the conductor who had remembered her wish, and had taken care to stop in precisely the right place.

"Well, I must say," remarked the other girl, as they walked along, "you could not have thanked that man any more graciously if he had been the handsomest fellow in Boston, and had just brought you a bunch of orchids."

The well-dressed girl smiled—what a bright, winsome smile it was.

"Don't you think," she answered, "that there is a certain kind of pleasure in being courteous to those who don't expect it? The people who are used to pleasant speeches take them as a matter of course. I think those to whom almost everybody is rather curt must like a change once in a while."

The girl of the diamond ear-rings looked at her companion a little curiously for a moment.

"You are a crank," she said at length, as if she had found in her own mind the word of the enigma.

"You are a crank, that's what you are; but I think you are a nice kind of a crank, after all."

You see it is all in the point of view. Perhaps the High Priest and the Levite would have thought the Good Samaritan a crank if they had happened to look back and see what he did when he came up to the man they had "passed by on the other side."

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES.

John 1: 29-42.

GOLDEN TEXT—Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—John i. 29

INTRODUCTORY.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, had been engaged for several months in the exercise of his ministry, preaching the doctrine of repentance, warning the people against the evils to which they were prone and baptizing all who gave evidence of change of heart and life. Jesus was at this time just entering on His public ministry. He had been baptized by John, the Spirit of God descended upon Him, He had been led into the wilderness and was tempted by the devil; and now He was on the east side of the Jordan at a village named Bethabara, where John bore direct testimony to Him that He was the Messiah, and where He gathered around Him His first disciples.

I. Jesus the Lamb of God.—The day before that on which John bore his direct testimony to Jesus he had himself been asked who he was, whether he was not the Christ. This he emphatically denied, and stated that he had been sent to bear witness of Him. Now as he sees Jesus approach he says to all within hearing: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." It is generally understood that in so describing Jesus, John had in his mind the prophecy of Isaiah in the fifty-third chapter, where the Saviour is spoken of as being "led as a lamb to the slaughter." It is significant that this first direct reference to Jesus represents Him as an atoning sacrifice. It is not wonderful that He is so represented, since His atoning death for sin is the central truth of Christ's first mission to this world. He is the sacrificial Lamb to which all the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed. He was the reality of which they were only the symbol and shadow. He came to take away sin, by bearing its punishment for mankind, that His righteousness might be imputed to them. He is taking away the sin of the world. The atonement made by Jesus Christ is sufficient to take away the sin of the human race. The pardon which it brings is freely offered to all. The only condition is the acceptance by faith of Christ's offered mercy. As the Lamb of God John pointed out Jesus, and all Christ's messengers to-day have still the same gracious truth to proclaim. John goes on to say that Jesus is the person to whom he had previously referred when he said: "After me cometh a man which is preferred before me." Jesus followed John in the order of time, but He was before him in dignity and office, and He was before John because of eternal existence. John tells his hearers that he at first did not know Jesus as the Messiah. Now he understands that Jesus is the Christ and realizes the meaning of his own mission, that his ministry and baptism were preparatory evidences to Christ's person and His saving work.

II. Jesus the Messiah.—Whatever ideas John the Baptist may have had of Jesus before His baptism, he was then convinced beyond doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. He states to those who heard him the evidence that had so powerfully influenced himself. The Holy Spirit in visible form when, "descending as a dove out of heaven," it rested upon Him. Up to that time John did not know that Jesus was the Christ, but he had been divinely instructed that He on whom the Spirit should be seen to descend and rest, is the One who "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." John's baptism with water was typical of Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit. The figure under which John saw the Spirit descend on Jesus at His baptism was that of a dove, emblematic of the fruits of the Spirit in the hearts of all those that are opened to His reception—the gentleness, the purity, and the peace that are the possession of all who are born again. The conclusion to which he comes from the evidence presented to him is emphatic. "And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

III. Jesus' Disciples.—On the day following that on which John had borne his emphatic testimony that Jesus is the Son of God, John was standing with two of his disciples. Looking intently on Jesus as He walked, John said to his two disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God"—the very words he had used the day before. These words were an intimation to the disciples that henceforth not John but Christ was to be their Master. All successful teaching prepares the pupils for the acceptance of Jesus as the Master. So those who became the first disciples of Jesus understood. They followed after Christ, literally it is true, but also from that time on, spiritually as well. Christ is ever ready to meet and welcome the enquiring spirit. He turned towards them and asked them what they sought, making it easy for them to approach Him and to open up their minds. In reply they address Him as Rabbi, which is explained in the text as Master. Rabbi is the Hebrew form, and the Greek equivalent by which the evangelist explains it to his readers, signifies teacher. The term is also expressive of the reverence and respect in which the instructor is held by his scholars. The two disciples ask Jesus "Where dwellest thou?" Up to that time Jesus was a resident in Galilee, to which he returned the next day. He invited them to go with Him to his temporary lodging, and spend the rest of the day in His company. How these two disciples must have enjoyed the teaching of the Master. It was a new revelation to them. The hours would apparently speed swiftly away. He won their hearts and they were His forevermore. The name of one of the disciples is given; it is that of Andrew, the brother of Peter. The name of the other is not given, but there is good reason to suppose that it was John the evangelist, who rarely names himself in his narrative. When reference is made to him he speaks of "that other disciple," or "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It is highly probable, therefore, that John himself was one of the two first disciples of Jesus who were directed to Him by John the Baptist, and who spent the evening with Christ in His temporary dwelling at Bethabara. There is not very much definitely known about Andrew but his first action on coming himself to Christ has become forever memorable. "He first findeth his own brother Simon." Andrew was himself convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and he is eager to proclaim the truth to others. He finds his own brother and tells him that he had found Christ. Simon believes his brother's testimony, and accompanies him to Jesus. Jesus, who knows what is in man, understood Peter. Hitherto he had been known by the name of Simon, meaning heard or hearing, but now he was to be called Cephas, meaning a stone. Cephas was the Aramaic, the form of the Hebrew language in use in Palestine in our Saviour's days. This word John explains to his Greek readers by using the word Peter, the name by which he was subsequently known by readers of the New Testament. In so naming him, Jesus discerned in Peter the rock-like qualities for which he should afterwards be distinguished. He had his times of weakness and failure, but he was enabled to be faithful unto the end.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

It is the first duty of all preachers and teachers to point out the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Christ alone is the Redeemer from sin.
The Holy Spirit's presence with Christ was an abiding evidence that He was the anointed One, the Son of God.
Christ is ever ready to welcome all who long to be His disciples.
Christ's faithful disciples seek to bring others to Him.