

made a striking picture in a gallery of studies of old age.

And why should there not be such a gallery? It would have a far deeper and wider interest than any gallery of mere Court beauties, or even of Victoria-Cross heroes. For the patriarchs who "have still remembered how to smile" are the conquerors in that hardest struggle of all—the conflict in which we must each win or lose—the battle of life. Ruskin tells all visitors to the National Gallery to go and look at an exquisite portrait of a certain aged Doge, and to ask themselves what must the life have been which resulted in that aspect of calm penetration, mild benevolence, and spiritual refinement, the flesh seeming only required to make the beautiful soul visible to human eyes. A great writer of to-day has said that the beauty of youth is but a heritage, of which it may or may not prove worthy. But the beauty of age is its own. Yet when we see a noble old man or a lovely old lady we are apt to whisper, "What must they have been when they were young?" It is a fallacy. Perhaps they were plain until their faces became a record of high thoughts and gentle deeds. Sometimes, when portraits exist, taken in youth, it is possible to verify this absolutely.

Old age is the sum total of human life. It reveals whether youth has been active and honest, observant of eye, and keen of sympathy. The old age of an indolent, apathetic person has but the value of an old blank book—that probably its binding was strong! The aged have seen the end of many life-stories; they can read personal histories from generation to generation, and from the pedestal of the past they gather power to foresee the future, and to utter the warnings of wisdom. Such an one was given forth by an energetic old lady in the words, "Take care what you wish, my dear; beware of your very prayers. For from all I have seen wishes always come true, and prayers are generally granted."

The one shadow often cast on a good old age is a sense of uselessness. The fading eyes fill with slow tears to feel that the failing feet can no longer run on errands of mercy, that the feeble hands can render no more loving service, sometimes that the faltering tongue can scarcely find the words or guidance it seeks to utter. But the best action of a good old age is actually its peaceful and cheerful rest. We do not want the old folks to do, but to be. Surely it is the very will of God that his servants, who have borne the burden and heat of the longest day, should rest a while in green pastures before they are called to service in another sphere. Life should scarcely be like those cruel taskmasters who will not spare the worn-out horse till it drops down dead in the shafts.

But there are old men or old women left, well cared for, perhaps, but unconvinced by any kind little attentions that they are not a burden or a trial, but a blessing and an honor. It is as much our duty to bear cheerily with the weariness and weakness of age as with the helplessness or fretfulness of infancy. Such duty should not be allowed to present itself as a trial, but as a part of the wholesome and harmonious discipline of life. Nobody is so pathetically grateful for kindness as are the old; yet are they sometimes neglected by those who are full of solicitude for the sick, the stranger, or the sorrowful. And yet to be merely old is really to deserve the sympathy which is extended to all these claims. The physical life of even the healthiest old age is never a pure pleasure. "The grasshopper" is always more or less of "a burden." Long hours of inaction will sometimes grow wearisome, even to the mind most full of brave resource. Those dearest to the heart are gone out of its sight, the friends of to-day are not the friends of its days of strength and labor, of passionate love, and fervent aspiration. There is no loneliness like that of the aged. Every old man lives on his own Patmos. The thoughts of the old are not as our thoughts. Their happiest early life is in the remembrance of a world we never knew. We sit by their side, we hold their hand, and look into their eyes, but their minds are filled by images unknown to us, and their hearts thrill with feelings into which we cannot enter. As we advance in middle life we know something of it, and every year will teach us more. It is a touching picture,

that of a young full life standing by the side of a fading life, which must perforce keep its own secret, despite every yearning confidence.

We can never show the old a greater kindness than by showing any sign that the vanished past is still cherished on the earth, if not for its own sake, then for theirs. There comes a time of life and experience when the mere remembrance of one's birthday by a friend seems the best pledge that it may have "many happy returns." Let us be careful of such matters. Let us love the aged as much as ever they will let us. Even those of them who cannot be said to have borne the burden and heat of the day, have at least been through them; and it is not for those who are putting on their armor to judge too harshly of those who are putting it off.

Those saddest days may come at last, when the mind totters on its throne, and reason gradually withdraws from the mechanism she can no longer use. Even there a rare triumph is reserved for some, as for one dear old friend who, when she heard her grandchildren's eager discussions on ethics and politics, and detected glances which seemed seeking her opinion, would say, "Ah, my dears, I don't feel quite equal to following that into all its ins and outs, so I won't venture to say anything about it." In her case the soul gleamed triumphant apart from decay, simply declining to use the tools which could no longer do real work. She must indeed have been a right-minded and impartial woman all her days, to have attained such knowledge of our ever-shifting "personal equation."

"Be the day weary, or be the day long,
At length it ringeth to evensong."

The twilight must come at last. The mourners shall go about the streets in the end, even for the oldest of us. The burden of the flesh shall be laid down. The old man or the old woman shall rise up and go out, leaving the empty place behind them. And then they shall find the Past in the Future, and the wisdom, and tenderness, and patience learned in their quiet waiting shall be the blood, and the strength, and the beauty of their immortal youth.

"With long life will I satisfy him,"
and—then—"show him my salvation."
—English Paper.

WILLING.

A king whose state was marvellous for splendor,
Whose royal city shone
Gorgeous with every grandeur that could render
Due honor to his throne,—

Had kept his son from court for sterner training,
Through disciplines profound.
The better so to perfect him for reigning
What time he should be crowned.

And now the day was set for his returning
From that far province where
Had passed his nonage; and the king was yearning
To hail the expectant heir.

So a proud embassy was missioned, bearing
Word that, probation done,
The monarch, who for years had been preparing
Fit empire for his son,

At length desired that he should take possession
Of his full birthright dower—
The honor, glory, good beyond expression,
Withheld until that hour.

What said the banished? Did ostatic pleasure
Give to his spirit wings
Whose eagerness, in overmastering measure,
Outsoared the waiting king's?

Nay—when they told the message of the father,
There was a startled pause
A strange, reluctant look, as though he rather
Would linger where he was.

Yet since the embassy was urgent, stilling
Whatever secret throo
It cost to leave his exile he was "willing,"
Half-sad, he said, "to go."

Ungracious heart!—to wound with hesitation
Such love?—to hear the call
Homeward, without one rapturous exultation—
"Willing," and that was all!

—Margaret J. Preston.

HE WHO STEALS a little steals with the same wish as he who steals much, but with less power.—Plato, B. C. 427.

WE CAN NEVER see this world in its true light unless we consider our life in it as a state of discipline, a condition through which we are passing to prepare us for another state beyond.—J. W. Alexander.

THE MOURNING GARB.

"The worst feature of the custom is the burden it puts upon the poor. They cannot afford to break over the custom, for they do not set the fashions, but follow them. So they deny themselves the comforts, and often the necessities of life, to put on black. Only the well-to-do can lift this load from the shoulders of their fellows. Let the leaders of society once set an example in this matter, and the thing would be done. We do not argue for the entire abolition of mourning emblems. The black band which a gentleman wears on his hat is inexpensive; detracts nothing from comfort, and is evidence to all who see him that he has lately lost a friend. Why cannot ladies adopt something as simple as this hat-band, some trifling but unmistakable addition to the ordinary dress? It would serve all purposes of protection as well as the costly and uncomfortable mourning wardrobe now in vogue. It would obviate the false and often absurd graduation of the scale of sorrow now advertised by the garments. It would enable the poor to do as others do—in cases of bereavement surely a commendable pride—without hardship to the household and injury to the character."—Presbyterian Observer.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON III.—JULY 15.

GOD'S PRESENCE PROMISED.—Ex. 33: 12-23.

COMMIT VERSES 12-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

To, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. 28: 20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God is ever with his children the guide and guard.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Ex. 32: 30-35.
T. Ex. 33: 1-11.
W. Ex. 33: 12-23.
Th. Ex. 34: 1-14.
F. John 1: 1-13.
Sa. 2 Cor. 12: 1-9.
Su. Rev. 1: 7-18.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

12. *Whom thou wilt send*: whether some angel, or whether his own presence. 13. *Show me now thy way*: thy plans and purposes. What thou proposest to do with the people? What thou forgive? What thou lead us on? What is the meaning of the tabernacle, the offerings, the ceremonial? *This nation is thy people*: although they have sinned, thou hast led them out; thou hast redeemed them by wondrous works; thou hast chosen them. 14. *My presence*: in the pillar of cloud and fire; not a mere angel, as in v. 2. *I will give thee rest*: I will bring your work to a successful issue. Rest of victory over enemies; rest in the promised land; rest of a successful work, and all the way, rest in this promise. 16. *So shall we be separated*: distinguished from all others by God's presence, by God's care and protection, by God's word and laws, a higher and nobler people. 18. *Show me thy glory*: more of thy real nature and power. 19. *My goodness pass before thee*: goodness is the chief glory of God. He is as good as he is great. *Proclaim the name*: the nature and character. *Gracious to whom I will be gracious*: all I do is out of pure goodness. But God always wills according to justice, love, and wisdom. There is nothing arbitrary or unreasonable in his decisions. 20. *Women see me and live*: (1) No man while living in the body has the power to see me, or (2) to see him in his glory would be fatal, as looking at the sun destroys the eyes, or intense emotion destroys life. 23. *See my back parts*: his veiled and clouded glory; not his face, the uncovered brightness of his nature.

SUBJECT: THE LORD OF GLORY OUR GUIDE AND GUARD.

QUESTIONS.

I. THE GREAT EVIL AND DANGER INTO WHICH THE ISRAELITES HAD FALLEN.—What was the punishment of their sin? (32: 27.) What further did God threaten? (32: 33.) What great change in God's dealing with the people? (33: 2, 3.) In what way had God hitherto led them? (13: 21, 22.) What position did the pillar of God's presence now take? (33: 7-9.) What marks of sorrow were required of the Israelites? (33: 4, 5.)

II. MOSES' PRAYER FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (vs. 12, 13).—What was Moses' first petition? (v. 12.) What did he wish to know? What was his plea? What was his next petition? (v. 13.) What did he mean by "show me thy way"? What promise like this did Jesus make to his disciples? (John 15: 15.) What was his third request? (v. 13.) Had he not already found grace in God's sight? Can we have too much of this? How may we have grace in God's sight? (Eph. 2: 13; Heb. 4: 16; Ps. 42: 1; 2 Chron. 15: 2.)

III. THE ANSWER: GOD HIS GUARD AND GUIDE (vs. 14-17).—What did God promise Moses? (v. 14.) What was the outward symbol of God's presence? (13: 21, 22.) Why did they need such a guard and guide? How would God's presence separate them from other people?

Why do you need the Lord for your guide? Repeat some Scripture promises in relation to this? (2 Chron. 16: 9; Ps. 50: 15; 91: 1; 37: 23, 24; Isa. 4: 5, 6.) Is there anything better in life than God's presence? How may we have this presence over with us? Can we safely go through life without him?

IV. THE GLORIOUS NATURE OF OUR GUARD AND GUIDE (vs. 18-23).—What greater blessing did Moses now ask of God? Could it be answered in full? (v. 20.) (1 Tim. 6: 15, 16.) How was it answered? (v. 10, 22, 23.) What do you learn from

this about answers to prayer? Is God's goodness his glory? What advantage would it be to Moses to see God? In whom do we see God? (John 1: 14, 18; 14: 9; Col. 1: 13-15.) How can we see more of his glory? (Matt. 5: 8; John 11: 16-18.) What good will this do us? (2 Cor. 3: 18; 1 John 3: 2.)

LESSON IV.—JULY 22.

FREE GIFTS FOR THE TABERNACLE.—Ex. 35: 20-29.

COMMIT VERSES 21-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

God loveth a cheerful giver.—2 Cor. 9: 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

It is a great privilege to give freely for God's cause.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Ex. 34: 1-35.
T. Ex. 35: 1-19.
W. Ex. 35: 20-25.
Th. 2 Cor. 9: 1-15.
F. Neh. 4: 17-23; 7: 70-72.
Sa. 1 Chron. 29: 1-17.
Su. 1 Tim. 6: 6-21.

TIME.—Autumn, B.C. 1491.

PLACE.—The Valley of Rahab, before Mount Sinai.

INTRODUCTION.—In our last lesson God answered Moses' prayer for the continued presence of God with the people, and had shown Moses his glory. After this, Moses was again summoned up into the mount, whither he went, with two new tables of stone, on which God would again write the commandments. Moses remained forty days in the mount. On returning he called upon the people for free-will offerings, with which to construct the tabernacle and its furniture; and they gave abundantly. It is estimated that the tabernacle and its furniture cost about a million and a quarter dollars.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

20. *And all the congregation departed*: from the great assembly to which Moses had summoned them, repeating the Sabbath law and asking for contributions for the tabernacle, stating what things would be needed. 21. *Whose heart stirred him up*: the heart is the centre and source of liberality. Giving is of little account without the heart. *The tabernacle*: a costly and beautiful tent for the manifestation of God's presence and as a centre of worship. It is described in chaps. 25-28. See next lesson. 22. *Tables*: armlets. 23. *Blue*, etc.: the colored yarns or cloth of wool or of linen dyed with these costly colors. *Red skins*: skins tanned and dyed red. *Badgers' skins*: seal skins, made into leather. 24. *Shittim wood*: acacia, a thorny tree, like our hawthorn, only larger; a close-grained wood, of orange color. No other kind of wood was used for the tabernacle. 25. *Wise-hearted*: skilled, and devoted to God. *Fine Linen*: a special manufacture of Egypt, where it was so fine as sometimes to be worth its weight in gold. 27. *Onyx stone*: the stone out of which cameos are cut, being turned on different colored layers. There were two of these upon the ephod. *Ephod*: the special overdress of the high priest. *Breastplate*: a small costly garment of the high priest, on which twelve precious stones were placed, to represent the twelve tribes.

SUBJECT: FREE-HEARTED GIVING FOR THE LORD'S WORK.

QUESTIONS.

I. THE GREAT WORK TO BE DONE (v. 20).—What did Moses do on his descent from the mount? (35: 1.) What duty and privilege did he impress upon them? (35: 1-19.) For what object did he summon them to give? What was the purpose of the tabernacle? Was it to be very costly? Why?

What great work has God for us to do? (Mark 16: 15; Matt. 5: 13, 14; Eph. 2: 21, 22.) Is this object worth self-denial on our parts and liberal giving?

II. THE CHEERFUL GIVERS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHING OF THIS WORK (vs. 21, 22).—What kind of people brought gifts? Is this the only true kind of giving? Had all the people a part in this giving? In looking over the gifts, which would you think that the women gave, and which the men? What are some of the women called? (vs. 25, 26.)

What are some of the motives which should lead us to give? How much should we give? What can children give. To what objects should they give? Should they earn what they give? What are some of the Bible words about giving? (Ecc. 11: 1; Matt. 10: 8; Acts 20: 35; 1 Tim. 6: 15-19; Mal. 3: 10; 2 Cor. 9: 6, 7.)

III. THE FREE GIFTS (vs. 22-29).—What were some of the things given? How did each one know what to give? Who gave what? Who gave skill? (See also vs. 30-35.) What four things did the rulers give? What is said of the abundance of the gifts? (36: 5, 6.) Is there need of every kind of gift we have? Is there any blessing on the selfish and illiberal?

LESSON CALENDAR.

(Third Quarter, 1888.)

- July 1.—God's Covenant with Israel.—Ex. 24: 1-12.
- July 8.—The Golden Calf.—Ex. 32: 15-26.
- July 15.—God's Presence Promised.—Ex. 33: 12-23.
- July 22.—Free Gifts for the Tabernacle.—Ex. 35: 20-29.
- July 29.—The Tabernacle.—Ex. 40: 1-16.
- Aug. 5.—The Burnt Offering.—Lev. 1: 1-9.
- Aug. 12.—The Day of Atonement.—Lev. 16: 1-16.
- Aug. 19.—The feast of Tabernacles.—Lev. 23: 33-44.
- Aug. 26.—The Pillar of Cloud and of Fire.—Num. 9: 15-23.
- Sept. 2.—The Spies sent into Canaan.—Num. 13: 17-33.
- Sept. 9.—The Unbelief of the People.—Num. 14: 1-10.
- Sept. 16.—The Smitten Rock.—Num. 20: 1-13.
- Sept. 23.—Death and Burial of Moses.—Deut. 34: 1-12.
- Sept. 30.—Review, Temperance, Doubt, 21: 18-21, and Missions.