

public-houses in the neighbourhood become crowded, and the world of London rushes on in spite of breaking hearts.

Four days later, at the jetty of the dockyard at Portsmouth, one of those monstrous vessels employed to carry our troops abroad, waits for the signal to cast off the last hawser before pointing her head southwards. The scene on board baffles description; tons of luggage yet have to find storage—piles of hay and straw for the immediate consumption of the horses and cattle, whose neighing and bellowing, now that they find themselves in such unusual quarters, help to make the confusion and noise more distracting. Then, too, the deck is crowded with a motley crowd of Jew clothiers, tradesmen, porters, soldiers, sailors, weeping girls and women bidding farewell; and all the many sides and shades of human form and feeling are to be found, while amidst all the confusion the sharp, deafening rush and hiss of escaping steam makes all other sounds as music compared with that.

Just as the officer gives the order to carry off the hawser, a cab drives up to the jetty, loaded outside with box, bag, and soldier's haversack, while from within, with pale, sad face, Corporal Harris steps out. There is a faint attempt at a cheer of welcome by the few who first recognize him; his hand is grasped by these, and then he is soon lost between docks, while the work of departure rapidly proceeds.

Now she's off, the band on the jetty from the neighbouring barracks playing, "The girl I left behind me." Then cheer after cheer ascends, the rigging of the ship and her sides are lined with men, seamen, and soldiers, waving hat and handkerchief, strong men weep; then choking down that terrible feeling in heart and throat, all things outwardly settled down.

But it is time we explained the arrival of Corporal Harris, whom we have seen welcomed just at the last moment before the departure of the vessel. On his return to the barracks in London, with the dead body of his wife, he held consultation with the adjutant, and there and then decided, if possible, to leave England with his own regiment.

"You see, sir," he said, "my dear wife was an orphan, and so am I, and as far as I know have no friends to look to or to think of, and amid the excitement and change I shall perhaps be better."

"Very well, Harris," replied the adjutant, "do as you like; I will telegraph to the colonel to tell him you will probably arrive on Saturday morning, before the trooper sails. I am truly sorry for you, my man."

With a soldier's salute, poor Harris went out to complete the remaining preparations for his wife's burial.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth," fell upon his ears at the graveside, and a deep longing came into his heart to know this Redeemer as his own. He knew, as he told the cabman, that his wife had a "Life" that he could not understand, nor yet touch or influence, and he felt that he wanted this "Life"; and all the time that tender, loving Saviour was crying through this very sorrow in the ears of this sad soldier, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

When poor Maggie had married Jem Harris, she had been as ignorant of Christ's salvation as he was, but a godly, faithful, earnest lady's maid to one of the officers' wives had been specially drawn out to her, and had striven to show her Jesus the crucified, and at last the new birth, resulting in the new life, was hers. She believed God, she saw Christ as her Saviour, her sins laid on him, and that she was free—had everlasting life through believing.

Now, as soon as she found Jesus, she wanted to bring her husband; but he gave her to understand that, while he would not interfere with her, she in her turn must not worry him with her religious notions. How it all comes home to him now; how hard it is to choke back those sobs and tears, and in his ignorance and simplicity he determines to "turn over a new leaf." He will be good. In this frame of mind, chastened and subdued, he had arrived on board the trooper just before she sailed; and God, who saw his desires, was preparing an instrument, and scenes, which were destined to lead him to Jesus.

(To be continued.)

AN EMBARRASSING ANSWER.

Any teacher who has ever attempted to "show off" her class, knows the inevitable disappointment of the process. No matter how well-trained the scholars may be, they seize the opportunity to make the most glaring blunders possible. Sometimes the situation is awkward for them, too, as in the following case, quoted from an exchange:

"Now, children," said a kindergarten teacher, showing off her little class with natural pride, "I told you yesterday about the various materials from which your dresses are made—silk, wool and cotton. Let me see how well you remember. Margie, where did the material come from of which your dress is made?"

Margie.—"It once grew upon the back of a sheep."

Teacher.—"Very good; and yours, Blanche?"

Blanche.—"My dress once grew upon the back of a sheep, and a part of it was spun by the silk-worm."

Teacher.—"Correct! And yours, Lucy?"

Lucy (with evident embarrassment).—

"My dress was made out of an old one of mamma's."

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

LESSON III.—JANUARY 21.

THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Luke 3. 1-17. Memory verses, 8-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.— Luke 3. 4.

OUTLINE.

1. The Beginning of John's Career, v. 1-3.
2. John's Career Foretold, v. 4-6.
3. The Gist of John's Message, v. 7-9.
4. John's Practical Advice for Daily Living, v. 10-14.
5. John Preparing the Way of the Lord, v. 15-17.

Time.—The summer of A.D. 26.

Place.—The country about the Jordan.

LESSON HELPS.

1. "The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar"—Tiberius came to the throne in A.D. 14. Here is one of the few direct notes of time in the Gospel story. "Tetrarch" means "governor of a quarter;" the dominions of Herod the Great were at his death divided among his sons, and to "Herod" Antipas came the "quarter" which included "Galilee" and Perea.
2. "The wilderness"—Where, apparently, from childhood he had made his home.
3. "Preaching, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"—Proclaiming the duty of repentance, the privilege of forgiveness, and the use of baptism as a symbol of both.
4. "Make his paths straight"—In the East little attention is given to the care of roads for common use; but when some "royal highness" comes along the people are compelled to clear and improve the old roads and to make new ones.
5. "All flesh"—All people.
6. "He"—John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. "The multitude that came forth"—(See Matt. 3. 5). "Men left their work, or their calling; the keen trader, the Roman tax-collector, and the native and foreign soldier among them. Every rank was represented. All that was noble and all that was base in Israel—the holy and the worldly; the pure and the corrupt; the earnest and the false; the friends of Rome and its enemies, mingled in the throng."—Geikie. "Generation of vipers"—Literally, brood of vipers. Especially addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees. "No apology must be made for the denunciatory preaching of John; no more than for the thunder and smoke of Sinai, or for the fire and brimstone of Gehenna."—Whedon.
7. "Bring forth"—"Implying instant effort."—Farrar. "Fruits"—"Profession of repentance was not enough. Practical reformation is the only evidence God recognizes of the genuineness of repentance."—Abbott. "Repentance"—"Implying, in John's view, an entire renunciation of the world; dying to the old, and consecration to a new life."—Lange. "We have Abraham"—"A matter of Jewish pride. This they thought would give them a right to share in the blessings of the Messiah."—Lange. According to the Talmud "a single Israelite is of more value in God's sight than all the nations of the world." "To"—For.
8. "Now"—While John spoke. "Ax"—Seven Hebrew words are translated thus. "The root"—"Not the unfruitful branches."—Lange. "Expressing utter destruction."—Whedon. Luke 13. 7. "Hewn down"—Denoting what is to happen at once and certainly. "Cast into the fire"—An Eastern agricultural practice; prophetic also of the "fire of perdition."
9. "The people"—John's first class of hearers.

11. "Two coats"—Extortion and selfishness prevailed. John calls for self-sacrifice. "I am that hath none"—"A second coat no man could want, as his neighbour who had none wanted his first."—Cowles. "Meat"—Food in general. "Do likewise"—"Selfishness is the root of evil. It is to be conquered not by religious emotions only, but by acts of unselfishness."—Ellicott.

12. "The publicans"—John's second class of hearers.

13. "Appointed"—Designated by the government.

14. "Soldiers"—John's third class of hearers. Either "Gallileans engaged in the war of Herod against Aretas" (Whedon), or "Roman soldiers from Judea" (Abbott). "Neither accuse any falsely"—"The temptation of soldiers was to terrify the poor by violence and undermine the rich by acting as informers."—Farrar. "Wages"—"Meaning both the money given a Roman soldier, three half-pence a day, and the necessary supply of wheat," etc.—Clarke.

15. "In expectation"—There was a widespread belief that the Messiah would soon appear. "The Christ"—"Showing both the expectation of Messiah's immediate appearing and the high estimation and even reverence which his own character demanded."—J. F. B.

16. "With water"—But only unto repentance. (Matt. 3. 11.) "Mightier than I"—"To effect what John's baptism was powerless to produce."—Lange. "The latchet," etc.—A reference to the work of the lowest household slave. Yet John was lower than he. "This menial duty was sometimes performed in reverence by disciples for the rabbi."—Whedon. "With the Holy Ghost"—"Water baptism is nothing but as it points out and leads to the baptism of the Holy Ghost."—Clarke. "Fire"—Some of the early fathers thought this a reference to the crosses and afflictions of the Christian life.

17. "Whose fan"—"An oriental figure which was clear to John's listeners. Symbolizing the preaching of the Gospel."—Lange. "Floor"—"Christ's sphere of action."—Ewald. "Wheat"—Bellevue. "Garner"—His church. "Chaff"—His enemies. "Fire unquenchable"—Eternal punishment.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The preaching of John the Baptist.—Luke 3. 1-9.
- Tu. The preaching of John the Baptist.—Luke 3. 10-17.
- W. Malachi's prophecy.—Mal. 4.
- Th. John's testimony.—John 1. 15-28.
- F. Repentance necessary.—Matt. 3. 1-12.
- S. Fruits of repentance.—Eph. 4. 25-32.
- Su. A voice in the wilderness.—Isa. 40. 1-8.

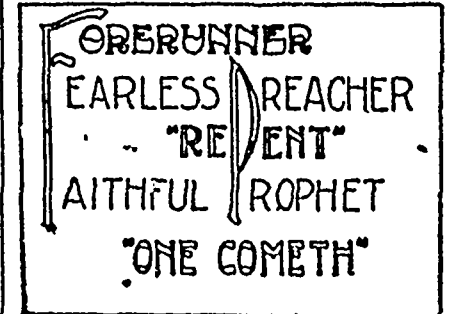
QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Beginning of John's Career, v. 1-3.
 - When John came, what was the name of the governor of Judea?
 - What part had he afterward in our Lord's crucifixion?
 - What was the name of the tetrarch of Galilee?
 - What part had he in that crucifixion?
 - Who were the high priests?
 - What part had they?
 - What did John do through all the country about Jordan?
2. John's Career Foretold, v. 4-6.
 - Who had foretold that the word of God would come to him?
 - Can you find the words here quoted in the Old Testament?
 - What was meant by "preparing a way" and "making the paths straight"?
 - When was the promise of verse 6 fulfilled?
3. The Gist of John's Message, v. 7-9.
 - What can you tell about John's parents, birth, and early history?
 - Where did he preach? Matt. 3. 1; John 1. 28.
 - What did he say to the multitude? Verse 7.
 - To what people were these words especially spoken? Matt. 3. 7.
 - What are "fruits worthy of repentance"?
 - What is true repentance?
 - Of what did he warn the people?
4. John's Practical Advice for Daily Living, v. 10-14.
 - What question was asked John?
 - What did he tell the people to do?
 - How did this command illustrate 1 John 3. 17?
 - How may we follow this command?
 - What two classes of people came to John?
 - Who were "the publicans"?
 - What command did he give them?
 - What publican afterward became a disciple of Jesus? Matt. 9. 9.
 - What vow did another publican make? Luke 19. 8.
 - What was John's command to the soldiers?

- How may we follow this command?
5. John Preparing the Way of the Lord v. 15-17.
 - What did the people think concerning John?
 - Why did they think that he might be the Christ?
 - What did John say to the people concerning himself?
 - Who did he say would come?
 - What spirit did his words show?
 - What warning did he give concerning Christ?
 - To what two kinds of people did this refer?
 - To which class should all seek to belong?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. That we must repent?
 2. That we must live righteously?
 3. That we must believe in Christ?
 4. That we must be baptized with the Holy Ghost?



The forerunner of our Lord came from the seclusion of the wilderness to prepare his way among men. The people were in intense expectation, and eager multitudes from all Judea gathered at Jordan to hear this fearless preacher who spared none and convinced all. "Repent," was the message with which he exhorted them to forsake their sins and to flee from the wrath to come. Then, as all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, he bore witness as a faithful prophet to the coming One, who should baptize them not alone with water, but with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Had Israel but recognized his mission and faithfully received his message, all flesh through him might have seen the salvation of God.

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