

SKETCH OF LESSON.

WHITSUNDAY.

MAY 29TH, 1887.

Offerings for God.

Passage to be read.—Exodus xxxv. 20-29.

God has instructed Israel to build a Tabernacle for His worship. But where are the materials to come from? Who is to give the wood, and cloth, and ornaments required? We shall see in our lesson to-day.

I. *The Gifts Offered.*—Moses is instructed to ask the people to bring an offering unto the Lord. (Ex. xxxv. 5). Of course God did not require their gifts. He needs nothing, "seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things." (Acts. xvii. 25). Yet He wishes to know who among the Israelites are grateful for His goodness. Therefore He calls for tokens of their love from all—men, women, and children, rich and poor alike. One gift, however, He will not accept. One condition is necessary. All must be given willingly. (Ex. xxxv. 5). "Whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring it." Let us watch the people as they come with various gifts. Here are some bringing badgers' skins, (a species of seal found in the Red Sea). Others bear gold, and silver, and brass. Some bring *shittim* wood, (the wood of the acacia, a thorny tree whose timber is hard and close-grained and will last for a very long time). Then come the women who have been preparing for the glad day. Some offer their ornaments, their brooches and ear-rings, their tablets or golden beads, rings, and jewels. These they cast off willingly, for it is a joy to them to give to God. Some, poorer in station, give the works of their hands. They have spun fine linen, the clear white *byssus* of the Egyptians. Some of it they have coloured and dyed blue, and purple, and scarlet. Others have made cloths of goats' hair. All is laid down at Moses's feet. Then come the rich rulers with their more costly gifts of onyx stones, royal spices, sacred incense and the fragrant oil. Even the children bring offerings. Every willing heart has delighted in bringing its gifts. What a delight and joy it is to share in the work of God!

II. *The work begun.*—Now all the material is on the ground—enough to make a glorious dwelling-place, or tent, where God's presence may rest, and the people may render Him acceptable worship. God has appointed two men as architects, Bezaleel and Aholiab. These He has endowed with skill and wisdom to do the work of cutting, carving, engraving, and embroidering. He has taught them, so that they may teach others. What a busy scene now presents itself. The whole camp is employed for erecting the dwelling-place of God: and a spirit of holiness and fervent gratitude pervades the place.

Notice some things about these offerings.

First—Where did the Israelites procure their gifts? On leaving Egypt you remember how they had "borrowed" or "asked" from the Egyptians jewels of silver and of gold. (Ex. xi. 2). So that God "brought them forth with silver and gold." (Ps. cv. 37). While in Egypt too they had learned to embroider and carve. So they render to God what they had received from God.

Secondly—They gave willingly. No compulsion was used. God simply asked for their gifts and they poured them in so lavishly that at last Moses had to cry out "Hold! Enough!" "So the people were restrained from bringing." (Ex. xxxv. 6, 7). They brought freely because they wished to do so, and because they were grateful to God. Oh for a like spirit in our day!

Thirdly—They did all not offer alike. Some had one thing, some another. Some were skilful and could work, carve, and spin, and embroider. Others could only offer their ornaments. But all gave according to what they had, and none who did so willingly were rejected.

Family Reading.

HINTS TO HOUSEKEEPERS.

COLD BISCUITS left over from tea may be made better than when first baked by dipping them into hot water and placing them singly on the hot grate in the oven long enough to let them get well warmed through.

A SOAK FOR SEED-CORN.—Seed-corn may be made safe from wire-worms and other vermin by soaking it before planting in a mixture consisting of one pound of blue vitriol or sulphuric of copper in a gallon of water. The solution should be lukewarm and the seed may soak a day or a day and a half. The poison will not only kill worms, but it will also destroy any injurious fungus germs that may be on the grains. Care should be taken

not to get any of the solution on the hands, as it causes sores.

ATTEND TO THE GARDEN.—Though this is a busy season with farmers they should not forget or neglect the garden. It pays to grow plenty of vegetables and small fruits, and all ruralists who regard the health and comfort of their families will cultivate choice varieties for home consumption. Those who only use what they cannot sell are far from wise. "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits," saith Paul, and the admonition should be heeded by those whose food consists largely of inferior or unseasonable staples (including hog and hominy), when palatable and healthful viands are easily obtainable. Much may be profitably done in the garden now—a-days, and we trust that rural readers of the *Independent*, of both sexes and all workable ages, will give the matter timely and careful attention.

PLANTING FRUITERIES.—In planting an orchard the young trees should be slightly inclined toward the direction of the prevailing winds. The trees in all old orchards lean as they were bent by the wind while young, and most of these old orchards were set when there was more, and consequently winds were much less violent than in these days of cyclones and tornadoes. More care should be taken now that our landscapes are so largely denuded by natural windbreaks.

POT-ROAST OF BEEF.—Select a piece weighing six pounds, wipe it carefully with a damp cloth, rub some salt over it, and sprinkle with pepper. Put it into a round-bottomed iron pot over the fire, and brown it slowly, turning it often. It will take about a half hour for this part of the roasting. When it is thoroughly browned put a little boiling water in the pot, add a little more salt and pepper, three whole cloves, and, covering closely, set where it will just simmer for four hours. If the water boils away, add a little more. When it has boiled the proper length of time take up the meat and remove the most of the fat; thicken the gravy, pour a little over the meat and serve the remainder in a gravy-boat. There should be a pint of gravy from a roast of the size mentioned. A piece of tough meat can be made tender and enjoyable by this method of cooking. There should be some fat on the outside of the meat; if there is not enough, have a thin piece cut and skewered to the roast.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

A Lecture by H. L. Hastings, before the Massachusetts Annual Convention of Y. M. C. Associations.

I have heard of a man travelling around the country exploding this book, and showing up "the mistakes of Moses," at about two hundred dollars a night. It is easy work to abuse Moses at two hundred dollars a night, especially as Moses is dead and cannot talk back. It would be worth something after hearing the infidel on "the mistakes of Moses," to hear Moses on "the mistakes of the infidel." When Moses could talk back, he was rather a difficult man to deal with. Pharaoh tried it, and met with poor success. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and it is said found a grave in the Red Sea. Korah, Dathan and Abiram tried it, and went down so deep that they have not yet got back. But now Moses is dead, and it is easy to abuse him. It does not take a very brave beast to kick a dead lion.

But, after all, this book seems to stand abuse, and thrive upon refutation. A few months ago some learned men, after working for a number of years on the revision of the New Testament, finished their work. Having inserted a few modern words instead of others which had become obsolete, made some slight corrections of errors in translation, and rectified from ancient manuscripts some little errors that had been made by copyists in transcribing the New Testament,* at last the book was announced as ready to be

* See Remarks on the "Mistakes of Moses," by H. L. Hastings.

issued on a certain day. What was the result? Why, men offered five hundred dollars to get a copy of that book a little in advance of its publication; and the morning it was published, the streets of New York were blockaded with express wagons backed up and waiting for copies of that book which had been refuted, exploded, and dead and buried for so many years. Millions of copies of that book were sold as fast as they could be delivered. They telegraphed that book, from the first of Matthew to the end of Romans, from New York to Chicago, about 118,000 words—the longest message ever wired—for the sake of getting it there twenty-four hours sooner than steam could carry it, to print in the Sunday newspapers.

A dead book, is it? They would not pay for telegraphing the greatest infidel speech ever delivered in this country, from here to Tophet. This old book seems to show some signs of life yet. It is like Aaron's rod that budded and blossomed, and it is being scattered all over the world.

This book outlives its foes. If you could gather all the books written against it, you could build a pyramid higher than the loftiest spire. Now and then a man goes to work to refute the Bible; and every time it is done it has to be done over again the next day or the next year. And then, after its enemies have done their worst, some of its professed friends torture and twist and mystify and misrepresent it. Surely it is no fool of a book if it lives through all that. Infidels have been at work nearly eighteen hundred years, firing away at it, and making about as much impression on it as you would shooting boiled peas at Gibraltar. [Laughter and applause.] The fact is, this book has come into the world, and it seems to have come to stay. It is in the world, and I do not know how you are to get it out. One hundred years ago you might have found that book in twenty or thirty translations; but now you can find it in between two and three hundred different versions, most of which have been made in this last progressive, intellectual nineteenth century. All over the globe it goes; touch any shore and you will find that book there before you.

And it is a curious fact that most of our skeptical friends contrive to keep very close to where its shadow falls. It does not take a great while to get out of sight of the Bible. You can go, in a very few days, where there are no churches, Sunday schools, Young Men's Christian Associations, preachers, deacons, or anything else of the kind—you can "go West." There is little difficulty in getting beyond the reach of the Bible. Your scalp might not be very safe, but you can easily get away from the reach of the Bible. But the infidel, while finding fault with the Bible, takes good care to stay where the Bible is. Why is this?

There was once a vessel wrecked on one of the South Sea Islands. There was on board a sailor who had been there before, and who knew that the people were cannibals. And when the ship was wrecked, and they were cast away on this shore, they knew there was no hope for them, for they saw no way to escape. The sailor, however, climbed up on a hill-top to reconnoitre a little. Presently his shipmates saw him swinging his arms in great excitement, and inquired what was the matter. He had seen just over the hill the steeple of a church! [Applause.] That was what took all the fear of trouble out of his soul. He knew that church spire made his neck safe on that cannibal island.

Now infidels know that fact just as well as he did. Years ago, a young infidel was travelling in the West with his uncle, a banker, and they were not a little anxious for their safety when they were forced to stop for a night in a rough wayside cabin. There were two rooms in the house; and when they retired for the night they agreed that the young man should sit with his pistols, and watch until midnight, and then awaken his uncle, who should watch until morning. Presently they peeped through the crack, and saw their host, a rough looking old man, in his bear-skin suit, reach up and take down a book—a Bible; and after

* For an account of these errors and their extent and importance, see *The Corruptions of the New Testament*, by H. L. Hastings.