

FRIENDS IN DISGUISE.

Mr. S— turned over uneasily in his bed, then ran his fingers through his hair, and that awoke his wife.

"What is the matter, my dear?" said she. "They have come," said he, "so get up and let us get out of the house as quickly as possible." As he said this Mr. S— picked an army ant out of his hair.

Mr. and Mrs. S— were missionaries. They lived on the high table-lands of Africa, several hundred miles from the coast, and while you, dear reader, were either sound asleep or engaged in some pleasant pastime, they were retreating in the dead hour of the night from what they considered an enemy. It was their first experience of that kind. You ought to have heard Mrs. S— tell the story of that night.

The army ant is a strange creature. Thousands upon thousands of them form in close column. They have their officers and their privates. The officers are large, state-looking fellows. When once started upon their line of march the army ants cannot be stopped or turned aside. They come into your house by day or by night, and when they come in you must go out.

So this good missionary and his wife were driven out of doors in the night, and took refuge in a neighbor's house.

These busy little soldiers, however, did not stay long. They held no dress parade, they beat no drums, and they waved no banners, but they worked. Before sundown of the next day their work was done and well done. "Forward march!" had been spoken by their officers, and they had marched on to some other place.

There were millions of them in the missionaries' house that night; but in less than twenty-four hours not an ant was to be seen. Wonderful soldiers! Were these little creatures really the enemies of the missionaries? No, they were their good friends. They helped the missionary's wife do up her house-cleaning. When they marched away there was not a mouse left on the premises, there was not a rat left; all the fleas and cockroaches had disappeared. You could not find a dead fly anywhere, neither could you see a spider's web in any corner. In fact these army ants were simply a vast horde of housecleaners. They worked for nothing and boarded themselves. When they left they took away nothing that did not belong to them.

The missionaries went back into a clean house, and when the army ants visit them again they will be welcomed as old friends. To be sure, they will have the house all to themselves, but they will not stay long.

Boys might learn a lesson from these little soldiers. They never say, "I can't." When they receive orders they never say, "I won't." They go into dirty places and leave them clean. But best of all, when their work is done they march on about their own business.—*Child's Paper*.

INDIA'S CALL.

India's father had been the pastor of a prominent church in one of our large cities; but his health was not firm, and after a long struggle as to duty he was constrained to resign his beloved charge and accept another whose demands were not so great.

The new charge was a village church. To the pastor's family the change was very great. India, a bright girl of fourteen, was at first delighted with the novelty; but as this wore away she began to wonder how she could adapt herself to the new life. She missed her old school companions through the week, and even on the Sabbath all was so different. There was a good Sunday-school, as far as numbers were concerned, but a lack of training was sadly evident. The young girl had come to a point in life when she felt out of her element. But she did not waste much time in brooding, but sought her mother's counsel.

After a long talk Mrs. McKenzie said, "My daughter, you are unhappy here. That must not be. Let me propose a remedy."

"What is it, mamma?"

"You know there is no mission society here for the children. Suppose you start one."

"I, mamma! You do not mean that."

"Yes, you are old enough, with a little help."

"I never thought of that. You will organize for us, mamma, will you not?"

"Most assuredly I will."

On the following Sabbath it was announced that Mrs. McKenzie would meet

the children in the Lecture-room on Thursday afternoon, the object being duly explained.

The day came and brought to the meeting four children besides the pastor's three. To her daughter's exclamations of disappointment Mrs. McKenzie replied that it was the first time, and more would soon come. So another meeting was announced, and six came; this when there was a Sunday-school of nearly two hundred.

This time Mrs. McKenzie said, "We must not give up, but it seems clear to me that there is a special work for you to do, India. There is some reason why the children do not come. You must go out and gather them in."

"How shall I begin, mamma?" asked India brightly.

"Go from house to house and invite them specially, explaining to their mothers our object and the simplicity of our meetings. Think of it, and tell me in a day or two if you are willing to undertake this."

In the course of the week India had made up her mind and was anxious to test the new plan. On Saturday morning, bright and early, she started out, making a number of calls before dinner, and when the day was over she had half canvassed the town.

Her experience in these calls was varied. A few were indifferent, but most were interested and promised to send their children. What struck India most was the general lack of information and the wonder that the children of the church were doing so much. Two or three families only took any missionary papers.

Fifty-seven boys and girls came to the next meeting and went home delighted.

Writing to a young friend in the city a few days afterwards, India said, "You know I have often told you I would like some day to be a missionary; ever since mamma told me that she named me in memory of her beloved sister, who died years ago in far-off India. You called me romantic, but indeed I have found some real mission work at home which I love. Don't laugh when I tell you I begin to feel I have had a call here almost as much as papa."

Two years have passed away. India's band has doubled in numbers, is constantly increasing its contributions, and works intelligently for the spread of the gospel in distant lands.—*Children's Paper*.

THE VEIL.

The terrible increase in this country of nearsightedness and other eye difficulties has led to a pretty thorough canvassing of the cause of the trouble. Among these causes stands prominently the veil—not only the long mourning veil—whose dragging weight upon the head is enough to condemn it, even when it is not worn over the eyes—but the bewitching short "nose veil," which is supposed to throw such archness into the feminine countenance. It is true that, when the eyes are weak, a veil serves an important purpose in shielding them from the blinding sunlight, but this purpose is much better served by colored glasses, the color to be prescribed by a physician.

It is very comfortable on a cold day, when walking or riding, to muffle one's face in a veil. Such a course sometimes prevents colds and chills, and the harm done to the eyes, if any, is amply atoned for by the protection rendered. In short, veils are useful and, to a degree, necessary articles. Ladies with a fine complexion could hardly do without them, but the fact remains that, for most of us, it is a very unwise thing to wear them. All veils are more or less injurious to the eyes. The oculists say that dotted veils alone bring them in thousands of dollars a year. Beauty is dearly bought at the expense of one's eyesight, and when, as is often the case, the coloring matter used in the veil is actually poisonous, thus tainting the air we breathe, the harm done is incalculable.

The putting of veils upon infants and young children is not essential nearly so often as is generally thought. There are very few days during the winter when a child's face, if the rest of the head is well covered, may not be exposed to the outdoor air. After an illness, or on a biting winter day, when one shudders to think of exposing the tender face of a baby to the wind, a veil may, perhaps, be prudently used, but on general principles, the advice of the best physicians is that a veil should be used as little as possible, either for adults or children.—*Philadelphia Press*.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON V.—MAY 2.

JESUS AT THE WELL.—John 4: 5-26.

COMMIT VERSES 23-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.—John 4: 24.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Jesus satisfies every thirst of the soul.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 3: 19-36.

T. John 4: 1-26.

W. John 7: 37-39.

Th. Isa. 55: 1-13.

F. Isa. 41: 17.

Jer. 2: 13.

Sa. Ex. 20: 3-11.

Su. Ps. 42: 1.

Rev. 22: 1, 2.

TIME.—December, A. D. 27. About 8 months after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jacob's well at Sychar, a part of the ancient Shechem, at the foot of Mount Gerizim. The well was one-half a mile from Sychar, and two miles from Shechem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim in Samaria.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Soon after the interview with Nicodemus in our last lesson, Jesus left the city of Jerusalem and spent several months in Judea teaching and baptizing through his disciples. The crowds left John and came to Jesus, which gave occasion for a further testimony of the Baptist to Jesus. In December Jesus left Judea to go to Galilee, and in passing through Samaria on his way came to Jacob's well, the scene of to-day's lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

5. JACOB GAVE: Gen. 48: 22. 6. JACOB'S WELL: 9 feet in diameter, 105 feet deep, formerly; now, 75 feet; dug in solid rock. SIXTH HOUR: probably 6 o'clock in the evening, Roman reckoning; by Jewish reckoning it would be 12 o'clock, sixth hour from sunrise. But John was writing in Ephesus among Romans. 8. MEAT: food. 9. JEWS HAVE NO DEALINGS WITH SAMARITANS: no free social intercourse, but would buy and sell. They had rival forms of religion, rival temples. The Samaritans accepted only the five books of Moses as their Bible, and were partly descended from heathen ancestors (2 Kings 17: 6, 23, 24). 10. LIVING WATER: flowing as from a fountain. The Holy Spirit, bestowing spiritual life (John 7: 37). 13, 14. THIRST, NEVER THIRST: every person is full of desires, bodily, mental, spiritual. The world cannot satisfy the soul. Jesus Christ sanctifies the natural desires, and satisfies the spiritual, the longing for happiness, for worthy life, for friendship, for forgiveness, for eternal life, for God. 16. GO CALL: said in order to convince her of sin, that she might seek the living water. 20. OUR FATHERS, ETC.: a question of great interest to her. The Samaritan temple was on Gerizim close by. 22. YE WORSHIP, ETC.: that which ye know not. YE ACCEPTED ONLY a part of the Bible, and therefore their knowledge of God was imperfect. SALVATION OF THE JEWS: promised in their Bible; and the Messiah was to be descended from them and born among them.

LEARN BY HEART vs. 10, 13, 14, 23, 24.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where was Jesus in our last lesson? With whom did he have a long conversation? Where did he go after that? (3: 22) How long did he remain there? Doing what? Why did he leave? (1: 1-3.) For what place? At what season of the year? SUBJECT: THE WATERS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

I. THE THIRSTY ONE (vs. 5-9).—To what place did Jesus come on his way to Galilee? What can you tell about Jacob's well? Why did Jesus stop there? What can you learn about Jesus' human nature from his becoming weary? What time of the day was it? Who met him there? What do you know of her character? What favor did Jesus ask of her? Why? What did she reply? Who were the Samaritans? Why did they have no dealings with the Jews?

II. THE WATER OF LIFE (vs. 10-15).—What was Jesus' reply to the woman? Did she understand him? (vs. 11, 12.) How did Jesus further describe the living water? Why is it called living water? What did he mean by this living water? (John 7: 37-39.) What will it do for us? In what respects is the Gospel like water (as free, abundant, cleansing, etc.)?

What are some of the human thirsts and longings? Can you measure the value of our being by these? Can this world satisfy them? (Jer. 2: 13.) How does Jesus satisfy them? Does he destroy the thirsts, or only satisfy them? How does the Gospel bless even our natural desires? (1 Cor. 10: 31.) Reconcile v. 14 with Matt. 5: 6.

III. PREPARING THE THIRSTY TO RECEIVE IT (vs. 16-18).—What did Jesus say to her then? How would this convict her of sin and need? Why must we feel our needs before we will seek the living water? (Rev. 3: 17.) How do you suggest this living water?

IV. TRUE WORSHIP (vs. 19-26). What question did the woman now ask Jesus? Why was it important to her? What was the difference between the Samaritans and the Jews? Whom did Jesus say we must worship? In what place? In what way? What is worship? What is it to worship in spirit and in truth? What reason is given? (v. 24.)

How does God's name "Father" help us to true worship? Are forms of worship wrong? What can we do to increase the spirit of worship? How is salvation of the Jews?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. We may be weary in Christian work, but not of it.

II. Christian service may refresh our weary bodies.

III. We should take every opportunity of doing good.

IV. Sect, race, social position, rivalries, should never keep us from kindly service or religious help.

V. Man is full of thirsts for earthly good, hap-

piness, forgiveness, larger life, friendship, eternal life, God.

VI. This world cannot satisfy these thirsts. (See Solomon's experience in Ecclesiastes.)

VII. Jesus Christ satisfies every thirst.

VIII. The Gospel is like living waters, refreshing, abundant, free, cleansing.

IX. True worship is sincere, spiritual, of the true God, loving, obedient.

LESSON VI.—MAY 9.

SOWING AND REAPING.—John 4: 27-42.

COMMIT VERSES 35-36.

GOLDEN TEXT.

One soweth, and another reapeth.—John 4: 37.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 4: 27-42.

T. Ps. 126: 1-6.

W. Mark 4: 1-20.

Th. Luke 10: 1-11.

F. 1 Cor. 3: 5-15.

Sa. 2 Cor. 9: 6.

Gal. 6: 7-10.

Su. James 5: 14-20.

TIME.—December, A. D. 27. The same day with the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jacob's well, half a mile from Sychar in Samaria.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—To-day's lesson follows close upon our last. On his way to Galilee Jesus passed through Samaria, and resting at Jacob's well while his disciples went on to Sychar to buy some food, he had a conversation on the living water with a Samaritan woman, who had come to the well for water. Just as he had announced himself as the Messiah, his disciples returned with the food from the city, and our lesson for to-day begins.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

27. MARVELLED: because Rabbits were not accustomed to give their learning in public to women, because she was a Samaritan, and because of the evident interest the Lord took in her welfare. 28. WATERPOT: the same word as is used for the waterpots at the marriage in Cana (2: 7). 32. MEAT THAT YE KNOW NOT OF: the spiritual life God gave him in his work, and the refreshment that came from helping the needy and serving God. 35. SAY YE NOT, FOUR MONTHS, etc.: four months from that time. The harvest was in April. This time was therefore December; the sowing was a month or two earlier. LIFT UP YOUR EYES: doubtless pointing to the Samaritans who were approaching from Sychar to learn from him. 36. FRUIT UNTO LIFE ETERNAL: the result was the eternal salvation of others, and nobler and better life for themselves. This was their wages. 38. I SENT YOU, etc.: Jesus had sown in their absence; now they were to reap. So it would be all through their lives. Prophets of old, John the Baptist, and Jesus himself, sowed the seed that grew into the church of God.

LEARN BY HEART the memory verses 35, 36; Ps. 126: 5, 6; Gal. 6: 7, 8.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where was Jesus going in our last lesson? At what season of the year? Where did he rest? With whom did he have a long conversation? On what subject?

SUBJECT: SOWING AND REAPING.

I. FIRST SOWING.—PERSONAL INVITATIONS TO CHRIST (vs. 27-29).—Where were Jesus' disciples during his conversation? At what did they marvel on their return? Why? What did the Samaritan woman now do? What did she tell her fellow-townsmen? Why these rather than strangers? What can you do in inviting men to Jesus?

FIRST REAPING.—What was the effect of her invitation? Were they wise in going to Jesus to learn more? What does Paul say about sowing and reaping? (Gal. 6: 7, 8; 2 Cor. 9: 6.) What is said in the Psalms? (Ps. 126: 5, 6.)

Is some good effect sure to follow from inviting others to Christ? Can we have the harvest unless we do the sowing?

II. SECOND SOWING.—WORKING FOR CHRIST (vs. 31-34).—What did Jesus reply when asked to eat the food brought by his disciples? What was the food "that they knew not"? Can we have that food? Does working for Christ refresh our bodies?

SECOND REAPING (vs. 35-38).—How long was it before the harvest? How near was the spiritual harvest? What were the "fields white to the harvest"? What are the "wages" of those that reap? What is "the fruit unto eternal life"? Who had sown the harvest the disciples were to reap?

What is life eternal? Was this harvest eternal life in themselves or in others? Do the unknown sowers of good seed have as much to do with the harvest as the reapers? What comfort for many in this? Why is the harvest a time of rejoicing?

III. THIRD SOWING.—FAITH (vs. 39, 40).—Why did the Samaritans believe in Jesus? Was this a good foundation for faith? What two things did it lead them to do? (vs. 39, 40.)

THIRD REAPING (vs. 41, 42).—How long did Jesus remain at Sychar? What was he probably doing during this time? What two results of their faith do we see? (vs. 40, 41.) Why did they believe now? What did they believe?

Was this a better foundation than the other? Is there anything so helpful to faith as personal acquaintance with Jesus and experience of his salvation? Is Jesus a better Saviour to us because he is the Saviour of the world?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. Those that sow shall reap what they sow.

II. Only by sowing good seed can there be a harvest of good.

III. Invite all you can, especially those nearest you, to come to Christ.

IV. God feeds our spirits through work for him and our fellow-men.

V. The harvest of souls is always ready to be gathered.

VI. A little faith well used leads to greater faith and brings us into communion with Jesus.

VII. Let us place our faith more and more on the foundation of personal acquaintance with Jesus and his Gospel.