

**Reading the Law.**

Nehemiah 8 : 1-12.

**E**ZRA'S name means a *helper*, and I am sure our little readers will admit that he merited such a name. He was a true helper. He helped the people to learn God's will, and he helped them to do it also. At the head of a band of exiles he returned from the captivity in Bablylon, to Jerusalem, and he brought back many of the vessels of the temple. During the captivity the books of the Law, and even the worship of God, had been lost sight of, and nearly forgotten. The first thing Ezra did was to bring the law before the people, and our lesson to-day tells how he did it.

Do you know any better rule for good reading than the one given you in the 8th verse?—*Read distinctly ;*

*give the sense ; make people understand.*

Who will remember this when they read or recite verses at the Sunday-school. Think of the Sunday-school in the streets of Jerusalem! *All the men, women and children gathered together to hear God's Word read and explained.* When the people heard the words of God's law and remembered how often they had disobeyed it, they were troubled and wept. But the Levites comforted them and told them that the way

to escape the punishment which the law told about, was to go and do right now. So the people went and did as they were told. The next day they came and heard more read, and then they went and did as that day's lesson told them.

Now, dear children, that is what you are to do. To live out all you learn from God's Word each day. Remember the first thing He tells you to do is to "Believe in Jesus," that is, accept Jesus as your own Saviour, and if you do that, you have His promise that He will help you to do what is right every day of your life. You know the Bible says, "If you know these things happy are ye if ye do them." If the Jews had not obeyed, what they learned would have made them more unhappy; but they obeyed, and so we read in the 17th verse of this chapter, "There was very great gladness." May each dear reader know the joy of being an obedient child of God.

**Esther's Petition.**

Esther 4: 10-17; 5: 1-3.

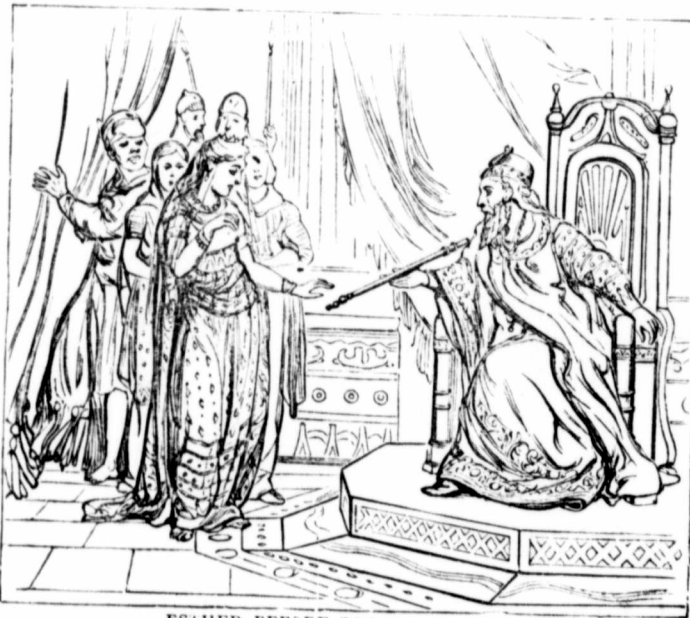
**A**HASUERUS, the man in the picture holding out the sceptre, was a great and mighty king, and he governed the large kingdom of Persia. After he had been king three years, at a great feast he sent for his beautiful queen, Vashti, but she would not come. The king was very angry, and soon after this he chose a beautiful Jewess, named Esther, as queen in Vashti's place. Though Esther became a grand queen she did not forget the Lord her God, nor did she forget to love her people.

A man called Haman had risen to be next in influence to the king himself. He hated the Jews. He talked with the king and made him promise to have

every Jew, Jewess and child, in all his large country put to death.

Although Esther was in the midst of so much wealth and magnificence, and though her husband was very kind, yet when Mordecai sent word to her of the danger the Jews were in, she was in great trouble. She sent word that she and her maidens would fast three days, and then she would go in unto the king, which was not according to the law, and which might cause her death. Thus,

brave beautiful Esther did not fear to risk her life so that she might save her own people. When the king saw Esther he held out his golden sceptre for her to touch. Now, this was a good sign, and Esther then said that she would like Haman and the king to come to a banquet. At the banquet Esther told the king all that wicked Haman had done, and the king ordered that he should be hanged. You may learn from this lesson that one wicked man may cause a great deal of trouble, but that God is able to punish such persons. Also, that one good person may be useful in bringing joy to others. Which are you doing?



ESTHER BEFORE THE KING.—Esther 5.

**'OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.'**

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