

II. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

1. **Earnest.** "Sat down and wept" v. 4.
"Effectual fervent prayer... righteous man." Jas. 5. 16.
2. **Humble.** "Fasted and prayed." v. 4.
"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord." James 4. 10.
3. **Persevering.** "Day and night." v. 6.
"Continuing instant in prayer." Rom. 12. 12.
4. **Confessing sin.** "We have sinned." v. 6, 7.
"I will confess my transgressions." Psa. 32. 5.
5. **Recalling covenant.** "Remember... the word." v. 8, 9.
"Remember the word unto thy servant." Psa. 119. 49.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Example of Nehemiah.

1. See Nehemiah's fidelity to his father's God while in a strange land, in the temptations of the palace, and the cares of public life. Let the young man away from home follow his example.
2. See his devotedness to the interests of the Church. His first inquiry was concerning it; his prayers were in its behalf; for it he was ready to make every sacrifice.
3. See his industrious, practical spirit. Read the story of his inspecting the condition of the city, his endeavor to arouse the people to action, and his labor in rebuilding the wall. What are you doing to build up Christ's Church?
4. See his self-denying liberality. He gave up much of position and wealth for the sake of God's people.
5. See his persevering spirit, not yielding to obstacles, but overcoming them. See in the note on the last verse of the lesson "seven hinderances" over which he triumphed.
6. See also his intense zeal for a pure Church. He led the people back to an obedience to God's law, to a solemn covenant with God, to keeping the Sabbath.

English Teacher's Notes.

I HAVE just been reading how the touch of a little girl on an electric battery has resulted in the explosion and shattering of nine acres of rock in New York harbor. A stranger to the wonderful powers of nature which man has learned to utilize might have wondered what possible connection there could be between the child on the shore and the massive rock which had so long blocked up the water-way; or how that small hand could make the slightest impression upon such an invincible barrier. But the spectators who looked upon the striking scene knew that there was a hidden power, mighty enough to do the stupendous work, and yet responsive to the gentle touch of a finger. To bring about this strange combination and its marvelous result had, however, involved a large expenditure of labor and skill. In the spiritual world the matter is far simpler. We shall see in our passage for to-day what a mighty power was set in motion by a secret touch, which produced wonderful results, visible to all. Guided by the passage, let us look at three pictures.

The first verse brings before us the capital and royal residence of the monarch of the great Per-

sian Empire, "Shushan the palace," or Susa. Here dwells Artaxerxes, "king of kings," as the Persian monarchs styled themselves. Ezra 12. 7. All the nations round about are subject to him. He reigns over many climes and many tongues. His wealth is enormous, his power undisputed, his will absolute. To him will apply the words of Solomon: "Where the word of a king is there is power, and who may say unto him, What doest thou?" Eccl. 8. 4. It would seem hopeless to attempt to influence such a sovereign outside the current of his own desires and pleasures.

Our next picture is found in vers. 2, 3. Far away from the magnificent capital of king Artaxerxes lies the conquered and vassal city of Jerusalem. For long, long years it has lain prostrate. The temple, indeed, has been rebuilt, and there are some families of Jews dwelling on the site of the old city of David. But the walls are in ruins and the whole place desolate in the extreme, while the returned exiles are scorned and persecuted by the Samaritans and other tribes round about them. Who shall build again these walls, and raise this city from the dust? Who shall obtain the great king's permission to do such a thing? And who shall carry it out in the teeth of determined hostility and opposition?

Now for our third picture. We go back to "Shushan the palace." Here is one of the great king's servants, a Jewish exile, shut up in his own room. Taking advantage, probably, of the temporary absence of Artaxerxes, he has withdrawn himself from the sight and speech of others, to spend certain days in fasting, mourning, and prayer. The weeping and fasting are expressions of his grief and his self-abasement. But the prayer is something more. It is the hand raised to touch the secret spring of power.

When the little girl was to give the impulse which should shatter the huge "Flood Rock" to fragments, she might not stand just where she chose. She had to take up such a position as should enable her to lay her finger on the spring. And she had to touch that one particular spring. She might have curiously fingered much that was round about her with no particular effect. The touch might be simple and gentle, but it must be direct.

And so, if that Jewish exile, in his lonely room, wished to bring about a great and wonderful effect, such as would seem hopeless to mere human calculations, he must get into the proper position and lay his hand on the right spring.

Now look at Nehemiah's position. We have already seen him weeping and fasting. These are the outward signs; but what is the language of his soul? "We have sinned... both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly," etc. He takes the sinner's place. And what does Scripture say of this? "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." Isa. 66. 2. But further observe what he styles himself and those for whom he pleads, "These are thy servants and thy people,

whom
tentive
the s
say of
conce
135.

No
clun
utes)
of G
Israe
cove
touch
issu
taxer
as rel
Th
sprin
infan
But i
their
effec

1.
first
gri
be t
stan
help

2.
plea
may
that
serv
Chr
the

3.
is, f
acco
spr
the
"G

H
Bo
bef
clas
etc
etc

Yo
sen
ter
act
be
not
can
sar
up
pr
ac
Se