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PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVI.]

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 29, 1896

[No. 9.

The Jericho Road.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON.

Ben Ibrahim, travelling down the road—

The Jericho road so rough and steep.

Where robber hordes their evil watch keep

To seize from the lonely traveller his load—

Bethought him of all the dangers nigh,

And scanned his possessions with careful eye

"Treasures are here of silver and gold,

Spices, fine linen, and fabrics rare,

'Twere a pity to lose such goodly share"

They have cost thought and time and labour untold;

But, hap what may I must keep this stone

That I bear in trust; it is not my own.

"'Tis my lord's and not mine," as the pass he neared,

"New stores can I gain, not honour lost;

I will keep my trust at any cost."

And he hid the gem safe in his long white beard.

O Ibrahim wise! From out thy hoards

Thou hast saved thy best, as well as thy lord's.

Down life's perilous road our pilgrim way lies,

Where dangers surround on every hand,

And robbers beset. Full many a band

Seeks the joy of our hearts, the light of our eyes;

Our gains are snatched by time's clamorous hordes.

One gem must we guard, for that is our Lord's.

A jewel most precious, designed for his crown,

A gem all worlds could never redeem.

'Twill last when earth fades out like a dream,

And the King of the Universe claims his own.

What profit then if, reaching the goal,

Aught else has been saved by losing the soul?

—Well-Spring.

FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO.

BY THE EDITOR.

A tolerably good road, repaired and levelled at the expense of a Roumanian



THE WILD SCENERY OF JERICO—FROM THE INN OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

lady, extends for most of the way from Jerusalem to Jericho. In many places we passed swarms of Arab men and boys repairing it in a seemingly most ineffective manner, with the rudest tools, short-handled hoes, and rush baskets for carrying earth.

As we passed the traditional Bethpage we were joined by our Arab escort, a swarthy, dark-eyed, muscular man, wearing a white bournous, confined by black horse-hair cord around his head, a weather-stained cloak and baggy trousers. In his girdle he carried quite an arsenal of weapons—a long-barrelled pistol, a huge curved sword, and on his shoulder a brightly polished gun. He would shake hands all round two or three times a day, and repeat the formula, "Good-morning! English? English goot."

He gave us several exhibitions of his magnificent horsemanship, sweeping like the wind over the plain, his bournous and cloak flying behind him, waving his gun above his head, stopping and whirling almost like a bird in its flight.

We more than once felt the advantage of having our escort, as we passed numerous groups of fierce-looking Arabs, conveying donkey brigades of grain or an occasional camel train, from the wheat-fields of Moab to the Holy City. Their bold, free air, their keen, hawk-like eyes,

and long, white, hungry-looking teeth, quite fulfilled our ideal of the sons of Ishmael: "their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them." On their shoulders they carried guns with immensely long barrels and their stocks inlaid with silver or mother-of-pearl, at their girdle a cruel-looking, curved knife in a sheath, and even the poorest donkey-boy carried a stout club. They were picturesque-looking rascals, with their undaunted air, free stride and sinewy forms.

The road descended rapidly, and we realized as never before the meaning of the phrase, "Going down from Jerusalem to Jericho," the descent being about three thousand five hundred feet. The Apostles' Spring, the only fountain between the two places, where, doubtless, our Lord and his disciples must have drunk of its waters, exhibits the remains of a handsome stone structure with Saracenic arches and stone troughs for

water. It has been identified as the Waters of En-shemesh, mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of Joshua.

The road all the way from Jerusalem is thronged with

RUSSIAN PILGRIMS

of the Greek Church on their way to the Jordan. They are a very picturesque, but shabby and dishevelled looking crowd in all degrees of raggedness. Most of them trudge along, sweltering beneath sheepskin cloaks, like Bryan O'Flynn's, "with the woolly side in." They wear unkempt, square-cut hair and shaggy beards, and carry bamboo staves from the Jordan, or palm branches, in their hands.

The women are generally mounted on the backs of much enduring donkeys, crouched on their bedding with, it may be, one or two children. They often wear a fur-lined cloak and top boots, and ride with short stirrups, bringing their knees a most to their chins. In the sweltering heat they ineffectually try to ward off the sun's rays by a palm branch or the corner of a shawl stretched out on a bamboo cane.

The village priest trudges along with his parishioners, dressed in black gown and tall, black hat, whose rim is at the top instead of at the bottom. Some of these foot-worn and weary pilgrims carry heavy bags on their shoulders. They all have sad and weary faces, and ceremoniously saluted the howadgi with humble obeisance.

This pilgrimage is the event of a lifetime. The rustic inhabitants of some village, in the remote Caucasus or Greek Islands, save their money for years, and, with the village priest, make the pilgrimage to the sacred places, carrying with them the long, white shroud in which they bathe in the Jordan, and which they carry to their distant homes to be their final winding-sheet.

While the Russian pilgrims are said to number about nine-tenths of the whole, yet there are many others, Cypriotes, Levantines, Abyssinians, Copts, Syrians, Armenians—adherents of the ancient Christian sects of the East. We saw at the Jordan a tall, handsome Abyssinian woman, weary and way-worn, who had got separated from her companions and was anxiously inquiring the way to the convent. It made us think of Mary returning from Jerusalem, and missing the



RUINED AQUEDUCT, NEAR JERICHO.



PLAINS OF JORDAN, NEAR JERICHO.

young Christ amid the great multitude of pilgrims.

About noon we reached a dreary and desolate pass on a hill, to the left of which was a ruined tower, known as the

INN OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

At its base was an ancient khan, or caravansary, where we stopped for lunch. This was a type of many such which we saw subsequently, and probably a type of those which from time immemorial have accommodated travellers in these Eastern lands. It had a solid wall surrounding a large court, with an arcade for horses and mules, with a row of chambers along two sides for travellers, who carried their own provisions; but for those who had none, rather meagre supplies could be purchased.

After lunch some of us climbed the steep hill to the old inn, probably an ancient castle for the protection of the road. It was utterly dilapidated, some of its ruined chambers being occupied by squallid Arab families. A couple of withered and witch-like women conversed with the Rev. Mr. Reed, in that universal sign language at which he was an adept, and showed us the scanty furnishings of the vaults of the tower in which they lived, and gave us water to drink. Anything more dreary than the outlook over the stony hills can scarcely be conceived—the deepening gorge of the Wady-Elkelt or brook Cherith to the left, and in the distance the tawny, long, serrated wall of the mountains of Moab.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 29, 1896.

A STUDY IN CHILD LIFE.

"A Child of Tuscany." By Marguerite Bouvet. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$1.50.

What a strange little family that was, which dwelt in the tiny stone hut in that small peasant village not far from Florence, "the fairest and most famous of the daughters of Rome," as Dante says. Faustina, the poor, melancholy woman, Raffaello, the bright, curly-headed bambino, or baby, and Minnetto, the surly old cat. And what sad, lonely lives were theirs! But why was this? Was not Faustina Raffaello's mother, and did she not love him very much? Yes, she did, though not his mother, but she had her reasons for not teaching the little fellow to love her too well. But she secretly cherished him above all else in the world. Many years before she had lost all that was dear to her, her husband and little "bambino," or baby, and having become hardened and embittered by sorrow, her life had grown to be a most desolate one.

But one day, twelve long years after, as she was wandering forlornly through the beautiful Boboli gardens, bidding them a fond farewell, for this was her last day in Florence—on the morrow she

was going to the country, it chanced that a little child came toddling towards her, cooling and gurgling like a contented young pigeon. Soon the little one grew tired and began clutching at her skirt as if begging to be taken up. She stood only a moment irresolute, then, unfolding an old shawl, wrapped it about the baby's sleeping form and hastened away, repeating to herself in a low, husky voice, "I have not stolen it! I have not stolen it! It came to me. I will not give it up. Shall not others suffer as I have been made to suffer? Let them look, and search, and despair, as I have done, and they will never find it. I shall hide it from all eyes, and it shall be my comfort and my revenge!"

For six years poor Faustina, little Raffaello, and his dumb playmate lived in their lonely hut. As the child grew older, and more and more anxious to help the woman who had worked so hard for him, he was allowed to go to the city to sell his pretty nose-gays. It was most interesting to follow the career of this beautiful little "peasant hero" in the big city, how he made friends with a cheerful, genial-hearted coachman, who afterwards restored the lost child to his own people, a family of the nobility, who lived in the magnificent Villa Barborello.

The authoress very beautifully and appropriately closes this exquisite child's history with these words, "I think that little Raffaello's joy in being restored to the dear ones he had lost so long, was in no way lessened for having spent those lonely, almost sad years of his childhood in Faustina's humble home. Those years had taught him a great lesson and moulded his young nature for gentleness and mercy. He was rich, and in time he grew to be powerful but in his greatness he never forgot the people, the dear, simple, humble people whom he had known and loved; and he never ceased to work for their good, because he, himself, had been one of them."

We are sorry to learn that in some unaccountable way, two or three short paragraphs in the January number of Pleasant Hours, were repeated in subsequent numbers,—in one case in the same number. We can only explain this from the fact that with the January number we began to print these papers by a Linotype machine. There was a delay in getting the machine at work, and the papers had to be rushed through at a very rapid rate. Amid this pressure of work the duplication of the paragraphs took place. The Editor, who has exclusive charge of the Methodist Magazine and Review, and eight other distinct periodicals, is unable personally to read the proofs of all these papers, and this has to be done largely by experienced proof-readers. Every effort will be made to prevent the recurrence of such a duplication of articles.

DESERVED PROMOTION.

Hon. Chauncey M. Depew tells the story of his visit to the mechanical department of Cornell University. He found at the head of it Prof. Morris, who claimed him as a superior officer, giving as a reason that he was an old-time worker on the New York Central Railroad.

"How did you get here?" asked Depew. "I fired on the New York Central. I stood on the footboard as an engineer on the Central. While a locomotive engineer I made up my mind to get an education. I studied at night, and fitted myself for Union College, running all the time with my locomotive. I procured books and attended as far as possible the lectures and recitations. I kept up with my class, and on the day of graduation I left my locomotive, washed up, put on the gown and cap, delivered my thesis, and received my diploma, put the gown and cap in the closet, put on my working shirt, got on my engine, and made my usual run that day."

"Then," said Depew, "I knew how he became Prof. Morris."

That spirit will cause a man to rise anywhere and in any calling. It is ambition, but it is ambition wisely directed, aiming not at the goal—for such an ambition produces envy, scheming, discontent, and weakness—but bravely and

cheerfully aiming at one's self, seeking to make one's self fitted for higher work. When this is accomplished the opportunity for higher work is sure to come.—Selected.

Wha's My Neibor?—The Modern Good Samaritan.

We all know George Macdonald as a charming writer of prose stories, but it will be news to many that he is an accomplished poet in the Scottish vernacular. In the following he gives a new version of an old parable—a new sermon on an old text:

Frae Jerusalem a traveller tulk
The laigh road to Jericho;
It had an ill name and mony a cruk,
It was lang and unco how.

Oot cam the robbers, an' fell on the man,
An' knockit him on the held;
Took a' whauron they could lay their
han',
An' left him nakit for deid.

By cam a meenister o' the kirk,
"A sair mishanter!" he cried,
"Wha kens where the villains may lurk?
I s' haud to the ither side."

By cam an elder o' the kirk:
Like a young horse he shied;
"Fie, there's a bonny morning's work!"
An' he sprangt to the ither side.

By cam ane wha gaed to the wrang kirk
Douce he trotted alang;
"Puir body!" he cried, and wi a jerk,
Aff o' his cuddy he sprang.

He ran to the boady, an' turned it ower:
"There's life in the man," he cried;
He was na ane to stan' an' glower,
Nor haud to the ither side.

He doctored his wounds, and he helst
him on
To the back o' the beastie douce;
And held him on til a weary man,
He landt at the half-way hoose.

He tend'd him a' nicht, an' at dawn o'
day:
"Lan'lord, latna him lack:
Here's aughteen pence! an' ony mair
ootlay,
I'll settle as I come back."

Sae nae mair, neibors—say nae sic word,
Wi' hert aye arguing an' chill:
"Wha is the neibor to me, O Lord?"
But "Wha am I neibor till?"

A MODEL BOY.

"I never think of what the Bible is to a man," said Rev. Sam Jones, "but what I think of a little boy. He was the good boy of the town, and all of the boys recognized him as a good, upright youth, and set their trap to get him drunk. They sent one of the shrewdest of the bad boys to him, and he met him on the street and said: 'Johnny, come into the saloon and have a mint julep.' Johnny said, 'Oh no, I can't go in there.' 'Well, why?' 'Well, my book says, 'Look not upon the wine when it is red,' much less drink it.'"

The bad boy said: "I know the book says that, but come in and take one drink."

He replied, "I cannot do that."

"Well, why?"

"Because my book says, 'At last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.'"

"Yes, I know the Bible says that, but come in and take one drink."

"No," he said, "my Bible says, 'When sinners entice thee, consent thou not.'"

The bad boy turned off and left, and went over to his companions, and they said: "Did you see him?"

"Yes."

"Did you get him to drink?"

"No, I could not get him into the saloon."

"Why?"

"Because," replied the bad boy, "that fellow was just as chuck full of the Bible as he could be, and I could not do anything with him."—Selected.

A Little Lad's Answer.

Our little lad came in one day
With dusty shoes and tired feet:
His playtime had been hard and long,
Out in the summer's noontide heat.
"I'm glad I'm home," he cried, and hung
His torn straw hat up in the hall,
While in the corner by the door
He put away his bat and ball.

"I wonder why," his auntie said,
"This little lad always comes here
When there are many other homes,
As nice as this and quite as near?"
He stood a moment deep in thought,
Then with the love-light in his eye,
He pointed where his mother sat,
And said, "She lives here; that is why!"
—Christian Advocate.



JUNIOR LEAGUE.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC.

March 1, 1896.

The Shunamite's son whom Elisha restored to life.—2 Kings 4. 18-37.

Elisha was a distinguished prophet whose life was full of astonishing events. We recommend our Junior League friends to make themselves familiar with this good man's history, and they will not only be pleased and profited, but they will learn how they may also become great and useful, for Elisha was a man of like passions with ourselves. He was a friend of God. This is what we may all become. We are not warranted in supposing that we may become such a prophet as he was, but there is no knowing what attainments we may make if we live devoted to God, and seek to be useful in our day and generation.

Elisha was accustomed to visit a place called Shunem, where he was entertained at the house of a respectable citizen, whose only son took sick one day and died. The mother was disconsolate, as mothers always are when one of their children die. No wonder that this mother felt so keenly, seeing that the deceased was her only child. She admired the character of Elisha, which prompted her to request her husband to provide a chamber where the good man could lodge when duty called him to Shunem. When death, therefore, entered the household, she lost no time in making ready to visit the prophet, that she might make him acquainted with what had befallen her. A friend in need, you know, is a friend indeed. Ungodly people respect those who are good. Some sick people in the days of Peter the Apostle, were desirous that even the shadow of his body might fall upon them as he passed by. Who can tell the power of goodness? This is true greatness. Let our young people aim at goodness above everything else.

What Elisha did when he heard of the death of the child! First, he sent his servant, Gehazi, to the sick chamber and commanded him to 'lay his staff upon the face of the child.' We must always use means, for miracles are not to be expected when they are not needed. The child, however, did not awake. Elisha therefore went himself into the chamber, and gave himself up to prayer. He had no doubt prayed all the time ever since the sad news reached him. But now we suppose he prayed the more earnestly, but still he used means. See verses 34 and 35. God in mercy answered prayer.

Who can tell the power of prayer? God still answers prayer. A good man once gave the present writer this advice when he was a boy. "Whatever you have to do, do the best you can, and pray to God to help you." Did our young friends ever try the experiment of praying to God to help them in their studies, or in all the concerns of daily life? We feel sure that if they will adopt it, they will be benefited. Especially let them pray to God to help them to be good, and though they may feel like the little boy who tried to be good, but said "it was hard work," nevertheless prayer will make it easier.

The Good Samaritan.

A traveller fell among thieves ;
He was crushed like autumn leaves ;
He was beaten like the sheaves
Upon the threshing floor.

There, upon the public way,
In the shadowless heat of day,
Bleeding, stripped, and bound he lay,
And seemed to breathe no more.

Void of hope was he, when lo !
On his way to Jericho ;
Came a priest, serene and slow,
His journey just begun.

Many a silver bell and gem
Glittered on his harness hem ;
Behind him gleamed Jerusalem,
In the unclouded sun.

Broad were his phylacteries,
And his calm and holy eyes
Looked above earth's vanities,
And gazed upon the sky.

He the suffering one descried,
But with saintly looks of pride,
Passed by on the other side,
And left him there to die.

Then approached with reverend pace
One of the elected race,
The chosen ministers of grace,
Who bore the ark of God.

He, a Levite and a high
Exemplar of humanity,
Likewise passed the sufferer by,
Even as the dust he trod.

Then came a Samaritan,
A despised, rejected man,
Outlawed by the Jewish ban
As one in bonds to sin.

He beheld the poor man's need,
Bound his wounds and with all speed,
Set him on his own good steed,
And brought him to the inn.

When our Judge shall reappear
Thinkest thou this man will hear,
"Wherefore didst thou interfere
With what concerned not thee?"

No ! the words of Christ will run,
"Whatsoever thou hast done
To this poor and suffering one,
That hast thou done to me!"
—Author unknown.

THE STORY OF JESSICA.

CHAPTER IV.

PEEPS INTO FAIRYLAND.

It was not the last time that Jessica concealed herself behind the baize-covered door. She could not overcome the urgent desire to enjoy again and again the secret and perilous pleasure ; and Sunday after Sunday she watched in the dark streets for the moment when she could slip in unseen. She soon learned the exact time when Daniel would be occupied in lighting up, before the policeman would take up his station at the entrance, and, again, the very minute at which it would be wise and safe to take her departure. Sometimes the child laughed noiselessly to herself, until she shook with suppressed merriment, as she saw Daniel standing unconsciously in the lobby, with his solemn face and grave air, to receive the congregation, much as he faced his customers at the coffee-stall. She learned to know the minister by sight—the tall, thin, pale gentleman, who passed through a side door, with his head bent as if in deep thought, while two little girls, about her own age, followed him, with sedate yet pleasant faces. Jessica took a great interest in the minister's children. The younger one was fair, and the elder was about as tall as herself, and had eyes and hair as dark ; but oh, how cared for, how plainly waited on by tender hands ! Sometimes, when they were gone by, she would close her eyes, and wonder what they would do in one of the high black pews inside, where there was no place for a ragged, barefooted girl like her ; and now and then her wonderings almost

ended in a sob, which she was compelled to stifle.

It was an untold relief to Daniel that Jessica did not ply him with questions, as he feared, when she came for breakfast every Wednesday morning ; but she was too shrewd and cunning for that. She wished him to forget that she had ever been there, and by-and-bye her wish was accomplished, and Daniel was no longer uneasy, while he was lighting the lamps, with the dread of seeing the child's wild face starting up before him.

But the light evenings of summer-time were drawing near apace, and Jessica foresaw, with dismay, that her Sunday treasuries would soon be over. The risk of discovery increased every week, for the sun was later and later in setting, and there would be no chance of creeping in and out unseen in the broad daylight. Already it needed both watchfulness and alertness to dart in at the right moment in the gray twilight ; but still she could not give it up ; and if it had not been for the fear of offending Mr. Daniel, she would have resolved upon going until she was found out. They could not punish her very much for standing in the lobby of a chapel.

Jessica was found out, however, before the dusky evenings were quite gone. It happened one night that the minister's children, coming early to the chapel, saw a small tattered figure, bareheaded and barefooted, dart swiftly up the steps before them and disappear within the lobby. They paused and looked at one another, and then, hand in hand, their hearts beating quickly, and the colour coming and going on their faces, they followed this strange new member of their father's congregation. The pew-opener was nowhere to be seen, but their quick eyes detected the prints of the wet little feet which had trodden the clean pavement before them, and in an instant they discovered Jessica crouching behind the door.

"Let us call Daniel Standring," said Winny, the younger child, clinging to her sister ; but she had spoken aloud, and Jessica overheard her, and before they could stir a step she stood before them with an earnest and imploring face.

"Oh, don't have me drove away," she cried ; "I'm a very poor little girl, and it's all the pleasure I've got. I've seen you lots of times with that tall gentleman as stoops, and I didn't think you'd have me drove away. I don't do any harm behind the door, and if Mr. Daniel finds me out he won't give me any more coffee."

"Little girl," said the elder child, in a composed and demure voice, "we don't mean to be unkind to you ; but what do you come here for, and why do you hide yourself behind the door?"

"I like to hear the music," answered Jessica, "and I want to find out what prayer is, and the minister, and God. I know it's only for ladies and gentlemen, and fine children like you ; but I'd like to go inside just for once, and see what you do."

"You shall come with us into our pew," cried Winny, in an eager and impulsive tone ; but Jane laid her hand upon her outstretched arm, with a glance at Jessica's ragged clothes and matted hair. It was a question difficult enough to perplex them. The little outcast was plainly too dirty and neglected for them to invite her to sit side by side with them in their crimson-lined pew, and no poor people attended the chapel with whom she could have a seat. But Winny, with flushed cheeks and indignant eyes, looked reproachfully at her elder sister.

"Jane," she said, opening her Testament, and turning over the leaves hurriedly, "this was papa's text a little while ago : 'For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment ; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place ; and say to the poor, Stand thou here, or sit here under my footstool ; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?' If we don't take this little girl into our pew, we 'ave the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.'"

"I don't know what to do," answered Jane, sighing ; "the Bible seems plain ; but I'm sure papa would not like it. Let us ask the chapel-keeper."

"Oh, no, no !" cried Jessica : "don't let

Mr. Daniel catch me here. I won't come again, indeed ; and I'll promise not to try and find out about God and the minister, if you'll only let me go."

"But, little girl," said Jane, in a sweet but grave manner, "we ought to teach you about God, if you don't know him. Our papa is the minister, and if you'll come with us we'll ask him what we must do."

"Will Mr. Daniel see me?" asked Jessica.

"Nobody but papa is in the vestry," answered Jane, "and he'll tell us all, you and us, what we ought to do. You'll not be afraid of him, will you?"

"No," said Jessica, cheerfully, following the minister's children as they led her along the side of the chapel towards the vestry.

"He is not such a terrible personage," said Winny, looking round encouragingly, as Jane tapped softly at the door, and they heard a voice saying, "Come in."

CHAPTER V.

A NEW WORLD OPENS.

The minister was sitting in an easy-chair before a comfortable fire, with a hymn-book in his hand, which he closed as the three children appeared in the open doorway. Jessica had seen his pale and thoughtful face many a time from her hiding-place, but she had never met the keen, earnest, searching gaze of his eyes, which seemed to pierce through all her wretchedness and misery, and to read at once the whole history of her desolate life. But before her eyelids could droop, or she could drop a reverential curtsey, the minister's face kindled with such a glow of pitying tenderness and compassion as fastened her eyes upon him, and gave her new heart and courage. His children ran to him, leaving Jessica upon the mat at the door, and with eager voices and gestures told him the difficulty they were in.

"Come here, little girl," he said ; and Jessica walked across the carpeted floor till she stood right before him, with folded hands, and eyes that looked frankly into his.

"What is your name, my child," he asked.

"Jessica," she answered.

"Jessica," he repeated, with a smile ; "that is a strange name."

"Mother used to play 'Jessica' at the theatre, sir," she said, "and I used to be a fairy in the pantomime, till I grew too tall and ugly. If I'm pretty when I grow up, mother says I shall play too ; but I've a long time to wait. Are you the minister, sir?"

"Yes," he answered, smiling again.

"What is a minister?" she inquired.

"A servant!" he replied, looking away thoughtfully into the red embers of the fire.

"Papa!" cried Jane and Winny, in tones of astonishment ; but Jessica gazed steadily at the minister, who was now looking back again into her bright eyes.

"Please, sir, whose servant are you?" she asked.

"The servant of God and of man," he answered solemnly. "Jessica, I am your servant."

The child shook her head, and laughed shrilly as she gazed round the room, and at the handsome clothing of the minister's daughters, while she drew her rags closer about her, and shivered a little, as if she felt a sting of the east wind, which was blowing keenly through the streets. The sound of her shrill, childish laugh made the minister's heart ache and the tears burn under his eyelids.

"Who is God?" asked the child.

"When mother's in a good temper, sometimes she says, 'God bless me!' Do you know him, please, minister?"

But before there was time to answer, the door into the chapel was opened, and Daniel stood upon the threshold. At first he stared blandly forwards, but then his grave face grew ghastly pale, and he laid his hand upon the door to support himself until he could recover his speech and senses. Jessica also looked about her, scared and irresolute, as if anxious to run away or to hide herself. The minister was the first to speak.

"Jessica," he said, "there is a place close under my pulpit where you shall sit, and where I can see you all the time. Be a good girl and listen, and you will hear something about God. Standring,

put this little one in front of the pews by the pulpit steps."

But before she could believe it for very gladness, Jessica found herself inside the chapel, facing the glittering organ, from which a sweet strain of music was sounding. Not far from her Jane and Winny were peeping over the front of their pew, with friendly smiles and glances. It was evident that the minister's elder daughter was anxious about her behaviour, and she made energetic signs to her when to stand up and when to kneel ; but Winny was content with smiling at her whenever her head rose above the top of the pew. Jessica was happy, but not in the least abashed. The ladies and gentlemen were not at all unlike those whom she had often seen when she was a fairy at the theatre ; and very soon her attention was engrossed by the minister, whose eyes often fell upon her as she gazed eagerly, with uplifted face, upon him. She could scarcely understand a word of what he said, but she liked the tones of his voice, and the tender pity of his face as he looked down upon her. Daniel hovered about a good deal, with an air of uneasiness and displeasure, but she was unconscious of his presence. Jessica was intent upon finding out what a minister and God were.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST PRAYER.

When the service was ended, the minister descended the pulpit steps, just as Daniel was about to hurry Jessica away, and, taking her by the hand in the face of all the congregation, he led her into the vestry, whither Jane and Winny quickly followed them. He was fatigued with the services of the day, and his pale face was paler than ever as he placed Jessica before his chair, into which he threw himself with an air of exhaustion ; but, bowing his head upon his hands, he said in a low, but clear tone, "Lord, these are the lambs of thy flock. Help me to feed thy lambs!"

"Children," he said, with a smile upon his weary face, "it is no easy thing to know God. But this one thing we know, that he is our Father—my Father and your Father, Jessica. He loves you, and cares for you more than I do for my little girls here."

He smiled at them and they at him, with an expression which Jessica felt and understood, though it made her sad. She trembled a little, and the minister's ear caught the sound of a faint though bitter sob.

"I never had any father," she said, sorrowfully.

"God is your Father," he answered, very gently ; "He knows all about you, because he is present everywhere. We cannot see him, but we have only to speak, and he hears us, and we may ask him for whatever we want."

"Will he let me speak to him as well as these fine children that are clean and have got nice clothes?" asked Jessica, glancing anxiously at her muddy feet and her soiled and tattered frock.

"Yes," said the minister, smiling, yet sighing at the same time ; "you may ask him this moment for what you want."

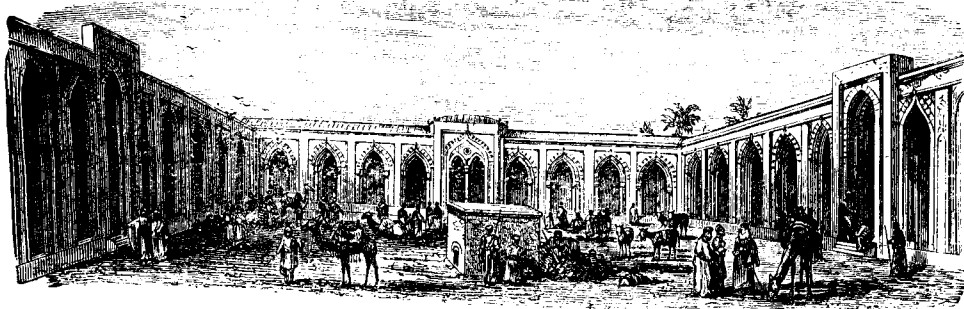
Jessica gazed round the room with large, wide-open eyes, as if she were seeking to see God ; but then she shut her eyelids tightly, and bending her head upon her hands, as she had seen the minister do, she said, "O God ! I want to know about you. And please pay Mr. Daniel for all the warm coffee he's give me."

Jane and Winny listened with faces of unutterable amazement ; but the tears stood in the minister's eyes, and he added "Amen" to Jessica's first prayer.

(To be continued.)

The morning dew was sparkling when little Mary came downstairs on her first visit to the country. "Oh, mother, look ! The grass is all covered with perspiration. It must be hotter'n I thought it was."

"Bumply seems wonderfully well satisfied with himself." "Yes. There's nothing you can mention that he doesn't think he knows all about." "Well, I suppose you can't blame him. He has no children old enough to ask questions and take the conceit out of him."



AN EASTERN INN.

The Good Samaritan.

BY JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY.

Woe is me! what tongue can tell
My sad afflicted state,
Who my anguish can reveal,
Or all my woes relate?
Fallen among thieves I am,
And they have robbed me of my God,
Turned my glory into shame,
And left me in my blood.

O thou Good Samaritan!
In thee is all my hope;
Only thou canst succour man
And raise the fallen up;
Hearken to my dying cry;
My wounds compassionately see;
Me, a sinner, pass not by,
Who gasp for help from thee.

Still thou journeyest where I am,
Still thy compassions prove:
Pity is with thee the same,
And all thy heart is love;
Stoop to a poor sinner, stoop,
And let thy healing grace abound,
Heal my bruises and bind up
My spirit's every wound.

Saviour of my soul, draw nigh,
In mercy haste to me,
At the point of death I lie,
And cannot come to thee;
Now thy kind relief afford,
The wine and oil of grace pour in;
Good Physician, speak the word,
And heal my soul of sin.

Pity to my dying cries
Hath drawn thee from above,
Hovering over me, with eyes
Of tenderness and love;
Now, even now, I see thy face;
The balm of Gilead I receive;
Thou hast saved me by thy grace,
And bade the sinner live.

Surely now the bitterness
Of second death is past;
O my life, my righteousness!
On thee my soul is cast!
Thou hast brought me to thine inn,
And I am of thy promise sure;
Thou canst cleanse me from all sin,
And all my sickness cure.

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

LESSON X.—MARCH 8.

TRUE LOVE TO ONE'S NEIGHBOUR.
Luke 10. 25-37. Memory verses, 25-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with
all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and
with all thy strength, and with all thy
mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.—
Luke 10. 27.

Time.—November, A.D. 29.
Place.—Perea.

CONNECTING LINKS.

The transfiguration, healing of a lunatic child, paying tribute money, healing of a man blind from his birth, sending of the seventy, are the leading events between the last lesson and this.

DAY BY DAY WORK.

Monday.—Read the Lesson (Luke 10. 25-37). Prepare to tell in your own words the last lesson and this.

Tuesday.—Read of the bad feeling between Jews and Samaritans (John 4. 1-9). Fix in your mind Time, Place, and Connecting Links.

Wednesday.—Read how God cared for strangers (Lev. 19. 9-18). Learn the Golden Text.

Thursday.—Read the royal law (James 2. 1-9). Learn the Memory Verses.

Friday.—Read how we may be the children of our Father in heaven (Matt. 5. 38-48). Answer the Questions.

Saturday.—Read the best way to conquer an enemy (Rom. 12. 9-21). Study the Teachings of the Lesson.

Sunday.—Read the greatest thing in the world (1 Cor. 13).

QUESTIONS.

1. The Law of Love, verses 25-28.—25. What was the lawyer's business? How



LOVE TO ONE'S NEIGHBOUR.

did he "tempt" Jesus? 27. What passage did the lawyer quote? What do they teach us? 28. How may we live a perfect life?

2. The Life of Love, verses 29-37.—29. To a Jew what was meant by the word neighbour? 30. Why was this road then haunted by thieves? 31. What may have led the priest to pass by the wounded man? 32. What were the duties of a Levite? How did he show his selfishness? 33. Was it strange that a Samaritan should help the man? 34. How did the Samaritan show his pity? 36. What was Christ's answer to the question "Who is my neighbour?" 37. What did Jesus tell the lawyer to do?

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

The Scripture will direct us on the greatest questions. God claims and deserves our best love. If we love God we will love his creatures. We are neighbours to all men. Our sympathy should be practical. The final test will not be what we have believed or professed, but what we have done.

A maiden writes: "Can you tell me how to change the colour of my hair, which all the young men tell me is red? Certainly we can. Get rich; and then they will call it golden or auburn."

AN EASTERN INN.

Sojourners and travellers in the East, who happen to be so fortunate as to stop over night, on their journey, at one of the "khans" or lodging-places for man and beast, which are to be found in many parts of Syria, find them very interesting objects of study. Totally different from the inns established for the accommodation of wayfarers in any other part of the globe, their characteristics have changed but little, if at all, in the last two thousand years. They afford lodging, but rarely food, as the traveller is supposed to carry his own supplies. The smaller "khans" are found

in the open country along routes frequented by travellers, while the larger "caravanserais" are usually located near towns. Each "khan" has a courtyard, enclosed by substantially built walls, within whose protection the animals and baggage are safely housed, while a spacious dwelling at the main entrance affords ample accommodation for the guests.

A "khan" which is well remembered by every reader of the Gospels is the one to which the "Good Samaritan" conveyed the stranger who had fallen among thieves and was grievously wounded. Luke tells of this Samaritan's great kindness and hospitality: "And he brought him to an inn and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him: Take care of him;

ST. BERNARD DOGS.

If a St. Bernard dog which has seen service in the Alps could write out his adventures, what a thrilling narrative of hair-breadth escapes and perilous undertakings would there be to read! A gentleman, who visited the St. Bernard monasteries recently, says the utmost pains are given in training the dogs. The training begins when they are mere puppies. At meal-time the little animals are required to sit in a row, each having before him a tin dish containing his food. Grace is said by one of the monks, the dogs, meanwhile, sitting with bowed heads. Not one of them stirs until the amen is spoken; if some young puppy, not well enough schooled in table-manners, happens to begin to eat before the proper moment, he is reminded by a low growl or a tug at the ear, that he is misbehaving. After a severe snowstorm, or an avalanche, two dogs are sent out from the monastery. Around the neck of one is fastened a flask of cordial, and to the back of the other is bound a heavy blanket. Should a traveller happen to be buried in the snow, their keen scent soon enables them to find the place. Then they search for the spot where the snow is the softest, for they know that the traveller's breath must have made it soft, and, therefore, that his head must be just beneath. They scratch away the snow, and, with their powerful paws, smite the man on the chest, barking, meanwhile, to arouse him from his stupor. Recovering his wits, the half-dead man drinks the cordial, revives, and to his great joy, finds himself shortly under a friendly roof.

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