

Our Youth Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, July 19th, 1868.

PART 4.—Our Lord's second passover, and the subsequent transactions until the third. JOHN v. 1-24: The Pool of Bethesda and the healing of the infirm man. Recite—JOHN x. 34-38.

Sunday, July 26th, 1868.

JOHN v. 25-47: Our Lord's discourse at Jerusalem. Recite—DANIEL xii. 1-3.

Prejudice, or, the Black Polyannthus.

CHAPTER II.

For some reason that I now forget, Prosper and Emile, about this time, came home from school for a few days, and gave considerably more trouble in the house than all the pupils put together.

In the interval between two sorts of mischief, as Prosper one sunny afternoon lay on his back upon the grass, singing and tossing up his cap, he bethought himself of Nannette's rabbit, and inquired why he had not seen it among the other pets.

'Why so?' asked Miss Ashley. 'Isn't there a wall along the side of the yard,' said Prosper, 'and doesn't the water run all along this side of the garden, and the cherry orchard, and the hop plantation?'

'Well; I should hope I know where the fence ends,—it ends against the back of the boat-house, which is half out of the water and half in; so Speck must be somewhere in the garden or the plantation, for he cannot swim.'

'But he can burrow,' said Juliet; 'and if not, the hops are growing so tall that you will never find him.'

'Excellent creatures, both of them,' said Miss L'Estrange, 'but some people are decidedly most agreeable at a distance.'

As she said this, her eyes rested on Miss Palmer, who was standing near; not, I am sure, intentionally, for a gradual sadness and quietness had crept over this poor girl lately, which we all pitied; she, however, on meeting the glance of Miss L'Estrange, colored, and drew back, evidently taking the remark to herself, for she turned away, and bent her steps to the solitary walk in the shrubbery.

She had just reached it, when, obeying a happy impulse, I ran after her, and catching her just as the shadow of the first laurel was cast upon her, 'Miss Palmer' I exclaimed, 'what are you going away for?'

She neither stopped nor turned, but walked resolutely into the very thickest of the shadow, till at length I ran before her, stood in the grass-path, and faced her.

She was pale, and perhaps the gloom cast upon her from the trees overhead helped to overcloud her face; but there was an energy in its expression that I did not understand. I saw she had been struggling with herself, for those wonderful eyes of hers flashed and changed their expression every instant; and though I had so bravely intruded upon her solitude, I now felt half afraid of her; she appeared all at once and by reason of some peculiar insight that I had acquired into her character, to have become much older, far wiser, and incomparably superior to myself.

I thought so at the time, but since then I have thought that the change must rather have been in herself; either the absence of her usual colour or something which she had just read in the little New Testament that she held tightly in both hands, had given to her features a strange look of awe, which increased as her excitement subsided, and which I cannot describe, though I have seen it characterized as

'that look which some have on their faces who die young.'

Though I had abruptly stopped her, she was too preoccupied to speak at first, till, being determined she should not think that my friend and champion had intentionally distressed her, I laid both my hands on hers, which were clasped over the little book, and made an attempt to push her gently backwards towards the entrance of the shrubbery.

I attempted, but did not succeed, and she looked down gravely into my face, and said, 'What do you wish, Miss West? What do you mean?'

'Oh, Miss Palmer,' I exclaimed, 'you know, you know as well as I do, that Miss L'Estrange did not say that about people who are most agreeable at a distance, meaning or thinking anything about you.'

'It does not signify what she meant,' she replied, after a pause, 'so much as what you mean.'

As I continued to lean against her, holding her hands tightly (for I wished to elicit from

her some admission that she felt I was right before I let her go), she looked into my eyes, and seemed to be quietly considering my features, and reading all my thoughts, as if learning me by heart. I did not shrink from her scrutiny, and we continued to look at each other till the expression of her eyes softened, and she smiled what that peculiar sweetness seldom seen but in those whose cast of countenance is grave and cold.

'I should be sorry if you thought we wished you to go away,' I said, answering her last remark. 'Oh, then, you do care about me?' she answered, quickly.

'Care about you,' I repeated; 'oh, yes, of course.'

I had forgotten at the moment that it was on my champion's account that I had followed her, and that only during the past few minutes I had cared about her for herself.

'I believe, since you assure me of it, that Miss L'Estrange did not allude to me,' she then said (I thought her language had also grown older); and as I released her hands, she put them about my waist, and drew me nearer. I saw she wished me to kiss her, and I obeyed the wish, with a sort of consciousness that this was an important kiss to her, but no consciousness at all that during all my future life it was to be of importance to my peace that I should have given it.

CHAPTER III.

Miss Palmer and I turned again and walked towards the entrance of the shrubbery; and it was not till she said, 'You have never taken any part against me, Miss West; you have looked unkindly at me,' that I became aware how completely she had known the nature of our feelings towards her: it also flashed into my mind, what a strange thing it was that my own should so entirely have changed towards her without any particular cause; and I hung my head, and could not make any answer.

I now thought her innocent; but I did not know how to tell her that hitherto I had thought as badly of her as any of my companions.

While I hesitated, the school-room maid came, and told Miss Palmer that Madame would take her out for a drive. She had complained of headache; and Madame, always considerate, thought the air would relieve it.

Nannette had been unwell during the last two days, and had been excused from the school-room; as Miss Palmer and I hastened towards the house we saw Massey carrying her down stairs well wrapped up, and I was surprised to see how ill she appeared.

'Poor lamb,' said Massey when I spoke to my little schoolfellow, and she peevishly turned away her face; 'don't take any notice of her, Miss West; it only teases her.'

The little girl was carefully placed in the pony carriage, and Madame and Miss Palmer presently appeared. I thought Madame seemed depressed; and Massey, as she looked after them when they drove away, observed, that she was sure her mistress thought the child very unwell, though she would not allow that there was much the matter.

'Why does she not send, then, for Dr. G——?' I inquired. 'He is sent for, miss,' said Massey, 'but he cannot come till this evening.'

The drive was not a long one; and when Nannette was lifted out of the carriage and carried up stairs again, she was so much worse that Madame did not leave her all the evening; and after the physician's visit significant looks passed between the teachers, which made us all feel extremely grave, for we perceived that the poor child was seriously unwell.

Madame did not come down the next morning, but sent a message to us, expressive of her hope that we would go on with our studies precisely as usual, and be very quiet in the house. We all tried to do our best, but not very successfully. Miss Palmer had a headache, and the teachers were scarcely equal to their duties, for both had been up nearly all night. Nannette had been attacked with croup, and for some hours had been in great danger.

After dinner it was a half holiday, and as it rained we were sitting drearily in the school-room, working and reading, when Miss Massey came in and said that a gentleman had called to see Miss Palmer.

Madame was in the drawing-room talking to Dr. G——; the two teachers were asleep on the dining-room sofas. 'There is no place but the school-room for him to be shown into,' said Miss L'Estrange; 'we can go into our own rooms.'

'No, ma'am,' said Massey, addressing Miss L'Estrange as our head and leader, 'the dear child has just dropped asleep, and Madame has given orders that no one is to come up stairs.'

'Then show the gentleman in,' said Miss L'Estrange, 'and we must stay.'

Accordingly he was shown in, and we rose for the moment, and then returned to our occupations, endeavoring to abstract our attention from him, that Miss Palmer might talk to him more at her ease.

He was exactly what Massey had said—a roughish-spoken gentleman in a light gray coat, stout, hearty, and farmer-like; he walked into the room, and after giving his niece two or three kisses, which resounded through the room, he exclaimed, 'Well, Hester, how are you, child? What! pale? I never saw you pale before.'

'I've got a bad headache, uncle.'

'Bad headache,' he repeated, as he walked up the room with her; 'what business have girls like you with headaches? I say, young ladies, what business have girls like Hester with headaches?'

We looked up and smiled; some of us said we hoped it would shortly be better; and he walked up cheerfully to our table, laid his whip upon it, and sat down.

'Well, Hester, I'm glad to see that you can hold yourself more upright now,' he observed; and he looked at her with evident satisfaction, and then turned to us, and presently a broad smile came over his features, and rubbing his hands upon his knees he exclaimed, 'Well, now, this is what I call a pretty sight; I'm glad my Hester's here; I knew she would be Lappy; such a number of young ladies, how pretty it is to see them amusing themselves so sociably, and so good humored.'

He continued to looked at us with that kind of admiring satisfaction which elderly people often feel for youth; his last words had called up a blush into the cheeks of several.

'Well, Hester, child,' he next said, still looking at us, 'didn't I always say you would be happy here? Eh? Didn't I?'

'Yes, uncle,' she replied.

On hearing the tone in which she said this, he glanced at us with surprise, as if inquiring what it might mean; then, perhaps, observing some confusion in our faces, a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he turned sharply round to his niece, and perceived at once that something was wrong. She was standing behind him, no longer pale, but agitated, and pressing her hands together as she often did when ill at ease.

'Where were you sitting, Hester,' he said, 'when I came in?'

'In a window-seat, uncle.'

'Which?'

She indicated the one which was farthest from us; and again he looked round at us, but with a very different expression; he had turned upon his chair, and was holding it by the back; she still stood, and looked as if she longed to speak, but did not dare.

'Well, Hester,' he presently said, in a tone as anxious as his first had been cheerfully, 'well, I hope you are happy.'

She made no answer, and the gloom deepened on his brow; he repeated his question, but she held down her head and said nothing, till in the most compassionate manner he said, 'I hope you have considered, my dear child, what a chance this is for you?'

Then she murmured, 'Yes, uncle.' The uncle heaved a deep, irrepressible sigh; his bitter disappointment was most evident; but he said, firmly, 'I say, child, look up; look up at me.' Miss Palmer obeyed him, and he again repeated, 'Are you happy here?'

Most of us, I believe, would have given anything to have left the room then, but we could not do it; we were compelled to hear her answer, given in a gentle voice, but as firmly as the question had been asked her, 'No. It would have been utterly impossible to mistake the meaning of her face, even if she had not answered at all.'

'My dear child,' he presently said very kindly, 'if you cannot stay here, what can I do with you but send you out to your grandmother; and what do you expect to be then better than a servant, and a very hard-worked servant, too? There will be few comforts, do books—think of that.'

'I do think,' answered Miss Palmer. 'And,' he continued, 'I could not have afforded, my dear, as you know, to place you here but for the kindness of Madame, who receives you much under her usual charge for old acquaintance sake.'

She interrupted him hastily, 'But I was promised—'

'Yes, you were promised; but, my dear, I thought, so kind as it was of Madame, that if I could get a good education for you—'

'Oh, but I was promised—'

'Yes, your grandmother promised that you should have your choice, and I never doubted that you would stay; what can I do better for you, my dear, always travelling about as I am? If you go to your grandmother, you need not expect that it will be like living at a farm-house here; it would be rough work and rough fare; and your grandmother told me herself that she could not afford to keep a servant, and thought it hard that I should wish to keep and educate you when she might have the benefit of your work.' He said this with great earnestness, and as if he had entirely forgotten our presence.

I cannot describe the pain it gave us to hear it, and to feel that her extreme desire to leave the school was in consequence of our unfriendly behavior. I call it simply unfriendly, because at that time we were far from feeling it to be unjust.

'I was to stay here till you came back,' said Miss Palmer, in a faint voice; and I have kept hoping and hoping that you would soon come, uncle. Madame is very kind, but I am miserable. How can I stay here four years longer? Oh, pray take me away with you, as you promised.'

'What! and send you to your grandmother Wilson?'

'Send me anywhere,' she replied, with a sigh.

We were all distressed and surprised at the hopeless tone in which she spoke, still more at the energy with which her uncle instantly replied, 'I'll take you back with me this very day, Hester, if you can give me a good reason for your being miserable.'

'Now, uncle!' she exclaimed, as if aghast. 'Come,' cried Miss L'Estrange, starting up with glowing cheeks, 'suppose we all go and stand in the hall for a few minutes.'

We were all eager to follow her lead; but before we could move a step from our places, the rough-spoken gentleman exclaimed, in such very resolute manner, that he could not possibly think of our turning out of our room on his account that after a little faint resistance we were reluctantly compelled to remain and listen with shame and contrition to what followed.

'Come with me, Hester,' said her uncle, 'to your own place, where you were sitting before I came in.'

She followed him to the remote window-seat, and they talked in lower tones than before; but, excited as our nerves were, it was impossible not to hear every word, and we were far too ill at ease to be able to keep up any conversation among ourselves.

First came various questions about Madame; and to these she answered that Madame was always kind.

He next inquired about her lessons; and she admitted that they were neither too long nor too difficult; that she liked the teachers, and she thought they liked her.

Her uncle appeared to be in such a restless state that he could not remain still for an instant. He pulled the working materials out of Hester's little basket, which stood on the table beside him. He changed his attitude. He got up and sat down again, scarcely taking his anxious eye off his niece, while all the time she stood before him, her head drooping, her eyes fixed on the ground, quite patient and quiet.

'All hitherto sounds as if you should be happy,' said her uncle in a lower tone, though one which was still audible to us; 'but if it is not so, Hester, tell me the reason.'

She still said nothing. 'Unless I have the reason, and the true one,' he repeated firmly, 'you must stay. Give it me at once. Have you felt ill since you have been here?'

'No, uncle; only the last two days.'

'Then, once for all,—and then he paused, and again lowered his voice, yet it reached our silent party, and we all heard,—'tell me, are the young ladies kind to you?'

He paused for an answer, and no one breathed till it came. It was given as if reluctantly, and in a very low and gentle tone, scarcely above a whisper, and we all felt, rather than heard, that it was 'No.'

Our suspense was breathless. As for me, confusion took away my powers of observation. What, I thought, should we do? Should we call Madame—should we promise to be more kind in future;—and what would this uncle do? Would he take her away directly, or accuse us to Madame? I was one of the little girls; it did not devolve on me to act, but I wished some one would do or say something. I wished, however, in vain, far before any of the elder girls could recover from their consternation to speak or stir, the door was opened by Massey, who said to Miss Palmer's uncle that Madame was now disengaged, and wished to see him; and he got up instantly and followed her, leading his niece by the hand.

Then followed a scene that I shall not easily forget. The dignified Miss Ward shed tears; Miss L'Estrange and Belle cried and sobbed with that heartiness which characterized all their actions; Miss Ashley blamed herself; Miss Morton blamed Madame for not having told us these circumstances beforehand; Juliet declared she had always expected some unpleasant end to Miss Palmer's affair; and Miss L'Estrange sobbed out that she would rather have borne twice as much that was disagreeable than have said a word, if she had known how much depended on Miss Palmer's staying; and now, she continued, 'to think of our knowing that we are making her to be a servant.'

As for me, I had felt since the morning a curious sensation, which, I believe, is sometimes the precursor of illness. I was very cold, and kept from time to time entertaining doubts as to the reality of what was going on around me. Every fresh thing that happened, I said to myself, 'I wonder whether this is real; and if it is, I wonder why I care so little about it. I wonder whether I should care if a very long lesson was set me, or be very much pleased even if I saw mamma walking in at the door. I don't think I care about anything.'

To be continued.

What an act of courtesy did.

A young man came to B—— College from a village the population of which were almost wholly Universalists. His own family were of that persuasion. When Sunday arrived in his new home, he looked about for a place where to attend worship. Something led him to the Baptist church. He was there met so kindly that he concluded to go another time, and soon decided to make that his place of meeting, at least for the present term. He became interested in the affairs of the church, in the minister and his preaching, and was finally converted. After a careful examination of the Scriptures, he became a Baptist in his belief, and was baptized into the fellowship of the church. He is considering his duty to preach the Gospel. Gentle reader give a friendly greeting to the stranger at the gate of your sanctuary. Who can tell but that thus you may win a soul to Christ, and fill some pulpit with a faithful minister of the gospel?

RE-INVIGORATE!—The lamp of life sometimes burns low and needs trimming. When recovering from debilitating sickness, or suffering from fatigue, exposure, or excessive mental toil, there is nothing so invigorating, soothing, refreshing and wholesome, as an occasional dose of that unequalled tonic and restorative—Radway's Ready Relief.

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One of the Pimples on the face of the man in the moon, say the astronomers, has disappeared. We are not told how, or by what means this was accomplished, but are not only told, but know, that Grace's Salve can readily remove from the human face pimples, scurf, and moth.

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