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THE ORIGIN OF SCANDAL.

Said Mrs. A. To Mrs. J. In quite a confidential way, "It seems to me That Mrs. B. Takes too much—something in her tea." And Mrs. J. To Mrs. K. That very night was heard to say, She grieved to touch Upon it much; But "Mrs. B. took—such and such!" Then Mrs. K. Went straight away, And told a friend the self same day. "I was sad to think— Here came a wink— That Mrs. B. was fond of drink." The friend's disgust Was such she must Inform a lady which she "nursed" "That Mrs. B. At half-past three, Was that far gone she couldn't see." This lady we Have mentioned, she Gave needwork to Mrs. B. And at such news Could scarcely choose But further needwork refuse. Then Mrs. B. As you'll agree, Quite properly—said she, that she Would track The scandal back To those who made her look so black. Through Mrs. K. And Mrs. J. She got at last to Mrs. A., And asked her why, With cruel lie, She painted her so deep a dye? Said Mrs. A. In some dismay, "I no such thing could ever say; I said that you Much stouter grew On too much sugar—which you do." —Detroit Free Press.

The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

[FROM PELLETIER'S NOTES.]

FIRST QUARTER.—Lesson 9.—Feb. 28. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.—Neb. i. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man.—Ps. cxviii. 12.

NEHEMIAH was cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes, and was a man of great wealth and influence. For 12 years, 445-433, he was governor of Judea, leading a great religious revival and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. He was a noble example of Christian patriotism.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH is a continuation of the Book of Ezra. The narrative of the book extends over about 14 years.

The history in our last lesson closed with the dedication of the second temple, B.C. 515. Then follows an interval of 57 years, during which we have little or no information of the condition of the Jews in Palestine.

THE REPORT FROM JUDEA.—Vers. 1-3. 1. The words of Nehemiah. The narrative or record. In the month Chisleu. The ninth month.

That Hanani, one of my brethren. Hanani seems to have been an actual brother of Nehemiah. Josephus tells us that as Nehemiah was walking one day outside the walls, some strangers, making for the city, travel-worn as if by a long journey, were overheard by him discoursing in his own language,—the Hebrew. He went up to them, and found they were from Judah; and one was his own brother. To inquire respecting Jerusalem and its people naturally followed.

THE REPORT. 3. In the province of Judea, now a province of the Persian empire. Are in great affliction and reproach. Their subjection to Persia forced itself upon the citizens at every turn. The tribute imposed on them was a heavy burden to a poor community. The establishments of the Persian governors were maintained by requisitions of bread, wine, and money, from the people. The country was pillaged in open day, and many Jews carried off into slavery, while the corpses of murdered men were often found on the road. The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down. The walls and houses had been destroyed.

THE EFFECT OF THE REPORT ON NEHEMIAH.—Vers. 4. When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. The revelation of the actual condition of Jerusalem came upon Nehemiah with a shock. And mourned certain days. This state of mourning continued three or four months. And fasted. Fasting had become a frequent practice among the Jews during the captivity.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.—Vers. 5-11. This prayer has several marked characteristics of true prayer. ADORATION. (v. 5) This reverential address expresses the right and natural feeling of the heart toward God.

CONFESSION. (v. 6-7) Confess the sins of the children of Israel. He recognizes that the cause of their troubles lay in their sins. God has repeatedly declared this. The only reason that Jerusalem was destroyed and the people made captive was because they had sinned.

PLEADING THE PROMISES. 8. If ye transgress, etc. This is not a quotation, but a reference to the general sense of various passages, instance, Lev. 26: 27-30; Deut. 28: 45-52; 62-67. But if ye turn unto me. If you will so act as to make it possible and wise to bless. I will gather them from thence. God does everything that wisdom and love can do for the salvation of men.

PLEADING FORMER MERCIES. (10) They people whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power. That God had blessed them before was an assurance that he would again, if they turned to him.

PERSEVERING PRAYER. It was three or four months before he received the beginning of the answer to his prayer (chap. 2: 1; comp. with chap. 1: 1). But the answer came. It was coming all the time.

METHODS OF ANSWER.—The subsequent history shows us how God answered his prayer. The answer came through the spirit of prayer itself. His earnestness and sadness so affected his countenance as to call the attention of the king. The answer came through the worldly king. So God often makes worldly men aid his cause, as men of science, explorers in the records of the past; so also commerce and capital are building highways for the Gospel. By consecration. Nehemiah himself was called to leave all for a long and difficult work. Each one worked over against his own house. One great secret of success lies here; each one doing the work nearest at hand, in his own home or neighborhood, in his own heart. (8) They watched as well as worked, (chap. 4: 17, 18). (9) They purified the church membership (chap. 5).

SIGNBOARDS.

Vigorous opposition of the liquor-dealers to the temperance movement is natural, and to be expected, for we war against their pecuniary interest; and if you touch some men in the pocket you touch where they live. Were these men to exhibit at their places of business a truthful signboard, it would read: "Delirium tremens, fever, disease, pauperism, crime, redness of eyes, wounds without cause, rags, wretchedness, despair and death for sale here."

That would be a truthful sign, but it would injure their business more than all the temperance organizations in existence. The liquor-seller will not even set up in his bar-room a specimen of his work; he puts up blinds at the doors and screens at the windows to hide his work from the passer-by, but the shoemaker and the tailor exhibit their work in their windows, and show what they have made out of the raw material.

The tailor, when he has finished a new coat, places it where it may be seen by the greatest number of customers; when the shoemaker has finished a first-class pair of boots he places them in his window, because the exhibition tends to increase his trade. With the liquor-seller it is quite different. He is ashamed of his finished work. With him the raw material is always worth more than the finished article. Were he to exhibit that he would lose his trade. No wonder he is ashamed to exhibit his work.

In the world's great exhibitions you have seen finished articles of nearly every manufacture, from a toothpick to a locomotive, and the exhibitors were anxious to explain the method of manufacture, or the textures of the woven fabrics. Almost every conceivable specimen of man's ingenuity and skill was there represented, from the raw material to the finished article. But there was one specimen of manufacture absent. I remember, at the Mechanics Fair in Boston, many years ago, being struck with the fact, and on mentioning it to Deacon Moses Grant, he proposed to apply to the managers for permission to exhibit a specimen of the liquor-seller's work. He knew a man who was once worth \$40,000, who was then debased and ruined through drink, who agreed, for a dollar a day, to stand in that Fair with a label in front of him, which read as follows: "I was once worth \$40,000. I was once respected and respectable. I once moved in good society. Such things as I am now are made out of such men as I once was. Please give us a premium for one of the best specimens to be found in the city." But they would not admit him! The liquor-seller is ashamed of the results of his infamous trade. A boy was passing by a liquor-shop, and, seeing a drunken man lying in the gutter in front of the saloon, knocked at the door, and said: "Mister, your sign's fell down," and the angry liquor-seller chased him half around the square. —Gough's Platform Echoes.

A FRUITFUL FIVE-DOLLAR BILL.

A little money sometimes goes a great way. As an illustration of this read the following, founded upon an incident which is said to have really occurred: A. owed \$15 to B.; B. owed \$20 to C.; C. owed \$15 to D.; D. owed \$30 to E.; E. owed \$12.50 to F.; F. owed \$10 to A.

All of them were seated at the same table. A. having a \$5 note, handed it to B., remarking that it paid \$5 of the \$15 he owed B.

B. passed the note to C., with the remark that it paid \$5 of the \$20 which he owed.

C. passed it to D., and paid with it \$5 of the \$15 he owed D.

D. handed it to E., in part payment of the \$30 owed him.

E. gave it to F., to apply on account of the \$12.50 due him.

F. passed it back to A., saying, "This pays half of the amount I owe you."

A. again passed it to B., saying, "I now only owe you \$5."

B. passed it again to C., with the remark, "This reduces my indebtedness to you to \$10."

C. again handed it to D., reducing his indebtedness to \$5.

D. paid it over to E., saying, "I now owe you \$20."

E. handed it again to F., saying, "This reduces my indebtedness to you to \$2.50."

Again F. handed the note to A., saying, "Now I don't owe you anything."

A. passed it immediately to B., thus canceling the balance of his indebtedness.

B. handed it to C., reducing his indebtedness to \$5.

C. canceled the balance of his debt to D. by handing the note to him.

D. paid it again to E., saying, "I now owe you \$15."

Then E. remarked to F., "If you will give me \$2.50 this will settle my indebtedness to you."

F. took \$2.50 from his pocket, handed it to E., and returned the \$5 note to his pocket, and thus the spell was broken, the single \$5 note having paid \$82.50, and canceled A's debt to B., C's debt to D., E's debt to F., and F's debt to A., and at the same time having reduced B's debt to C. from \$20 to \$5, and D's debt to E. from \$30 to \$15.

MORAL. "Here a little and there a little," helps to pay off large scores. Money circulates from hand to hand and business moves. Pay your debts—in full if you can, and if you can not pay in full, pay something. What helps one helps another, and so the round is made.—American Merchant.

CHILDREN WHO ASK.

Mrs. Mary C. Hungerford has some wise words in *Our Country Home* about answering the boys. Children, both boys and girls, ask all manner of questions just because they are curious and want to know. The child that does not ask questions must be lacking in intelligence, and the gist of Mrs. Hungerford's advice is that the mothers should not be ashamed to candidly own their ignorance when unable to answer some puzzling query. Evasive answers are denounced on the ground that "a child's clear eyes soon see through its mother's thinly-veiled pretense of being too busy or too sick, and then he has to learn that she not only is not able to give the information he seeks, but stoops to deceit to cover her inability." The boy who finds out that his mother's lips can utter a word that is not strictly true is to be pitied, but his mother is more to be pitied. A suggestion follows to the effect that mothers might get their children to help them more at the household work, and in turn study a little with the children, and thus all would learn something, and an era of mutual helpfulness would set in. I cordially commend the idea. Mothers, and fathers, too, are far too much addicted to the habit of checking the wholesome spirit of inquiry and investigation in their children which is a mark of a healthy mind. If ignorant on any point, look it up. If possible, let the child look it up with you. Then talk over the subject in the household, so that it may be permanently impressed on the minds of all. All lawful questions should be encouraged.

A PURE OFFERING.

The *Christian Weekly* points out the duty of giving to God the cleanest and best that we have, by the following anecdote:

We were told awhile ago of a Christian woman who when she had silver money to put into the missionary collection, scoured the piece, that it might be bright and clean. It was her feeling that only that which was in such condition was fit for the Lord's treasury. We may call this a mere sentiment, yet it is a sentiment in the right direction. It is the impulse of the devout heart to do that which the ancient Jew was under ritual obligation to do—to offer in sacrifice only that which was without blemish. The best is the only suitable offering to make to God. It was an expression of a sense of God's purity, that even the coin that went into His treasury should be clean and shining. We do not always lay the stress that we ought upon the beauty of holiness.

Cases are not unknown of false money, bad coppers, and bad silver coin, being offered to God. The truth is that the fact is often forgotten that our giving is to Him who sees and knows all.

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