

Young People's Column

THE FIRST GIRL GUIDE

J. C. Wetterhahn

Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:3)

Few characters in the Old Testament impress us with a more living and human interest than that of Naaman the Syrian. "Because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria," he had suddenly become the first man in Damascus. His recent victories have now made him wealthy, famous; popular alike with his king and with his servants: beloved and happy in his home, "but he was a leper." The brief monosyllable "but" connects two of the sharpest of contrasts. On the one side what more could a man want. On the other side a leper and apart from God without hope. His leprosy was like an iron wedge driven deep into the golden dream of his life. The spell of his enjoyments was broken, all music became a funeral dirge and for all in the great house the sunshine had become shade.

The background is indeed dark but on it God is about to paint the picture of His grace overflowing from apostate and unbelieving Israel to heathen Gentiles. While those in Syria might think Naaman the greatest in the land, not so God. God had been looking for someone in Syria to live and to witness for Him and had found none.

In this way we learn the reason which God had for sending or at least permitting trouble to come to this little girl and indeed to all His children, young and old. Unless she had suffered she could not have been where God needed her to live and to speak for Him.

Some admit the hand of God only in what they call great events, but all of these turn on small hinges. The little maid, humble as she was, and apparently of the least possible consequence, initiates the entire series of events of this narrative. She knew who and what Naaman did not know. He was a great man with his master, with his people, and with his family, but she was great with God. Neither Benhadad, king of Syria, nor Jehoram, king of Israel, were of any help to Naaman in his trouble. This little captive maid knew God and His power through Elisha His prophet. And how great was her knowledge in the light of Luke 4:27 where our Lord says, "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elijah the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." What undeserved, unmerited grace was God's to Naaman, and from the human standpoint all because of the little girl God had brought out of Israel.

The Eternal most often chooses the weakest and feeblest through whose unconscious influence the knowledge of His love and power is manifest. In Matt. 21:16 our Lord quoted a part of Psalm 8:2 where the psalmist says "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

In the four short verses which are practically a record of only one remark we have enough to delineate her character (I. Cor. 1:26-29).

I. A faith in God which surmounted a sea of troubles. We may well believe that in the attack in which she became a captive she also lost her parents. If this is true she knew they

were ready to glorify God either by their life or their death. When she learned of Naaman's leprosy she also knew that he was doomed to die and was not ready. In a plight similar to hers many would have cursed the day of their birth and said in the words of Carlyle: "There may be a God, but He does nothing—nothing!" Truly hers was a faith of no ordinary kind. As Dr. Mackay of Glasgow says: "It was cradled in adversity, it was maintained in solitude and persevered in amid the atmosphere of idolatry and worldliness."

Let us also learn from her that no matter where His providence may take us, let us take God with us as did Joseph in Egypt or Daniel in Babylon.

If she had a favorite verse it might well have been Psalm 37:7, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass," and had she chosen a favorite song from among our modern ones, I feel sure it would have been, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are," for she surely practiced its sentiments.

II. Her faith in God led her to be kind and loving to man. Again as Dr. Mackay says, "If ever there was one who had cause to remember atrocities it was the little captive maid." She was also a woman before she was a patriot and no national animosities were allowed to choke the springs of pity. Pity is good but it is not enough if we can do more. She expressed her pity in the words of our text, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." She may not have known Elisha personally, but we believe she earned what Jesus talked about when He said, "He that receiveth a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10:41), for she made both God and His servant to be venerated in a foreign land.

O the force of individual influence! As Paul states in Romans 14:7, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," or, as a poet has expressed it, "I am a part of all I have ever met."

So completely did the influence of her simple faith enter into the hearts of those who heard, that Naaman's wife, the general himself, and the king acted upon it.

Let us learn this: If this little maid knew and loved God better than anyone else in Syria it was because she had been taught to do so. A knowledge of God does not grow up in the human heart. She had had at least one godly parent who did his or her duty. She cherished their instructions in her heart, prayed to their God for keeping, and witnessed to His glory. And there was no doubt in her utterance—"he would recover him of his leprosy."

What an example of the power of parental teaching! As Dr. Arnold says, "All who have meditated upon the art of governing mankind, have felt that the fate of empires depends on the education of their young." And our Webster has said, "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon bronze, time will efface it; if we rear temples they will crumble to dust; but if we work upon immortal souls, if we imbue them with right principles of action, with just fear of wrong and love of right, we engrave on those tablets something which no time can obliterate, but which will grow brighter and brighter to all eternity."

When, Syria, all thy waters
Run voiceless to the main,

The least of Israel's daughters
Shall rend her captor's chain:
Not for lost home appealing
Rose that sweet exile's prayer—
"O happy land of healing,
Would that my lord were there!"

Proud disputants for power,
See whom her God, to view,
Rich in His kingdoms dower,
Sets in the midst of you!
With Jordan's washings seven,
Take, leprous soul defiled,
Bathed with the dews of heaven
The flesh of that little child!

—Herbert Kynaston in Herald of Holiness.

CORRESPONDENCE

Fredericton, N. B.

Dear Brother Trafton:

Please find enclosed my renewal for the King's Highway. I am still on the victory side and God is blessing my soul, showing light upon my pathway, that leads me closer to Him and helps me in His service. Praise His holy name. He is very precious to me these days.

Yours saved and kept by the precious blood,
MRS. FREDERICK LYONS

Dear Brother: Southampton, N. B.

You will find enclosed my renewal for the Highway. I praise my heavenly Father for what he is to me, and for His promises, for I find them true. He is our burden bearer and our keeper.

MRS. A. W. GRANT

Brown's Flats, N. B.

Dear Highway Readers:

We would like to express through the Highway our appreciation and gratitude to God and His people on the Port Maitland Circuit for all their kindness to us during our ministry of eight years with them. On Saturday evening, June 17th, in spite of a down-pour of rain, a number of people from Sandford met at the parsonage, giving us a great surprise. After spending a pleasant evening, we had a treat of cake and ice cream. We tried to express our thanks to these dear ones, and after having prayer and thanking God, they returned to their homes. The following Friday evening, June 23rd, we spent a pleasant evening at Brother Charlie Sollows' home with friends from Port Maitland and Sandford Churches. The evening was spent in conversation and singing. Refreshments were served by the ladies. At the close of the evening Brother Fred Sollows on behalf of those present, presented us with a sum of money. We tried to express our gratitude to these good people and then had prayers.

At Young People's meeting on Saturday evening, June 24th, we had the privilege of leading the service. At its close Brother Gordon Symonds, their president, expressed in a few well chosen words, their appreciation of our labors with them, how we had all enjoyed the sweet fellowship in working together without the least friction, and on behalf of the young people, he presented us with a gift of money from their society.

At Brazil Lake on Sunday, June 25th, others gave us gifts of money. For all these gifts and their kindness to us in every way we are very grateful, and thank God for all His blessings and the privilege of laboring with these good people who have stood by us during our stay with them.

Yours in Him,

H. E. & MRS. MULLEN