



## THE LITTLE CAPTIVE MAID

By Judson Sanders

Little Naomi was so proud of her sickle. It was so shiny, so sharp, and it was her very own. She was big enough to help in the reaping. The little girl next door would look after little sister. In an unguarded moment big brother sent an admiring glance toward the little maid and her sharp, shiny sickle.

Soon they were busy in the field of ripened grain. It was later in the day when it happened. She was among the bushes, at the bottom of the field, eating a few juicy berries, when there was the sound of a band of Syrian horsemen, and of fleeing Israelites. She crouched low in the bushes, her heart beating wildly, and her dark eyes dilating with fear. But the captain saw her, and before she could run more than a few paces, he had caught her, and the soldiers went galloping off. After a long journey they came to a city, and she was given to the wife of Naaman, the Syrian General. He was an honorable and successful leader, and the King loved him, but he was a leper.

Naaman's house was almost a palace, and very beautiful, with an enclosed court-yard with a fountain, lovely flowers, a cool shady pool, and strutting peacocks.

Poor little Naomi was sick at heart. As she stood before the splendid-robed and jewelled wife of Naaman, there were no words on her lips, and no tears in her eyes, just dull misery, anguish, and despair. She was sure she could never feel anything but hatred for this beautiful woman and house in this land whose words she could neither speak nor understand. But there was kindness, pity, and compassion in this lady's eyes and voice. She put her hands on Naomi's trembling shoulders and looked deeply into her eyes. She stooped and slipped her arm around her, and laid her cheek against Naomi's for a long moment, and then embraced her till they could feel each other's heart-throbs, and Naomi's senses swam with the sweet perfume of her hair. Then she took her by the hand, and, still saying words Naomi could not understand, she led her into the house.

Tired, bereaved, and sick at heart, Naomi could not eat of the evening meal, but her eyes kept wandering round the room, pausing on the marble floors and the richly embroidered tapestries.

Later, as she lay sleepless in her sweet little room, on the strange rich bed, gazing at the dim walls, lit by the flame of an olive oil lamp; she said to herself, "I must not hate these people, who have torn me from all that life holds dear to me. Somehow, somewhere, I must find forgiveness in my heart for them. I am an Israelitish maid. I live to please Jehovah God, whose prophet is Elisha. But oh, what would I give to see Father and Mother just now, to feel the hand of big brother touselling my hair, and to hear little sister's laughter again." And for the first time that day she wept, wept till her shoulders were shaking with heavy sobs.

The next day she was shown the little tasks about the house that she must do, and in the weeks that followed she learned quickly many words of the Syrian tongue.

One day, Naomi ceased to wonder why Naaman did not live in the house, never ate there, but came each day and had some conversation on the doorstep with his wife, and then was gone again. She had learned that he dwelt in a house apart, for he was a leper.

Another day Naomi came upon her mistress seated at a table, weeping bitterly. She was about to steal away, when she raised her head and said, "Do not withdraw thyself, but come near to me." She slipped an arm around Naomi, who asked, "Why do you weep?" "Because my husband is a leper," her mistress replied. Quickly, earnestly, and without hesitation came the reply, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

Naaman's wife passed the word along, and the next day, after great preparations, the journey of Naaman and his retinue and goods and treasures, started for the home-land of the little Hebrew maid.

That night, as she awaited the sweet fingers of slumber to seal her eyelids, her heart was filled with joy; for she knew that she had found in her heart to forgive her captors, and God had healed her grieving broken heart, and made it whole again, and that she was living well pleasing to Him.

Impatiently mistress and maid awaited their return. The flaming splendour of a beautiful sunset shone on Naomi's dark braids, adorned with scarlet pomegranite blossoms, and richly perfumed: and upon the mistress, tall and stately, in her rich attire and flashing jewels. With wildly beating heart, Naomi cried, "The camels are coming; I can hear the cries of the drivers." Soon Naaman came striding up the walk, clad in a new change of raiment, and entirely free from the snowy hered scourge of leprosy. Lord and mistress embrace, and enter the house, as though walking on air. A few minutes later the call of Naomi's name falls on her ears, as she stands in her little room facing the window that looks out over the beautiful courtyard garden, but for her the garden is wrapped in a heavy mist, for the glad hot tears are raining down her cheeks, tears of a great joy. She turns, but pauses on the threshold of the door, with downcast eyes. A great bashfulness has siezed her. "Naomi, Naomi, my child, come here," calls Naaman again, and she runs to his side. There he stands an arm around each, and unashamed tears running down their faces. "Dear little Naomi," he says huskily, "If you had not been brought into my home, I would not stand here now, cleansed from my leprosy, as a man come back from the dead. What do you say?" She lifted a beaming face to his, her lips trembled, but she had no words to say.

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Only capable persons need apply

### WEDDING

The Reformed Baptist Church, Seal Cove, was the scene of a pretty candle light wedding on April 22, when Rev. A. D. Cann, assisted by Rev. H. S. Wilson, united in marriage Audrey Roberta Harvey, R. N., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher Harvey, Seal Cove, and Lewis Forman Chisholm, of Anon Park, Florida. The happy couple are residing in Texas where the groom is an officer in the U. S. Airforce.

### GIFTS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Mrs. Manning Mullen   | \$ 20.00 |
| A friend, for Ermalo  | 500.00   |
| Miss Edna Shaw  | 10.00    |
| Bloomfield  | 30.00    |
| Seal Cove   | 100.00   |
| Barkers Point   | 70.00    |
| Woodstock Missionary Society                                  | 85.00    |
| Saint John  | 10.00    |
| Millville   | 25.00    |
| Salem   | 10.00    |
| Hartland (in memory of H. G. Hillman)                         | 5.00     |
| Blacks Harbour  | 30.00    |
| Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Doyle (in memory of daughter, Jean Doyle) | 25.00    |
| Greys Mills   | 10.00    |
| Salem Y. P. S.  | 5.00     |
| Helen White (Cent a meal)                                     | 9.48     |
| Marysville Junior Y. People (Rosamond Dow Memorial)           | 14.76    |
| Helen White   | 26.95    |
| Ingalls Head  | 10.00    |
| Blissfield  | 10.00    |
| Seal Cove   | 250.00   |
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| Perth   | 50.00    |
| Norton  | 8.00     |
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| Moncton (Easter Offering)                                     | 500.00   |
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| Barkers Point (Native worker)                                 | 25.00    |
| Seal Cove (Easter Offering)                                   | 184.00   |
| Westchester S. School (Easter)                                | 20.00    |
| Mrs. J. H. Webb   | 10.00    |
| Mrs. Frank Langille   | 5.00     |
| Sandford (Easter Offering)                                    | 100.00   |
| Beals Reformed Baptist Mission (Easter Offering)              | 16.39    |
| Glassville  | 7.00     |
| Fredericton (Easter Offering)                                 | 500.00   |
| North Head  | 36.00    |
| Millville   | 65.00    |
| Wood Island   | 6.70     |
| Barkers Point   | 85.68    |
| Brazil Lake   | 6.00     |
| Bloomfield  | 35.00    |
| Mrs. H. C. Mullen (in memory of Mother, Mrs. Roxanna Sabine)  | 10.00    |
| Marysville  | 100.00   |
| Crawford  | 25.00    |
| Marysville  | 100.00   |
| Marysville Men's Class (Native worker)                        | 50.00    |
| Saint John  | 55.00    |
| Beals   | 73.09    |
| Hartland  | 25.00    |
| Truro   | 400.00   |
| Interest Mary Stairs Memorial                                 | 13.50    |

Rev. F. A. Watson, Treasurer

### BETHANY BUDGET

The following churches have paid their Bethany Budget in full:

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Middle Southampton  
Presque Isle  
Salem  
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Westchester  
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Moncton

Thank you, pastors and churches, for boosting Bethany!

Yours in appreciation,

L. K. Mullen, Treasurer

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