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Our Poetry.

A Little Gentleman.

She stood at the crowded crossing, A woman crippled and old, Whose thin and faded garments A pitiful story told.

The Bird's Breakfast.

Two little birdies One wintry day Began to wonder, And then to say, 'How about breakfast This wintry day?'

Two little maidens One wintry day Into the garden Went their way, Where the snow lay deep That wintry day.

One with a broom Swept the snow away; One scattered crumbs, Then away to play; And birdies had breakfast That wintry day.

Our Pulpit.

Abraham the Friend of God.

THE LAND OF PROMISE.

SERMON PREACHED BY REV. A. J. MOWATT.

In St. Paul's Church, Fredericton, Sabbath Evening Feb. 26th.

'And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.—GEN. XII:6.

We left Abraham last Sabbath evening on his way from Haran to Canaan. Tonight we shall speak of his arrival in the land, and give some description of the country and its peoples as the great emigrant found them in his day.

Abraham knew almost nothing of the country he was on his way to. He lived long before the days of immigration-agents, and land speculators, and town-lot boomers. All he knew of the country was, that there was such a country, that it was far away to the west on the shore of the Great Sea, and that Canaan, Ham's youngest son, had settled there, and so it had come to be called the land of Canaan. He was blindly following where the Lord seemed to lead, groping his way across deserts and over mountains, seeking to find where the Lord wanted him and his to make their home.

How rich with lessons for us who are on another sort of journey, who are journeying to the Heavenly Canaan! This journey we walk by faith, not by sight. And here too there are deserts to cross, and mountains to climb, and rivers to ford, and dangers to be on our guard against; but we have the word of the Lord to lead us, the same word that Abraham had, and if we follow where the Lord leads, we shall at last come to rest and glory. But let us not turn back, nor stop by the way. I do not know that Abraham had ever any thought of turning back after he had once set out, but I am very sure he would have his temptations by the way. We cannot know what inducements may have been held out to him to settle in the lovely vale of Damascus, nor can we know how nearly he may have been in yielding to them. Perhaps he lingered there longer than he should, and it may have been quite an effort on his part to pull up his stakes and face the desert again. But his faith triumphed over every difficulty, and resisted every temptation.

And we are so often tempted to turn back in the good way, or turn aside and linger by the way, and so come short at last. And alas! not a few do come short. They never set out, or they turn back at the first difficulty that crosses their path, or they stop when they are half way at some lovely Damascus of the world. But the true Abrahams, the men of faith, hold on their way to the end.

First, Abraham's arrival in the Land of Promise. I suppose Abraham would form some idea of the country he was called of God to go to before he left Haran and all the way along as he was journeying towards it he would try to picture out to himself what sort of land the land of promise would be. Men always do so. The emigrant of to-day dreams and hopes as he comes tumbling over the leagues of ocean waves; that stretch between the land of his birth and the land of his adoption, and his dreams and hopes are often so extravagant. And the first emigrant would dream as well as the last one, and his dreams would be no nearer the truth. I do not wonder

that the emigrant of today when he first sets foot on this new land is so disappointed that he is ready to turn right about and go back home again. And he does it sometimes, and he would do it oftener if he only had the wherewith.

What did Abraham think, and how did he feel, when from the mountains of Gilead on the east of the Jordan his eyes first rested on Canaan? There lay at his feet the Jordan valley with its thread of silver winding in many a curve through it, and beyond in the grandest confusion the terraced mountains with valleys between of his future home. Far away to the north he could see snow-capped Hermon towering skyward, with many a lesser peak in the foreground. It must have been a striking scene to one who, like Abraham, had seen only plains, or the rolling table lands of Padan-Aram; but we are not sure that he would be greatly taken with what he saw. It would be so different from the idea of the land of promise he had formed in his mind, for our ideas of anything we have not seen are reproductions of what we have seen.

But he held on his way. He forded the Jordan and it must have looked insignificant as a river, to one who had been brought up on the banks of the Euphrates. Where he forded its waters they were not more than 80 or 100 feet wide, and four to five feet deep. Across the Jordan he was in the land of promise, but he pushed on along the valleys and up among the hills, till he had come to the plain of Moreh, in the very heart of the land. Here at the feet of two mountains that centuries afterwards came to be famous, Mount Ebal on the north, and Mount Gerizim on the south, mountains nearly 3000 feet high, with a valley of varying width between them, and under a wide-spreading terebinth he pitched his tent. That night, it would seem, the Lord appeared to him, and told him that he was now in the land that was to be his, the land of promise that he had come so far to find. In the morning he built an altar to the Lord, and gathering his people around it, he gave thanks for the mercies of the journey, and he sought the Divine blessing upon himself and his people in their new home. That was his way of taking possession of the land in the name of his king, the Lord God, and a very good way it was, a better one than that in vogue to-day of landing an army, and unfurling a banner and drawing the sword. Abraham's was a right and christian way, one that was worthy of the father of the faithful.

The place where Abraham pitched his tent and erected his altar on arriving in the land, was afterwards called Sichern or Shechem, but in his time it was known as the plain of Moreh. It was a lovely spot, one of the loveliest in the whole land, well-watered, fertile, abloom with pretty wild flowers, and planted with groves of olive-trees and fig-trees. All around the plain were terraced mountains with rich valleys and straths opening up among them, and leading away in so many directions to the wealth and beauty of the land. The same plain to-day 'yields abundant harvests of wheat and barley, and a good supply of beans, lentils, sesame, cotton, and tobacco, and a wealth of wild flowers on every uncultivated patch of ground, especially mallows and anemones of many colors, and ranunculi.' So writes a modern tourist.

Secondly, The Land of Promise—its general features and characteristics. Moses in his farewell address to Israel describes the land thus: 'For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of oil olives and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.'

The strip of the country lying between the Jordan on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west, about 180 miles long north and south, and 45 or 50 miles wide, is a most insignificant country geographically. If you take the part of New Brunswick that lies between the river St. John and the State of Maine, you will have some idea of the size of this remarkable land. The physical features of the two countries, however, are widely different. It is a land of mountains and valleys, with two quite extensive plains, Sharon on the seashore in the south, and the great plains of Esdraelon or Tezeel on the seashore half way up the coast. In Abraham's day, and long after his day, the country was well wooded, the mountains being covered with ash and cedar and fir; but to-day its mountains are bare and barren for the most part, and the whole aspect of the country rather forbidding than otherwise. If you take your stand on the plain of Esdraelon and look south, your eye rests on the Carmel ridge running east and west

and about 1500 feet high, its western end jutting out into the Mediterranean sea. In other days it was noted for its vineyards, and so was called Carmel. Beyond Carmel the mountains rise still higher, attaining their highest point where Jerusalem stands. Looking north again your eye rests on mount Tabor towering grandly above the lesser peaks, its sides shaded with oak-groves, and far beyond Tabor the two Lebanon ranges, running parallel to one another and the sea-coast. The highest peak here is snow-capped Hermon 10,000 feet high. Out of its perpetual snows the river Jordan receives its waters, and carves out a channel for itself as it flows southward, forming by the way the waters of Merom, and the Lake of Galilee, and emptying its waters into the Dead Sea. It receives many tributary streams in its course, but at its mouth it is only about 180 yards wide and three or four feet deep.

The Land of Promise has about the same latitude as Southern California. It has two seasons, the wet and dry. January is the coldest month, and July and August the hottest. It is seldom hotter than 92 degrees in the shade, and seldom colder than 28 degrees, or a little below freezing point. The hot summer weather is moderated by cool, refreshing sea breezes. From the end of April till the beginning of October is the dry season, and then a cloud in the sky is rarity. From October till April is the rainy season and there are sometimes heavy storms of rain and wind and thunder. In January it snows and freezes in the mountains, and the snow storms were probably much more severe once than now.

Canaan was, and still is an abundant fruit-growing country, such fruits as grapes, figs, oranges, apples, pomegranates, being common. The grains grow well in the valleys, and up the mountain-slopes, and the country was once capable of supporting a dense population. But oppression and degradation have done their work, and now the land of promise is very far from being what it was when Abraham set foot first in the vale of Shechem. Beautiful wild flowers bloom everywhere, and many song-birds trill their melodious notes in the olive-tree groves. Lions nested at one time the jungles of the Jordan valley, and herds of wild asses and deer and goats roamed free and unfettered in the mountains.

Such is a brief description of the country to which Abraham emigrated by the call of God, and in some respects it was not much of a country. And yet, as a thoughtful writer states, it was not by accident that that strip of Syrian territory became the theatre of sacred events, the home of the covenant people, and the seat of Divine revelation. There was no other portion of the earth's surface which could have answered so well. It unites as no other country does, central position with isolation. It lies at a corner where Africa, Asia, and Europe meet. The six ancient states of Babylon, Assyria, Media, Persia, Phoenicia, and Egypt stood round about it. The main lines of ancient traffic lay along its confines. And yet though so central, it was strangely apart. The great roads of travel and traffic were outside of this sacred land, and along its 180 miles of seacoast there is not a harbor where a ship of any size can ride at anchor. Thus Abraham's God prepared for him and his seed a country with very special features, a country apart from the world and the great nations, and at the same time a country that in one way and another had so much to do with the world and its nations.

Another thing about the land of promise too, it was the poor man's country. It demanded industry and thrift from all who would succeed in it. Here only shepherds, and small farmers, and vine dressers, could live, and would care to live. No chance here for the merchant-princes of Tyre to roll up wealth! Being without harbors it could never build up and carry on a foreign trade. Again and again it was attempted in later days, but only failure attended the enterprise. But here the hard-working and honest poor could do well. Not enough for export, but enough for home-use, could be raised in its rich valleys, and fertile slopes.

And then the land could be easily defended from a foreign invasion. Among their mountains, and in their valleys, the people were all but unconquerable. They laughed at invasion, and felt free and independent, and not until they became faithless to their God and false to themselves did they fall under a foreign yoke.

When therefore we examine into the characteristic features of Palestine, we see that the choice of the country to be the land of promise was no after-thought but an arrangement of Divine wisdom when He laid its rock-foundations for its mountains to stand securely on, and scooped out its fertile straths. Thirdly, Its First Settlers. Abraham found the country inhabited. 'The Canaanite was then in the land.' A

fuller account says: 'The Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan.'

It is very clear, however, that in his day the land was but thinly settled, and no opposition was made, so far as we can learn, to his settlement. Perhaps the people, feeling their isolation, were rather glad than otherwise to see this new accession to the population, and willingly made room for the sheik from the banks of the Euphrates. The Canaanites seem to have been mainly agriculturists, although they may have traded some as well, for they knew something of exchange, and had money. They cultivated the rich Jordan valley and the plain of Sharon. They built towns and lived in communities, and had a system of government, a rude civilization. On the hilly region in the south of the country he found such towns as Hebron or Mamre, Salem, where Melchizedek the priest-king reigned, Luz and En-Mishpat; and then down on the plain of Jordan, where, it is believed, the Dead Sea now lies, were the pretentious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim and Zoar, cities already disgustingly wicked and obscene, and fast ripening for their after destruction. These cities had independent Kings who ruled over them.

The Canaanites were themselves immigrants a century or two before Abraham. They found aborigines in the country, the gigantic Rephaim, and the Horites who were troglodytes or cave-dwellers. These original settlers continued in the land in diminishing numbers even as late as David's time. Almost every country has such aborigines, but no one seems to be able to tell us much about them.

The Canaanites were already divided and subdivided into clans. The Amorites were a rude, wicked, warlike clan in the mountain districts of the south. The Hivites and Hittites were superior people, more especially the latter, and Abraham was on good terms with them. The Hittites afterwards grew to be a powerful nation, and scholars of late have been devoting much attention to researches with regard to them. There were several other tribes, but Abraham had not much to do with them. I have thus to-night given some description of the land of promise and its peoples in Abraham's time. He came there at the call of God to live among its degraded idolaters the life of faith, and, as we have seen, almost the first thing he did was to erect an altar, and set up the worship of the one living and true God. Religion with him was always and everywhere first, and so the other things never came short.

What a lesson here for immigrants, and for all who are starting out to do for themselves in the world! To-day many are crowding west, setting up homes for themselves on the great plains, or in the rapidly growing frontier towns. And the degraded Indians are there, many of whom are pagans, idolaters; and the low Chinese are there, who are also idolaters. Thus the west to-day is not unlike what Canaan was as he found it. And the western cities are real Sodom and Gomorrah—many of them. No Sabbath kept! No fear of God! The saloons, and gambling-hells, and theatres, and dens of infamy, everywhere, and crowded day and night, and the churches almost nowhere and poorly attended! And alas! So many immigrants come, and they set up no altar to God. The little religion they had, they leave it behind, or lose it by the way, and the darkness grows darker and darker, and is it to be wondered that the judgments come, sulphurous and awful, and the story of Sodom's doom is told over again?

Thank God, Abrahams are not wanting in the west, men of faith and prayer who know how to plead at the footstool for mercy, and their prayers are heard, and for their sakes the towns are spared. As a church we are trying to follow our people into the plains and mountains, and wherever we can find them we set up an altar to Jesus, and the west is yet to be greater than the east in all that is good.

But the special lesson I want to impress upon you here is this, the importance of an altar wherever your home and work are. Have you built a new house? Are you starting out on a new enterprise, going into business, choosing a profession, getting married, and so on? Then like Abraham have an altar, seek the Lord and serve him, and His favor will be with you, and it will be well with you. Getting on and up in the world, and making money, and growing famous, is not everything. How poor a life that is lived without the Lord! It will go out in a night dark and hopeless, and there will be no one to come after us and bless our memory.

Infants under three months of age should not be given arrowroot or other starchy foods, for they cannot digest them.

USEFUL HINTS.

To brighten faded carpet, sponge with a mixture of one part ox-gall to two parts water.

Apple sauce is much improved by the addition of a tablespoonful of butter and requires less sugar.

To seed raisins easily, pour hot water over them, let it remain a moment, then drain off. The hot water loosens the seeds and they come out clean.

Charcoal is recommended as an absorber of gases in the milk room where foul gases are present. It should be freshly powdered and kept there continually.

The best thing for a burn is to wet the burn with cold water, then cover the burn with white flour so thick it will keep out the air; keep it on, it will prevent blistering.

A decided improvement in the eating bib for children is made of a towel. It is better to have the towel white. Hollow out the neck before binding, and bind with white tape.

Fog is an excellent cosmetic. To it is due much of the beauty of English complexions, and those who live in hot and dry climates must be doubly careful to guard against their desiccating effect if they would escape the appearance of mummies.

In putting away wash dresses, every vestige of starch should be removed, and they should be left unironed. White dresses of any fabric are improved by placing sheets of blue tissue paper between the folds, and then wrapping the whole dress in the same paper.

Never put kid gloves upon little children. It is simply barbarous. In winter woolen mitts are good and sensible, with Lisle thread for moderate weather; but in summer it is positively sinful to hide the dimples and fetter the motion of cunning baby fingers.

BREAKING THE NEWS.

They are telling a story on a well known and now wealthy Irishman of this city, which it is said happened before he was either so wealthy or so well known, says Kansas City Times. Judge McCarty, so the story goes, had been killed by an accident, and the problem was how to break the news to his wife. The Irishman in question volunteered to break the news so gently that it would not jar on the most sensitive feelings. Putting the body in a wagon, he started for Mrs. McCarty's residence.

'Does the widow McCarty live here?' he asked, significantly.

'She does not,' said Mrs. McCarty. 'But indeed she does, The Widow McCarty does live here, he insisted, with more significance and greater emphasis on widow.'

'But she does not, replied Mrs. McCarty.

Disgusted at her lack of perspicuity the bearer of the bad news asked in despair:

'An' faith, does Judge McCarty live here?'

'He does.'

'Well I'll bet yes tin dollars he does not.'

'He does.'

'But he does not,' insisted Pat, 'I'll bet yes tin dollars he does not,' and then in utter despair, he added, 'for I have got his corpse in me wagin, an' a finer wone was never seen at a wake.'

Of an iron egg in the Berlin Museum the following story is told: Many years ago a prince became affianced to a lovely princess, to whom he promised to send a magnificent gift as a testimonial of his affection. In due time the messenger arrived, bringing the promised gift, which proved to be an iron egg. The princess was so angry that she valued a prince should send her so valueless a present that she threw it upon the floor, when the iron egg opened, disclosing a silver lining. Surprised at such a discovery she took the egg in her hand, and examining it closely, discovered a secret spring, which she touched, and a silver lining opened, disclosing a golden yolk. Examining it closely, she found another spring, which when opened, disclosed within the golden yolk a ruby crown. Subjecting that to an examination she touched a spring, and forth came the diamond ring with which he affianced her to himself.

Irate Student—Don't you sweep under the bed, I'd like to know! Calm Goody—I always do; I prefer it to a dustpan.