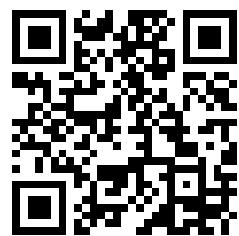

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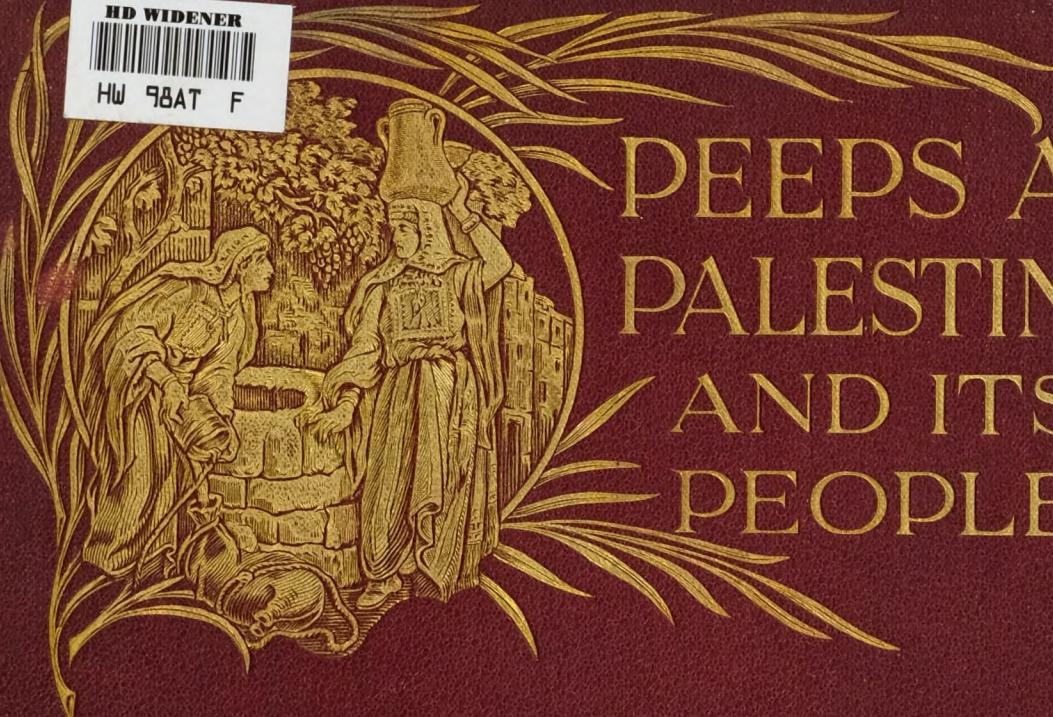
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PEEPS AT PALESTINE AND ITS PEOPLE

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PEEPS AT PALESTINE AND ITS PEOPLE.

BY CAROLINE PRIDHAM
(MRS. L. G. WAIT).



AUTHOR OF
“LITTLE ELSIE'S BOOK OF BIBLE ANIMALS.”

London:
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

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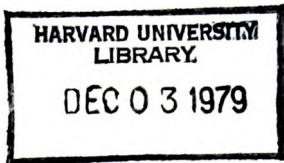
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TO THE CHILDREN—

WITHOUT WHOSE THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS THIS LITTLE BOOK
HAD NOT BEEN—

IT IS OFFERED,

IN THE HOPE THAT IT MAY SERVE TO UNLOCK FOR THEM THOSE SACRED
STOREHOUSES FROM WHICH AUGHT OF WORTH WHICH
IT CONTAINS HAS BEEN DRAWN,

THAT THEY MAY ENTER AND GATHER FOR THEMSELVES.

INDEX.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. BREAD FROM A FAR COUNTRY	1
II. CORN AND CORNFIELDS	10
III. ON WATER	9
IV. MORE ABOUT WELLS AND WATER	26
V. ON HOSPITALITY AND HABITS AT TABLE	39
VI. ON HOUSE-TOPS AND HOUSES	52
VII. ABOUT ANCIENT TOMBS AND BURIAL CUSTOMS	66
VIII. TOMBS AND BURIAL CUSTOMS (<i>continued</i>)	84
IX. ABOUT THE TABERNACLE; OR, HOW GOD DWELT WITH HIS PEOPLE IN THE DESERT	100
X. THE HISTORY OF THE TABERNACLE (<i>continued</i>)	119
XI. ABOUT THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, AND THEIR TRADI- TIONS	134
XII. THE SEA OF GALILEE AND THE COUNTRY OF OUR LORD ..	152
XIII. ABOUT DRESS	168
XIV. ABOUT DRESS (<i>continued</i>)	183

PEEPS AT PALESTINE AND ITS PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

SYRIAN BREAD.

“ **A**UNT EDITH,” said Charley, one morning, “ I wish you would tell us what that parcel was you received by post just now. I saw you look at papa as you opened it, and he said something about ‘mountain bread,’ and then you said, ‘Yes; what the Arabs make;’ and the parcel did really look like a roll of crust tied up in brown paper.”

“ Yes,” said May, “ I quite thought somebody had sent you a cake; but then no one would send such a thing by post, and so far too. From Syria you said, didn’t you ?”

“ Yes, May, my parcel came from Syria ; and you are not so very far wrong, Charley, it did contain a piece of the bread made and which is eaten by the country people there. I am very glad,” continued their aunt, “ that it has been sent me while I am staying with you, and now I want you both to look at it. It is very interesting to us, not only as having come from a far country, and being unlike the bread we are accustomed to see, but because it is, I believe, the very sort of bread of which we often read in the Bible.”

“ Oh ! I know there is a great deal about bread in the Bible,” said May. “ I remember about the loaves with which Jesus fed the great crowd of people ; and you know, Aunt Edith, when the disciples said, ‘Lord, teach us to pray,’ part of the prayer the Lord taught them was, ‘ Give us this day our daily bread.’ ”

"And don't you remember, May, about the bread from heaven which God sent the Israelites, and how Jesus said, 'I am the Bread of life,' and how very often 'unleavened bread' is spoken of? I think," continued Charley, thoughtfully, "we should find a great deal about bread in the Bible if we were to look, Aunt Edith."

"I am sure we should, Charley, and we need not be surprised at this, for God speaks in His Book to men and women and children living in this world, of their common every-day wants, their work, their pleasures, their rest, their food and clothing—all that concerns them in daily life. What a blessing it is for us that God has given us such a book! Now I want you to look at this roll of bread, but remember it has only been rolled, as you would roll up a copy-book, that it might travel better. It was once quite thin and flat. Unroll it and you will see what I mean."

"Oh, yes, I see. It is very much like crust, and how easily it breaks! May I break a bit off?"

"Yes; I want you and May to taste it. Do you like it?"

"Its not nearly so nice as our English bread," said both the children at once.

"Is that the only kind of bread to be got in Syria?" asked Charley.

"Oh, no. The friend who sent me this says, 'We eat delicious bread, far more pure and wholesome than what you have in England; it is made of white flour, and baked in cakes of two thicknesses. Those about an inch thick we split and toast. The other cakes are not quite half so thick, and hollowed all through inside.' I don't think such bread as this," continued their aunt, pointing to the roll which lay on the table, "is much used in the towns in the Holy Land; it is mostly made in the country places, where the people are very poor, and by the Arabs, who wander about so much that it is necessary they should be able to make their bread in a rough and ready fashion. This bread came from the mountain part of Palestine, and is probably just the same as that used in the time of Abraham."

"How very interesting," said Charley. "I see now," he added, taking up the bread which had travelled so far, and unrolling the thin, flaky folds, "why people in the Bible always break their bread, never cut it. Of course no one would think of cutting such bread as this—you see, May, it breaks quite easily. We were wondering the other day, Aunt Edith, when we were reading the accounts of Jesus feeding the multitudes, why it always says, 'He blessed the bread, and *brake*, and gave to them'; and May thought it must have been because they had no knives in Palestine then."

"Oh, yes, they had knives, though not quite like ours," said Aunt Edith, smiling at little May's way of getting rid of difficulties; "but, Charley," she added more gravely, "you are quite right to stop and ask about anything in the Bible which seems strange to you. Many things which you do not understand would be quite plain to you if you had ever lived in Eastern countries and seen the ways of the people. They do almost all common, every-day things in just the opposite way from our way of doing them; for instance, if a man in Nazareth or Damascus wants to write a letter, and is learned enough to be able to do it himself, which is not often the case, he will fold the paper across, and then begin writing with a reed pen his Arabic letters from the right to the left of the paper—not as we do, from left to right. A Syrian schoolboy on entering his school will take off his slippers, just as an English one would take off his cap. You may notice in this picture of an Eastern school that each of the boys who sits with his tablet in his hand learning to write sentences from the Koran, has taken off his slippers."

"Oh, there the shoes are, all lying on the floor," said May. "Of course the boys' feet are not cold in those hot countries."

"And they have all got their caps on," said Charley. "I dare say if *they* saw a picture of an English school they would say, 'How strange those boys look with their bare heads.'"

"If I had time," continued their aunt, "I could show you how different almost all Eastern customs are from ours, and the most in-



ARAB SCHOOL BOYS.

teresting thing about them is that they do not change ; the people still eat, and sleep, and dress just as they did thousands of years ago in that land,

“ ‘ Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed,
For our advantage, on the bitter cross.’ ”

“ But do the fashions never change ? ” said May.

“ Very little indeed. The people never seem to wish to learn any new way of doing things. They still grind their corn in small hand-mills, which are made of two flat circular stones (the upper and the nether mill-stones) carefully fitted together ; the upper stone is made to turn round upon the lower one, while the corn, poured through a hole at the top, is gradually crushed between them ; but this grinding is slow, laborious work, and has been the lot of captive women in all times. We find many allusions to this in the Old Testament ; ancient historians and poets, too, speak of the custom of imposing this work upon the women of a conquered people, and during the sad time of the Indian mutiny delicate English ladies were set to grind for their savage captors.”

“ I suppose corn may have been ground in this way in England long ago ? ”

“ Yes, Charley. Until quite lately mills of this sort were in use in lonely parts of the Highlands of Scotland, and were called querns. They were worked by two women, who sat opposite each other, and turned the upper stone round by its handle ; I have seen great mill-stones lying about near the villages in Ireland half covered by the grass which has been allowed to grow over them.”

“ I suppose the women grind the corn in Syria, too,” said May, “ for you know it says somewhere in the Bible, ‘ Two women shall be grinding at the mill ? ’ ”

“ I will read you what Dr. Thomson, who was for many years a missionary in Bible lands, says about the mills in use there,” said her

aunt. "He is describing what he saw at Lydd, the town called Lydda in the Acts, 'which was nigh to Joppa,' and he says—



GRINDING AT THE MILL.

"Two women are sitting before the door of their house, upon a large piece of sackcloth, grinding on a hand-mill. From this, on southward through Philistia, there are no mill-streams, and we shall not cease to hear the hum of the hand-mill at every village and Arab camp morning and evening, and often deep into the night. I like it, and go to sleep on it as a child to its mother's lullaby. It is suggestive of hot bread and a warm welcome when hungry and weary. You observe that *two women* sit at the mill, facing each other. Both have hold of the handle by which the upper is turned round on the nether mill-stone. The one whose hand is disengaged throws in the grain as occasion requires through the hole in the upper stone, which is called "rekkab"

(rider) in Arabic, as it was also long ago in Hebrew. Both retain their hold of the handle, and pull *to*, or push *from*, as men do with the whip or cross-cut saw. Women only grind. I cannot recall an instance in which men were at the mill.’’

“ Thank you, Aunt Edith,” said Charley. “ Now will you tell us whether the corn in Syria is like ours ? ”

“ Palestine still is, as it seems to have been from the earliest times, a corn-growing country, as Egypt was. It is said that ‘seven ears on one stalk’ may still be seen. The most common kinds of corn are wheat and barley. The parched corn of which we read was grain gathered before it was ripe, and roasted or dried in the ear. It was eaten without any further preparation.”

“ Boaz gave Ruth parched corn,” said May, “ and the disciples ate the corn just as it was growing in the cornfield. I suppose that must have been because they were hungry, and had no time to roast it.”

“ Bread which was wanted for immediate use was unleavened. You remember the unleavened cakes baked upon the hearth which Abraham gave to the angels, and how the Israelites, on leaving Egypt in haste, took with them their dough before it was leavened. Unleavened bread, too, was used in the service of the Tabernacle, for ‘leaven’ in Scripture is always a type of something bad and corrupting in its influence. Loaves of ordinary bread, whether of wheat or barley, were made very thin, and oval or circular in form—indeed, their name signified a circle—and baked in a curious sort of oven.”

“ Oh, do tell us what it was like.”

“ I believe we have no account of it in the Bible, May, but it was probably like that now used by the Arabs, and also by the Egyptians and ancient Greeks. This oven is a jar, which is thoroughly heated by burning dry grass and wood in it. The cakes are placed in the hot jar; it is covered, hot embers are placed on the top, and the thin cakes of bread are soon baked. A kind of fritter made with honey and flour, and cooked with oil in a frying-pan, is still eaten in Palestine.”

"I should like to see the poor people who live on the mountains make their bread," said Charley, "because then I should know how it was made in the very old times."

"I heard a gentleman describe it not long ago. He spent three months last winter in a place called the Lebanon, not very far from where the cedars are, about which David wrote, and saw the poor people making their bread, and this is how it was done: a girl makes some flour into a ball with water, and keeps throwing it backwards and forwards, from one hand to the other, with a regular motion, for some time; then she passes her ball to an old woman (for only the very old women *finish* the loaves), who shapes and flattens it till it is so thin you can see through it by holding it up to the light. This large, thin cake is then placed before the fire upon a cushion, like a footstool, and there baked. The Arabs often bake their cakes on flat stones or on the sand."

"Did the gentleman tell you how the people of the Lebanon used their thin leathery cakes of bread, Auntie?"

"Yes, Charley, he gave an amusing account of a Syrian meal at which he was present. If you are not tired, I will tell you what it was like."

"I should very much like to hear about it," said Charley.

"Another day I hope to tell you a little more about Eastern customs at meals, for they are very unlike ours. You must remember that in this case the traveller I speak of was the guest of very poor country folk, who had not much to offer. The traveller soon found he was expected to use his bread as a plate, the fashion being to fold a piece of the bread into a little scoop, and so help yourself: now to a plate of rice, which you pop into your mouth and eat, plate and all; then to a plate of something else—always eating your plate, and making a fresh one for your next mouthful. There was one dish, rather like treacle, made from the juice of grapes, and one of the women seeing the stranger seemed to like it, and wishing to be very polite, made a little scoop of bread,

dipped it in the treacle, and then popped it into her guest's mouth, which he opened at once to receive it, for he knew it was meant as a mark of kindly feeling and respect."

"Oh, Aunt Edith, I should not like to be fed in that way!"

"As the traveller received the food given him in such a strange manner, the promise of God to His ancient people came to his mind: 'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' He thought, too, dear children, of that most solemn scene in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, where, as the twelve sat with their Master at that last passover supper which He had so earnestly desired to eat with them before He suffered, the blessed Lord, after His sorrowful words, 'One of *you* shall betray Me,' had caused them to look at each other in doubt and fear, answered John's question, 'Lord, who is it?' by bestowing just such a mark of kindness upon the traitor. 'He it is, to whom I, having dipped the morsel, give it.' And, having dipped the morsel, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon."

"Jesus was always kind to everybody, so He would be kind even to Judas," said May.

"Yes, during those three years when Judas went about with the Lord, hearing His gracious words, and seeing the mighty works which He did, no doubt he had had many a kind act and word from Jesus, although He knew from the beginning that Judas would at last be so terribly under the power of Satan as to sell Him for a few pieces of silver, and betray him with a kiss. We read that, after this last mark of kindness shown him by the Lord he was so soon to betray, 'Satan entered into him,' and at a word from Jesus, understood only by himself, he 'went immediately out; and it was night.'

They were all silent for a little while, and then their aunt told Charley and May that she should be glad to have a little more talk with them about Eastern customs another day.

CHAPTER II.

CORN AND CORNFIELDS.

 WISH I had asked you last evening to tell us more about 'parched corn,' Aunt Edith," said May, as she shut the last of her lesson-books and carried her little stool to her favourite corner, beside her aunt's chair.

"It is not too late to ask now," said her aunt. "I fancy it is only green corn roasted whole, but I should like to see whether Dr. Thomson tells us anything about it, if you will fetch 'The Land and the Book,' Charley. I remember," she continued, as she turned over the leaves, "when your papa and I were much younger than you children are now, we tried to make some parched corn of our own by holding some ears of wheat, which we had gathered, over the flame of a candle. I cannot say that our experiment produced anything very palatable, only a few grains, black as soot, with no flavour but that of smoke, which we ate, trying to make believe we liked them, but feeling very guilty all the time, for we knew we had no right to play with fire! Ah, here is something about corn; yes, parched corn. Now, Charley, will you read this aloud while I finish my work, and then we will have a talk about anything you like till bed-time."

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Edith," said May. "We shall have more than an hour's talk. How glad I am we finished our lessons in good time!"

"Now let us hear what our book says; begin at page 648, Charley."

"Charley read: "'Harvest is the time for parched corn. It is made thus:—A quantity of the best ears, not too ripe, are plucked, with the stalks attached. These are tied into small parcels, a blazing fire is kindled with dry grass and thorn-bushes, and the corn-heads are held in it until the chaff is mostly burned off. The grain is thus sufficiently roasted to be eaten, and it is a favourite article all over the country. When travelling in harvest time my muleteers have very often thus prepared parched corn in the evenings after the tent has been pitched. Nor is the gathering of these green ears for parching ever regarded as stealing. After it has been roasted it is rubbed out in the hand, and eaten as there is occasion. This parched corn is often referred to in the Bible. So, also, I have often seen my muleteers, as we passed along the wheat-fields, pluck off ears, rub them in their hands, and eat the grains, unroasted, just as the disciples are said to have done.'

"Fancy people eating parched corn now just as they did when Ruth was alive," said Charley, as he shut the book; "it is just as you said last night, Auntie—the customs in Palestine have not changed."

"So the disciples were only doing what anyone might do if he were hungry, when they plucked the ears of corn, and ate them as they went through the fields," said May—"not stealing the corn. Well, roasting corn without even the trouble of grinding must be very convenient for people on a journey or living in tents, but I should not care for that kind of bread every day."

"Aunt Edith," said Charley, "that must have been a strange kind of corn which Pharaoh saw in his dream—seven ears upon one stalk!"

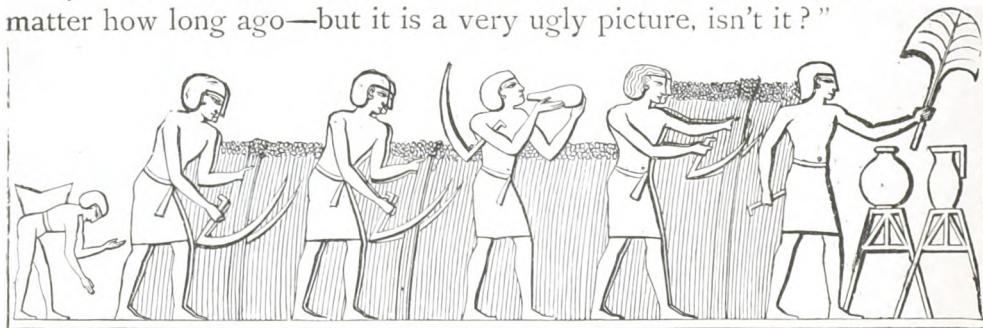
"You must remember, Charley, that Egypt has always been a wonderfully rich corn country; even now, when the crops in Palestine are scanty, the people go to Egypt to buy corn, just as they did so long ago, when Jacob 'heard that there was corn in Egypt,' and said to his

sons, 'Go, buy us a little food.' Travellers tell us that stalks of wheat, such as the king dreamed of, are still to be seen here and there."

"How much I should like to see such a beautiful stalk," said May,

"I should like," said her aunt, "to show you a curious drawing, copied from a picture found upon the tomb of one of the kings of Egypt. You see the men are reaping the corn with hooks not unlike those we use now. I have also seen a very interesting picture of a granary, which was probably just such a place as that in which Joseph stored the produce of the seven years of plenty."

"I should like best of all to go to Egypt, and see those very old tombs with their pictures, for myself," said Charley. "Pictures always make things so plain; you can just fancy how they looked, no matter how long ago—but it is a very ugly picture, isn't it?"



REAPERS.

"I fancy you would consider most of these very old pictures curious rather than pretty," said his aunt: "but I think," she continued, "May was going to tell us something."

"I was only thinking that Joseph had a dream about corn, as well as Pharaoh," said May. "I suppose God must have sent him the dream, because it all came so true, and his brothers *did* bow down to him just as their sheaves had bowed to his, although they were so jealous and angry when he told what he had dreamed."

"How little did his brethren think, as Joseph told them his dream, and thoughts of envy and hatred arose in their hearts, that the day

would ever come when they should be so filled with the spirit of Cain, the first murderer, as to tear off his coat of many colours, and rid themselves of his presence—for the company of one who feared God was an unwelcome restraint upon them—by selling him as a slave. How carefully should we guard against the first jealous thought, dear children."

"It must have seemed very hard to Joseph, after he had travelled so far and spent such a long time in looking for his brothers, that they should set upon him so before he had time to speak to them," said Charley.

"Yes, indeed; but as we read the story, Charley, and notice his meek silence in the presence of those to whom he came with a message of love, yet who gave him only hatred in return, we are reminded of One greater than Joseph, of whom it is written, that He 'came unto His own, and His own received Him not.'"

"You mean the Lord Jesus, I know," said May, "for He was 'sold by those who should have loved Him.' How very kind Joseph was to his brothers at last, when he said, 'I am your brother whom you sold into Egypt. Do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, for it was not you that sent me here, but God'; and yet it must have made them dreadfully sorry to be forgiven so."

"Do you remember, May," said Charley, "that large picture we saw last year of Ruth gleaning among the corn? Papa said it was drawn on the spot, in a field near Bethlehem, and that there are beautiful corn fields there now, and the women and children still go gleaning after the reapers, or sit by the roadside beating out the grain from what they have gathered."

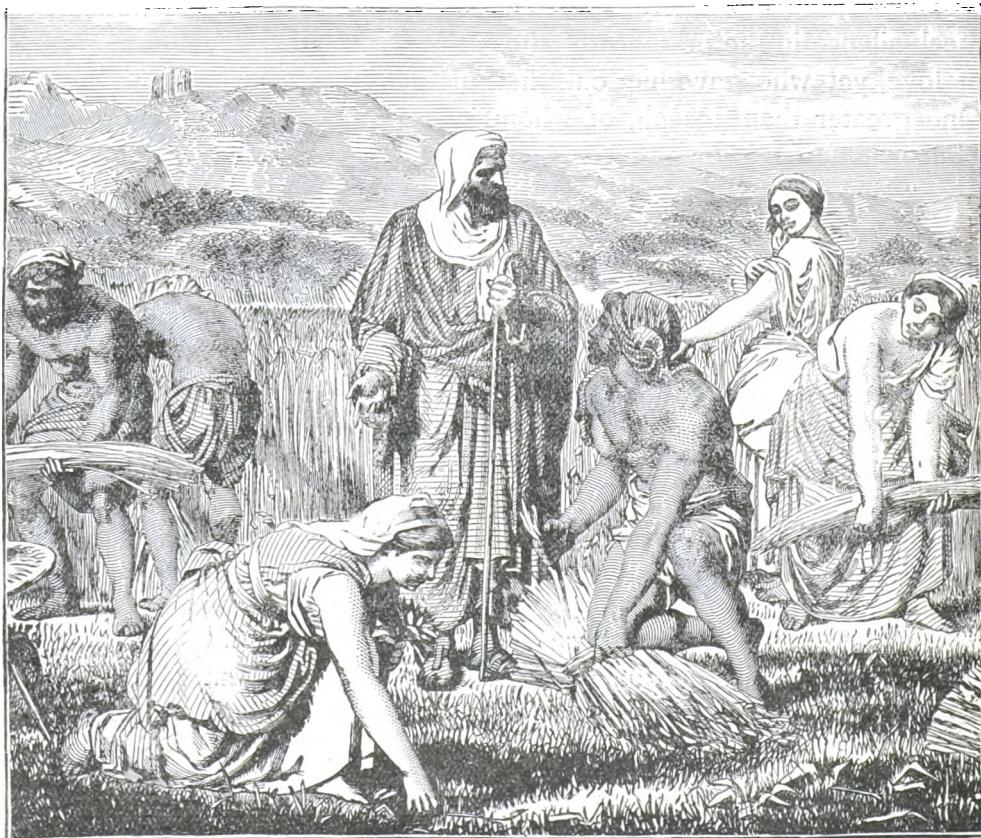
"Bethlehem means 'house of bread,' Charley," said his aunt, "a name showing how fruitful the country where it is situated must have been in the earliest times, and full of significance to us, when we remember that He who said, 'I am the bread of life,' was born there."

"Bethlehem is only six miles from Jerusalem. I remember the man who explained the Panorama said it was. We saw a very pretty

picture of it, Aunt Edith ; the houses looked so white, with dark trees behind."

" Those dark trees were olives, May. Travellers tell us that Bethlehem is now a small town of one long street, situated amid groves of olive, fig, and vine, and in the valleys around the ridge on which it stands are—

" The harvest-fields of Bethlehem
So beauteous to behold.
The nodding ear and the rustling stem,
And the wavy sea of gold.'"



RUTH GLEANING.

"It must have been very strange and lonely for Ruth, all by herself among the other gleaners," said May; "I am sure she must have been glad when Boaz came to see his corn fields, and she heard him speak so kindly to the men, and say, 'The Lord be with you,' and the reapers answer, 'The Lord bless thee.' See, I have found all about it in the second chapter of the Book of Ruth. Fancy one of the books of the Bible being called after a poor girl who came to glean! But where was the Land of Moab, Aunt Edith?"

"It lies along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea; it was once very fertile and populous—but very little is known of it now. The story of Ruth, the Moabite widow, who left her own country and came to put her trust under the wings of the God of Israel, is very beautiful; her simplicity and truthfulness of character, as well as her loving devotion to Naomi, may teach us many a useful lesson."

"How pleased she must have been when she came back in the evening with such a load of barley. But, Aunt Edith, how much is an ephah, and how could she carry anything heavy in her veil?"

"An ephah contained a very large quantity of corn, May, but not too large to be carried in the piece of cotton cloth of which Ruth's veil was probably made. Dr. Thomson says he has seen the country-women carry home the corn they have gleaned in their veils."

"How very interesting; I *should* like to go to Bethlehem!"

"Do you remember, May," said Charley, "how much we read about Bethlehem in the time of David. It was when he was keeping his father's sheep there that he was sent to his brothers to the camp with the parched corn and the ten loaves, and saw the mighty giant come into the valley and cry, 'Give me a man, that we may fight together?'"

"Dr. Thomson tells us," said their aunt, "that the valley of Elah, the scene of David's great victory, is now filled with fields of corn; and through the valley runs a torrent, the bed of which, when dry in summer, is seen to be covered with round pebbles——"

“Oh!” Aunt Edith, interrupted May, eagerly, “that must be the very brook out of which he chose the five smooth stones!”

“It is thought very likely that this stream, fringed with acacias, may be the same,” said her aunt; “but Charley was just going to say something, I think.”

“I only wanted to ask you whether oxen are still used for threshing corn in Palestine?”

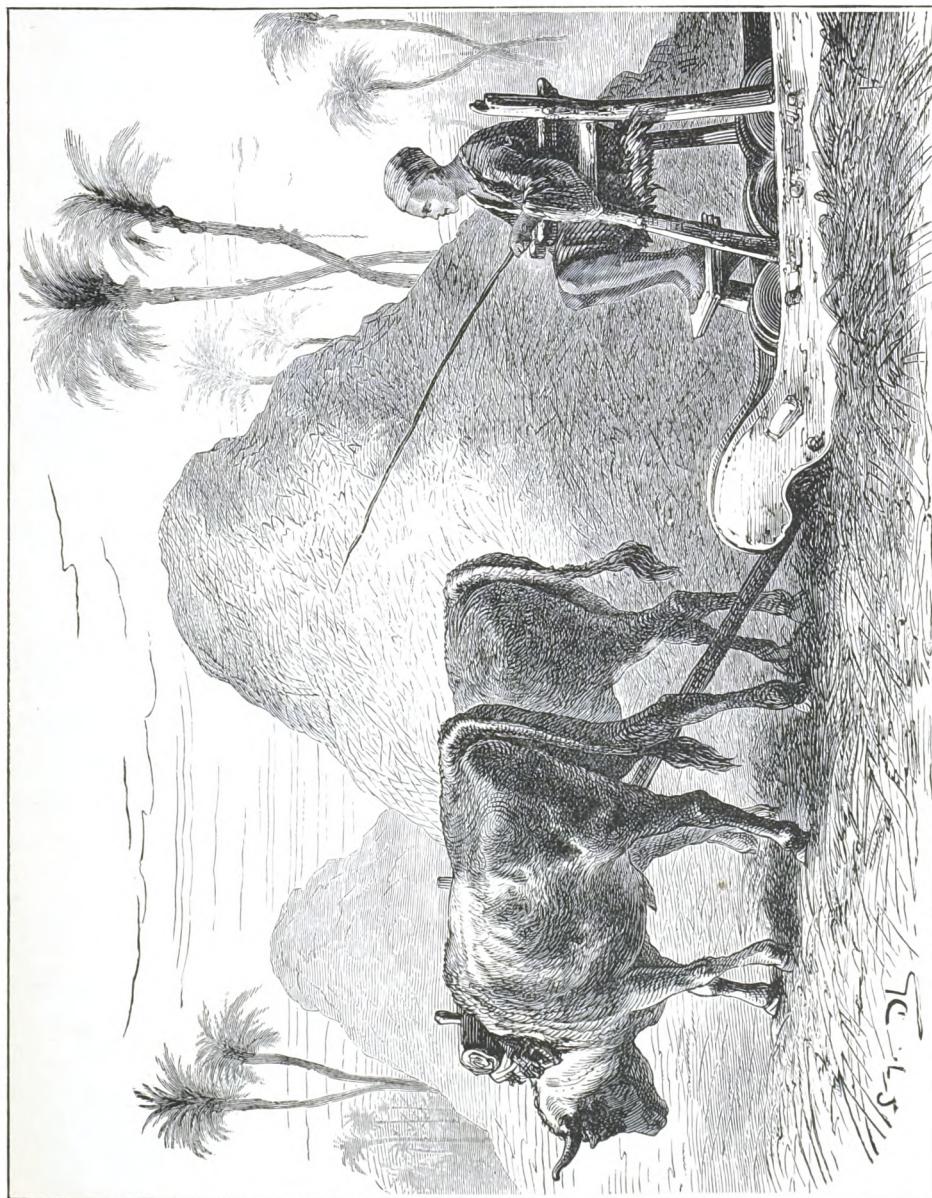
“The most common way of threshing is by means of a broad slab, on which the driver stands, while horses or oxen draw it over the threshing-floor; but in some places no machine of any kind is used,—the animals are merely driven or ridden round and round the threshing-floor until the grain is beaten out by the trampling of their feet. The command given long ago to the Jews not to muzzle the ox which trod out their corn is still obeyed, for travellers tell us they have seen the oxen munching the corn as they patiently walk round and round the floor. I will show you a picture of threshing as it is now done in India.”

“When the Israelites were in the Wilderness they had no trouble in sowing or reaping or threshing—they only just got up early and gathered the bread from heaven,” said May.

“And when they came to Canaan they found the old corn of the land ready for them,” said Charley.

“Aunt Edith,” continued May, thoughtfully, “when Jesus told his disciples to say, ‘Give us this day our daily bread,’ He knew it was what they wanted more than anything else; we can do without ever so many things, but not without bread. Do you know, I saw a poor woman the other day, who said when she got up in the morning she cried because she knew she had not a bit of bread to give her children? Mamma gave her half-a-crown to go and buy some. I thought if the Lord Jesus had been here He might have made some bread for that poor woman.”

“Perhaps he put it into mother’s heart to help her, May.”



OXEN TREADING OUT CORN.

"I think Charley is right," said their aunt. "There is just time," she continued, "for me to tell you of a poor man who once lived in England, but afterwards went far away as a missionary. He used to tell the story himself, and I will give it in his own words. 'We were very, very poor,' he said, 'and one winter's morning there was only a piece of bread as large as my hand to be divided between us all—and there were nine of us, with the baby. Well, I looked round, and it seemed as if there was nothing that could be sold, so I just knelt down and asked God to make that piece of bread enough for us all.'"

"Oh, Aunt Edith, did the poor man expect to see the bit of bread grow larger?"

"Listen, May, and I will tell you: 'I did not expect,' he said, in telling the story, 'that any change would come over the bread, but I did expect that it would be enough for us, for I had asked God to make it enough. Then I divided the bread, and God *did* make it enough. We were all satisfied, and felt no more hunger.'"

"I think that is a beautiful story," said May; "as beautiful as the story of Elijah and the ravens. But I hope that poor man soon got some work so that he might earn bread for his children."

"I cannot tell you more of his history to-night," said Aunt Edith, "for we have already talked too long; your eyes tell me a tale, my little maid; we must say good-night at once, or you will be late to-morrow morning, and then what will papa say?"

CHAPTER III.

ON WATER.

WELL, Charley," said May to her brother, "what shall we talk about to-night? After bread comes water, you know."

"Yes, May; but there can't be much to say about that. Water is water all the world over."

"Still there is a great deal about water in the Bible," answered May, "and you know that the bread which fell from heaven to feed the Israelites in the desert was not common bread, so I should think the water which came from the dry hard rock for them to drink when they were so thirsty must have been a very wonderful kind of water: wasn't it, Aunt Edith?"

"It was water given them in a very wonderful way," said their aunt. "God who was leading His people, by a way which they knew not, through the pathless wilderness, and who furnished a table for them, giving them daily bread in that hungry, desolate place, knew through what a dry and thirsty land they were travelling, and supplied this want also in His own way. 'They thirsted not when He led them through the deserts: He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them. He clave the rock, also, and the waters gushed out.'"

"Oh, that verse is in my text-book; it is the text for mamma's birthday, and she says she likes it so much, because it reminds her of how God took care of His people so long ago. I should think, auntie, when they saw the bright water come pouring down from the rock, like

a beautiful waterfall, the poor thirsty people must have cried for wonder and joy."

"I daresay they did, as those Greeks did when they reached the top of a hill and saw the sea again, and knew that they were near their homes, and their dangers would soon be over," said Charley. "Do you know, May, they were just as brave men as could be? and yet *they* cried for joy, and raised such a shout, and hugged each other so. They were quite wild with delight."

"I suppose," said their aunt, "as we can have no idea of the intense thirst which those suffer who are travelling on and on under the burning sun of the desert, so we can but guess at the joy with which a desert fountain is hailed by man and beast. It is said that the camels are often the first to scent the water from afar, and that, if allowed to take their own course, they will run in the direction of the spring, and never stop until they reach it."

"I know the hymn says—

“‘The scent of water far away
Upon the breeze is flung ;’

but I can't imagine being able to smell water, though I know you can smell salt water, even quite a long way off, before you can catch a glimpse of the sea."

"You must remember, Charley, that your sense of smell has never been quickened by the parching thirst and feverish longing for a drop of water, which too often are experienced by travellers in hot countries. In the East water is a very precious thing. Have you ever noticed how often wells are spoken of in the Old Testament, and what interesting scenes took place in their neighbourhood?"

"Oh yes, Aunt Edith; let me see which is the first I can think of? There was the well in the desert, which God showed Hagar when the water was spent in the bottle, and she had not a drop to give her child."

"God made 'rivers in the desert' for her," said May, "as well as for the Israelites."

“Yes, Charley,” said Aunt Edith, “I was thinking of that well; the scene is touching and beautiful indeed. How desolate the outcast mother must have felt when she cast her son down under one of the low-growing desert shrubs, and went to sit, in her despair, ‘a good way off,’ for she said, ‘let me not see the death of the child!’ In that lone wilderness Hagar lifted up her voice and wept, but perhaps with a sad feeling at her heart that there was no one near to hear her cry or to aid her.”

“But God heard her cry, Auntie—He does, always.”

“Yes, God’s ear is ever open to the faintest cry of His creatures. The very name of her cherished one, Ishmael, might have reminded Hagar of a time when, before this son was born, she was found in her fear and sorrow, by the angel of Jehovah, and was told, as she stood beside a desert fountain, that this son was to be named Ishmael, ‘God shall hear,’ because Jehovah had heard her affliction.”



“It says, ‘God heard the voice of the lad;’ I wonder whether Ishmael knew the meaning of his name, and whether he prayed to God when he thought he was dying, all alone.”

“We cannot tell, Charley, what thoughts passed through the boy’s mind; but it is well for us that God does not wait until they cry to Him to come to the help of those who are in trouble. It is not only written

‘Call unto me and I will answer thee,’ but ‘Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear.’”

“How Hagar must have wondered when she heard a voice fall from heaven, and found that God was speaking to her, and that He knew all about her, and about Ishmael, too!”

“Those words, ‘Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is!’ were given as words of comfort to another poor mother, May—a mother whose boy was lost in the wilderness of this world—gone she knew not where.”

“Oh, do tell us about him. How did he get lost?”

“He was not very happy at home, and so one day, without considering, poor thoughtless child that he was, the terrible grief he was about to cause the mother whom he tenderly loved, he ran away, without saying a word to anyone, intending to seek his fortune. How many tears were shed in that home when it was found that Herbert was gone! The days and weeks went on, and for a weary time no news came; the mother’s heart would have been well-nigh broken as she thought of the poor wanderer, had not God stayed her soul upon those words. Over and over again she repeated to herself, as she passed the little room where Herbert used to sleep, and her heart whispered, ‘*Where* is the boy? He may be dead!—‘Fear not; God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.’ Still no tidings of the lost one came.”

“But did Herbert never come back? Perhaps he really was dead?”

“You shall hear, Charley. One day a letter came from a gentleman, who lived near London (I should have told you that Herbert’s home was across the sea), saying that the lost son was safe at his house, and longing to return home; that he sent his love, and prayed to be forgiven.”

“Oh, I know his mother would want him to come home as fast as the boat could carry him; but how did the gentleman find him, so far away?”

"He was driving along a country road, May, when he noticed a boy sitting by the wayside, with a weary, hopeless look on his young face. Stopping his horse, the gentleman asked the lad to come and sit beside him. They drove on, and before very long the poor boy had told the kind stranger all his sad story, and so the lost son was brought back. The tale of his wanderings over sea and land, and his many trials and hardships, was very sad, but his mother's God had never for one moment forgotten him; he might wander far, but not so far as to be beyond the reach of Him who ever followed him with love and pity, and brought him home at last."

"I see," said May, "it was God who put it into that gentleman's mind to care for the boy, when perhaps Herbert was not thinking of Him at all, only feeling lonely, and poor, and perhaps hungry. But, Aunt Edith, when Hagar's eyes were opened to see the fountain, and she went and filled her bottle and gave her son drink, do you think that bottle was one like ours? It would not hold much water, I am afraid, if it was."

"It is probable that Hagar carried a water-bag, made from the skin of a goat or kid. Such skins are still prepared in Palestine and Egypt. The large bottles are made from goat-skins; smaller ones, made from the skins of kids, may often be seen hanging from the saddle, as a traveller rides past; and very large ones, made from the skins of oxen, are laid across the camels' backs when a caravan starts for the journey across the desert."

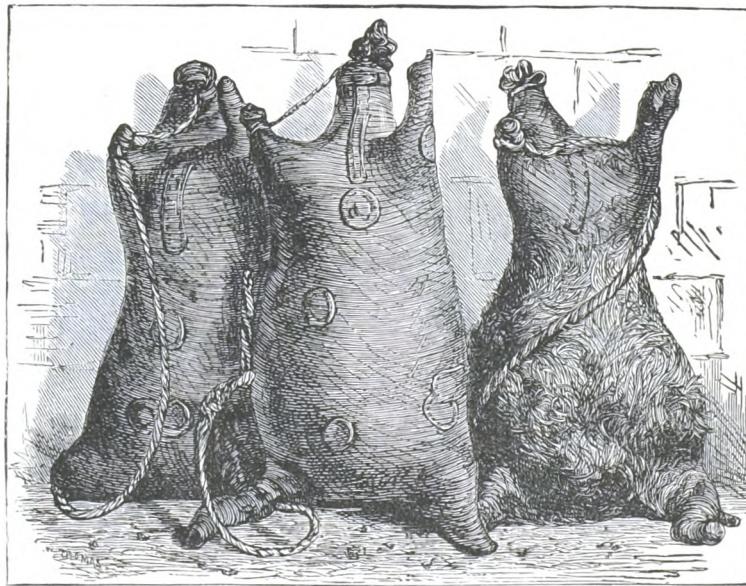
"How very strange these bottles must look!"

"I am sure you would say so, May, if you could see them, for when filled with water the skins again take the shape of the animals to which they belonged."

"I have heard Uncle Alfred say the water-carriers at Cairo carry the water in skin bottles; but it seemed to me the water must be very disagreeable after being kept in the skin of some animal."

"You must not forget, Charley, that the skins are most carefully

prepared; indeed, I have read that the process of cleansing a skin intended for a water-bottle occupies more than a month,—but when ready, it will keep the water fresh and sweet, and is very easily carried, as of course it may be laid on an ass's back without any danger of its being broken. The head and feet of the animal are cut off; the neck forms the mouth of the bottle, and every other aperture is carefully sewn up with waxed thread."



EASTERN WATER BOTTLES.

"Uncle Alfred told me that one water-carrier at Cairo had a bottle with a long brass spout, and poured the water into a brass cup; and he said that although the poor man had to bring the water from a place more than two miles away, he did not ask any price for it (although people might pay if they chose), but cried constantly, as he passed along, 'May God compensate me!'"

"Another of the street cries in the East is 'Oh, ye thirsty, water!'

and travellers tell us that when at Cairo they have often heard the voice of a man who used to go about with his water-skins, crying, ‘The gift of God! The gift of God! ’ ”

“ That was just what Jesus called the living water, which He gives, when He was speaking to the woman of Samaria—‘*the gift of God*, ’ ” said Charley.

“ The other cry may remind us of the invitation to take God’s free gift, with which the 55th chapter of Isaiah begins : ‘ Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ’ ;—blessed words, which have led many a thirsty soul in this desert-world to come and take of the water of life freely.”

“ When the Lord Jesus was in this world it was as if there was a well to which anyone might come, for He said, ‘ If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink,’ ” said May, thoughtfully.

“ So we read, dear children, of the rock which, on being smitten, became a fountain of living water, springing up in the midst of the wilderness that the Israelites might drink—‘*That rock was Christ*. ’ How wonderful it is to think that it is from the smitten Rock that the water of life flows now for every poor thirsty one who will come and drink. Let us ask God to teach us to love the blessed Lord Jesus, who has loved us unto death ;

“ Remembering how, amid our toil,
Our conflict and our sin,
He brought the water for our thirst,
It cost His blood to win.”

If we are all at home to-morrow evening we will talk about some other wells mentioned in the Bible, but we must say good-night now.”

CHAPTER IV.

MORE ABOUT WELLS AND WATER.

XOU would never guess what we were doing last night, Aunt Edith," said little May, looking as full of mystery as a sphinx ; "you would never guess, so I suppose we had better tell you."

"I think I should like to try," said their aunt, smiling, as she turned to the table and saw that the children's large school Bibles lay there, with little pieces of paper showing here and there between the leaves. "Your mamma told me that she had allowed you to stay up a little beyond your usual bed-time, because you were 'so very busy,' and that she had promised not to tell me what you were doing ; but I think I know. You have been finding something in the Bible for us to talk about, haven't you ?"

"Oh ! we did think we had such a surprise for you," said Charley ; "and now you have guessed it in a minute. We found ever so many places where wells are spoken of, and we have a great many questions to ask you about them. May found the story of Samson's well, which God made to spring up for Him when he was faint from fighting with the Philistines ; and I think it is almost as wonderful as the story of the water flowing from the rock for the Israelites in the desert."

"I am sure you have not forgotten the beautiful name which Samson gave to this spring ; En-hak-kore, 'the well of him that cried.' It was not only a refreshment to him to drink of the bright water, but this fountain, as it bubbled up, was a token that God was within hearing,

so that he might have said, as David afterwards did, 'This poor man cried, and Jehovah heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.'

"We did not notice the name of the well, because we wanted to find another reference ; and we had not much time, Aunt Edith."

"It is always a pity, when reading any Bible story, not to read it all through, May ; for perhaps the very part we miss may be the most full of the lesson God would have us learn. But I shall be glad to hear what places you have found."

"My first mark is at the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis," said Charley, showing his aunt the place in his Bible. "You know Abraham's servant made his camels kneel down beside a well outside the city of Nahor, and then Rebekah came to the well, with her pitcher on her shoulder."

"You have, indeed, found a beautiful story, Charley. We can almost picture to ourselves the caravan, tired with the long journey, resting in the lovely golden light of an eastern sunset, under the stately palms beside the well ;—as caravans do even now—the camels kneeling, as they are taught to do when young. Just at evening time, when the men are coming home from their work, the women take their pitchers and go to draw the cool, fresh water ; as did the fair and gracious maiden who was to leave her country and become the wife of Isaac,—so long ago."

"But then the servant prayed, or he would not have known which maiden was to be the wife of his master's son. We can tell what he prayed," said May, reading from her Bible. "'And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water ; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water : and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink ; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also : let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac ; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.' See how very



ELIEZER AND REBEKAH.

soon God answered his prayer, Aunt Edith," she continued. "In the very next verse it says, 'It came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out.' *She was the answer!*"

"It has been remarked," replied her aunt, "that this chapter contains more about prayer than any other in the book of Genesis. How sweetly must the gentle words of Rebekah have sounded as she let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave the weary traveller a draught of the clear, cool water; and how he must have thanked God in his heart when she said, unconsciously almost repeating his own words, "I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking."

"I should think," said Charley, "he must have been glad that one who was so willing to help, and so kind even to the poor, tired camels, as well as so beautiful and gentle, was to go home with him, and be the wife of his master's son."

"And when she came to her new home she found a well there, too, Aunt Edith; for we found more about that fountain in the desert which Hagar called after the name of God, who saw her in her trouble. It was by that very same well—Lahai-roi—that Isaac lived."

"I am sure you and Charley must have taken trouble, May, to find these interesting references. I cannot tell you what pleasure it gives me to know that you have looked for them all by yourselves, without asking any one to help you," said their aunt, smiling, as Charley took another little slip of red paper from his Bible.

"My reference is to the second chapter of the book of Exodus," said he. "You remember, Aunt Edith, when Moses fled for his life from the land of Egypt and came to Midian, he sat down by a well, and watched seven maidens come to draw water for their father's sheep."

"And then," added May, "you know how some shepherds came and drove them away, just as they had filled the trough with water, and how Moses stood up and helped the girls; and one of them was Zipporah, who was the wife of Moses afterwards."

"I remember quite well, May, and I think I can tell you something in connection with this scene which will interest you. Travellers say that on arriving at a well in the heat of the day, it is quite a common thing to find it surrounded by flocks of sheep, waiting to be watered ; and a traveller once came upon a party of very wild, fierce-looking men, just such as we may suppose the Arab shepherds to have been, who were drawing water in leather buckets and pouring it into the stone trough beside the well, for their flocks to drink. When these rough-looking men had finished their work several women and girls, who had been waiting at a distance, came up with their flocks and drew water for them."

"That is very interesting," said May ; "and it reminds me of one reference which I found : but I cannot tell where it is, because my markers have dropped out. It was about Jacob meeting Rachel at the well, and how, when he saw her coming, he ran directly and moved the great stone away from the mouth of the well, and watered her sheep ; and then he kissed her. How surprised she must have been!"

"But why should there have been a stone upon the well ?" asked Charley ; "was it to keep the water cool ?"

"Water in the East," replied his aunt, "is guarded as a very precious thing ; and many of the wells, especially in desert places, are covered with large, heavy slabs of stone, to keep the sand from filling them. In the centre of the slab is a hole large enough to let down a leather bucket or earthen jar, and, just as a bottle is stopped by a cork, this hole is stopped by a wedge of stone, often so heavy as to need three men to move it from its place."

"Isaac dug a great many wells," Aunt Edith.

"Yes, Charley ; he had very great possessions in flocks, and, no doubt, one of his objects in undertaking the great labour of digging wells was to provide water for them, to save them from dying from thirst. There is a very old Syrian custom which makes the man who is 'lord of the water' also 'lord of the land' ; and a well was the pro-



DRAWING WATER.

perty of the family of him who made it for ever. One thousand seven hundred years had passed since the time when Jacob bought the field and dug the well near the city of Shechem, yet the woman of Samaria still spoke of it as Jacob's Well."

"Oh, Aunt Edith, that reminds me to ask you whether that well where Jesus sat when he was wearied with his journey is to be seen now?"

"I believe it is, Charley. Travellers have tried to find out whether Sychar was the old city of Shechem, about two miles from Samaria, where Nablûs now stands, or a village near, which still exists, called 'Askar; but all are agreed that the spot known among the Mohammedans as *Bir el-Yakûb*, and by the Christians as *Bir es-Samariyeh*, 'the well of the Samaritan woman,' is the very place where the Lord Jesus, 'wearied with His journey,' sat, and spoke of the 'living water' to her who came to draw from Jacob's Well."

"How very much I should like to see it," said May.

"Can you tell us anything about it? What was it like?" asked Charley.

"We cannot be sure what this well looked like so long ago, for it is now only a great hollow basin, cut out of the solid rock, quite round, and with the sides hewn perfectly smooth. It sometimes contains a few feet of water, but is more often quite dry."

"The woman of Samaria said, 'the well is deep,'" said May. "Can you see to the bottom?"

"When last it was measured, the well was found to be 75 feet in depth, and it is probably deeper still, as there is so much rubbish at the bottom. The early christians built a church over it, but the roof and walls have fallen in, so that nothing can now be seen but a pit half filled with stones, while broken columns lie heaped around."

"I see from the map in my Bible why Jesus 'must needs go' through Samaria—it lies just between Judea and Galilee."

"Yes, Charley, that was the most direct way; but there was another road which the Jews preferred. A Jew who held fast to the

tradition of the elders would be very careful to avoid Samaria, for he believed that 'to eat from any dish, to drink out of any pitcher, to sit on any rug or stool, to use any staff or saddle which a Samaritan had touched, would render him unclean.'

"What did 'unclean' mean?" asked May.

"It was a dreadful word," said her aunt; "an 'unclean' Jew could not go about a town, could not eat with his friends, could not enter a house or synagogue,—he was just like a leper. And we are told that to a Jew travelling in Samaria, bread baked, and even water drawn by a native of the place, were forbidden things."

"Oh, now I understand, Auntie, why the woman was so surprised that Jesus should ask her for water. I always thought it so unkind of her to refuse Him such a little thing."

"She was surprised, May, because she knew that the great Jerusalem doctors had forbidden Jews to buy anything of Samaritans —they were not allowed even to speak to them."

"Did the Samaritans think themselves unclean?" said Charley.

"Far from it; they thought themselves very superior to the Jews, and believed that they alone had the true law, and the rightful form of worship. But I think I must try to tell you a little about them, and how they came to be a separate people, though living in the very midst of Palestine."

"I hope you will begin at the very beginning; I never understood about the Samaritans; they seem to have been Jews and yet not Jews;" and Charley's eager face wore a very puzzled expression.

"We must go back a very long way, then, even to 900 years before Christ's coming, when Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was crowned at Shechem, the chief city of Ephraim. Do you remember what happened at the beginning of his reign?"

"Oh, yes, Auntie," said both the children; "God was angry with Solomon, because His heart was turned away from Him, and He had said He would rend the kingdom out of the hand of his son, and

leave him only one tribe ; and Jeroboam, to whom the ten tribes were promised, came with the people to Rehoboam, as soon as he was made king, to beg him to be a more gentle ruler than his father had been."

" You remember very well ; now can you tell me, May, what answer Rehoboam made ? "

" He forsook the counsel of the old men who had been his father's friends, and answered the people roughly, according to the advice of the young men with whom he had been brought up."

" Yes ; and we are told 'the cause was from the Lord,' that His saying about the division of the kingdom might be fulfilled, as it was when 'Israel rebelled against the house of David,' revolted from Rehoboam, and offered Jeroboam the throne of the new kingdom."

" Did Rehoboam reign over only the tribe of Judah ? " asked Charley.

" Most of the tribe of Benjamin, and, afterwards, the Levites remained with him ; but the breach then made was never healed, thenceforth the people are spoken of as Judah and Ephraim, or Judah and Israel."

" How long did the kingdom of the ten tribes last, Auntie ? "

" For 250 years. It was then destroyed by the Assyrians."

" How many kings were there ? "

" Nineteen kings, belonging to nine different families ; but not one of them was a man who feared God, or tried to please Him."

" I know Jeroboam did not fear God, for he set up those two calves at Bethel and Dan for the people to worship. We have just been reading about him at school, and of how he tempted the poor people. It does seem such a pity that they listened to him when they had the true God to pray to."

" I daresay you remember, May, how often he is spoken of as the one who 'made Israel to sin ? ' These idols were set up in the north and south of his new kingdom."



NABLUS, THE MODERN SAMARIA.

"I see Samaria marked on the map," said Charley. "Who built it?"

"Omri, the father of Ahab, built the city. You will find the account of his reign in 1 Kings xvi. He was buried in his new capital, and there Ahab reigned, and before long a temple and altar to Baal were built there."

"It was in Ahab's reign that Ben-hadad besieged Samaria; more than once, did he not?"

"Yes, twice the king of Syria tried in vain to take what was now considered the royal city of Israel. The prophet Isaiah speaks of it by name (Isaiah vii. 9), 'the head of Ephraim is Samaria,' and prophesies the destruction of the proud, strong city; which came to pass when it was taken, after a three years' siege, by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, in the reign of Hoshea, while Hezekiah was reigning over Judah. (2 Kings xviii. 9, 10.) Thus the kingdom of the ten tribes came to an end."

"What became of the people?" asked May.

"They were carried off into Media by the Assyrians, and strangers were brought by the conquerors to occupy the deserted kingdom. We read (2 Kings xvii. 24) that people were brought from different Assyrian provinces, and placed 'in the cities of Samaria, *instead of the children of Israel.*' So you see, the new Samaritans were not Jews, but foreigners from the far East."

"Were none of the Jews left?"

"Probably *all* were taken away captive. But this is a point, Charley, which learned men have found it very difficult to decide. Of one thing, at least, we are certain;—these foreigners, of course, were idolaters; and there seems to have been no attempt made to worship God, until He, in displeasure, sent beasts of prey among the colonists; and on their complaining of their sad condition to their master, the king of Assyria, he sent one of the captive priests to teach them 'the manner of the God of the land.' This priest

dwelt in Bethel, and taught the people 'how they should fear the Lord.'

"That was very nice. I suppose they all gave up their idols, didn't they, Auntie?"

"If you refer to 2 Kings xvii. 41, May, you will see what a strange state of confusion began at that time, and existed for centuries. I see Charley has found the place."

Charley read, "So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."

"That was very strange," he said, thoughtfully; "but what happened to them next?"

"Nothing is known of their history till, at the return of Judah from the captivity, they put in their claim to be allowed to share in the work of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem."

"Oh, I remember; that was in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Don't you know, May? They became such bitter enemies, when Ezra would not allow them to have anything to do with the work. But did they not afterwards build a temple of their own, auntie? I have learnt about it in my Bible History."

"Yes; Manasseh, a man of priestly family, who had been banished from Jerusalem by Nehemiah, was allowed by the Persian king, Darius, to build a temple on Mount Gerizim for the people with whom he had taken refuge."

"I suppose that is the 'mountain' where the woman at the well said her fathers worshipped, is it not?"

"Yes; the Samaritans were very proud of their temple, which they considered far superior to the one at Jerusalem. They sacrificed a passover there, and *towards* the mountain, even after the temple was in ruins, they worshipped, wherever they might be. They kept there, too, a copy of the Law, which they considered more ancient and important than any other."

"But did the Jews ever own them as of the same religion as themselves?"

"No, Charley; though in course of time the Samaritans claimed to be of Jewish descent, and talked about 'our father Jacob,' the Jews would never acknowledge them, and, in the time of our Lord, so greatly were they hated, that you may remember the disciples actually wished to call down fire from heaven to burn up a Samaritan village, whose inhabitants had not received them. The Lord Himself called the Samaritan leper, who returned to give glory to God for his cleansing, a 'stranger.'"

"It was well for that poor woman that Jesus did not feel towards her as the disciples would have done. He never despised anyone," said May.

"The Lord, 'full of grace and truth,' could show His grace by becoming dependent on a poor outcast sinner even for a little water, as He sat, weary and thirsty, by the well, while He told her the truth about herself, so as to cause her to say to others, 'Come, see a Man who told me all that ever I did; is not this the Christ?'"

"Are there any Samaritans now, Auntie?" asked Charley.

"There is a settlement still existing at Nablûs, numbering about two hundred people. But we must finish our talk about wells now, Charley—although I see you have some more references ready to show me—for it is getting very late."

CHAPTER V

ON HOSPITALITY AND HABITS AT TABLE.

 HAVE been reading in 'Stories from Virgil,' Aunt Edith," said Charley, "of how *Æneas* and his chief captains took their dinner under a tree, putting their meat upon cakes of bread, and how when they began to eat the bread, *Iulus* cried out, 'What, eating our tables as well !' I thought directly of the traveller you told us of who dined with the poor people in the Lebanon, and ate his plate with each mouthful. How I wish we could have all our meals in that pic-nic style every day."

"Oh, Charley, not on frosty and snowy days!" cried May; "and on the pouring wet days, why the bread-plates would get soaked through and through."

"Pic-nic fashion only suits warm, dry countries, I think," said their aunt; "or beautiful June weather like this. But what do you say to our trying it this afternoon; shall we have tea under the great beech tree in the back garden?"

The children thought this a delightful plan, and were soon seated with their aunt under the old tree, eating and chattering, and admiring the graceful play of light and shade made by the sunlight streaming into their leafy bower. After tea, Charley reminded his aunt that she had promised to have another talk about the customs of the people in

Bible-lands. "I should like," he continued, "to hear a little about their food, besides what you have told us. From the accounts in the Old Testament, they seem never to have had meat in the house ; they just sent to the fields for a calf or a sheep, if a stranger came to dinner."

"I think they were wonderfully quick in getting dinner ready long ago," said May. "Don't you remember when Abraham was sitting in



LEBANON.

the tent door in the heat of the day, and saw three men coming, how he ran to meet them, and asked them to stay and rest under a tree—a beautiful, tall palm tree, I suppose it was ; and how he told Sarah to make cakes, and ran himself to fetch a calf, and then brought the meat, and butter, and milk out to the men under the tree ? It seemed to take almost no time, Aunt Edith ; only just while they were resting."

"Perhaps, when St. Paul wrote, ' Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares,' he may have been thinking of that beautiful scene in the life of Abraham :

neither he nor Sarah seem to have been aware at first that their visitors were other than ordinary strangers, yet with what kind and respectful attention Abraham treated them, unwilling that wayfaring men should pass by until he had given them water for their feet, and set food before them."

"I wonder how soon he found out that they were angels; perhaps not until they said Sarah should have a son."

"I think, Charley, when one of the company under the tree said, 'Wherefore did Sarah laugh? Is anything too hard for the Lord?' Abraham, and Sarah too, must have known who had deigned to take shelter from the noon-tide heat so close to their tent door; but it was no strange or terrible thing for the man who was called 'the friend of God' to know that God was so near him."

"But how dreadful it must have been for Sarah to remember that she had said what was not true to God Himself!"

"She must indeed have been filled with sorrow and shame, May; but we must not forget that we, too, speak all our words, whether true or false, whether for good or for evil, in His holy presence. David remembered this when he said, 'There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.' Sarah must have known that God had forgiven her, for when Isaac, the child whose name meant 'Laughter,' was born, his joyful mother said, 'God hath made me to laugh.'"

"But I was going to tell you, Charley," continued his aunt, "that so little have Eastern customs altered as the long centuries have rolled by, that in parts of Arabia travellers are even now entertained as Abraham entertained his guests. Dr. Shaw says, speaking of Eastern hospitality, 'The greatest prince of these countries is not ashamed to fetch a lamb from his herd and kill it, while the princess is impatient till she has prepared her fire and kettle to dress it.'"

"Oh, Aunt Edith, Abraham must have been like a prince; he was so rich in flocks, yet he ran to the herd and fetched the calf; and Sarah's

name meant princess, and yet she made the cakes, and baked them on the coals, just as the Syrian women still bake their flat cakes!"

"Do you remember, May," said Charley, "how Nathan told David, in his parable, that the rich man spared to take of his own flock to dress for the wayfaring man who was come to him, but sent and fetched the poor man's pet lamb? So, you see, in David's time it was quite a common thing to take a lamb or sheep from the fields to provide dinner for a stranger."

"What will you say when I tell you that last year when some Syrian children had their school treat, and were taken by their teachers an excursion, they actually led the sheep which was to furnish their dinner along with them?"

"Oh, Aunt Edith, I should say it was a sad excursion for the poor sheep," said May.

"I don't believe I could have eaten any of the dinner," said Charley; "but do go on, Aunt Edith."

"Not long ago," said his aunt, "I read an account of a strange dinner-party, which I will describe to you, as well as I can remember it. Some English travellers were invited to dine by the Sheikh of the country, who sent word that a sheep had been killed, and dinner would be ready at noon. On arriving at the place where the low, black tent was pitched, the guests found cushions and Turkey rugs spread upon the ground, so down they sat, Arab-fashion, and watched their hosts roast the green coffee-berries, pound them, and make the coffee. After pipes had been presented, the dinner appeared; a huge bowl filled with flat cakes and boiled rice, with the sheep crowning the whole, was placed before the strangers. The Sheikh and his brother refused to eat with them, so they turned up their coat-sleeves, and prepared to dine in the approved Arab style."

"Oh, do tell us what the Arab fashion is like."

"It is considered a great breach of good manners to use more than one hand, May; and the correct thing is to make little balls of rice,



NOMADIC ARABS.

and cleverly jerk them into the mouth, while the meat must be torn from the bones with the fingers. You will not be sorry to hear that after the travellers had finished their meal, and the great bowl had been handed to the crowd outside, who soon made an end of the contents, a little silver basin, covered with a perforated plate, was carried round, and water from a silver ewer poured over their hands. I have seen one of these small hand-basins, so common in the East; the ewer, which was very prettily shaped, would not hold more than a pint of water."

"I remember," said Charley, "that Elisha was spoken of as the man who poured water upon the hands of Elijah."

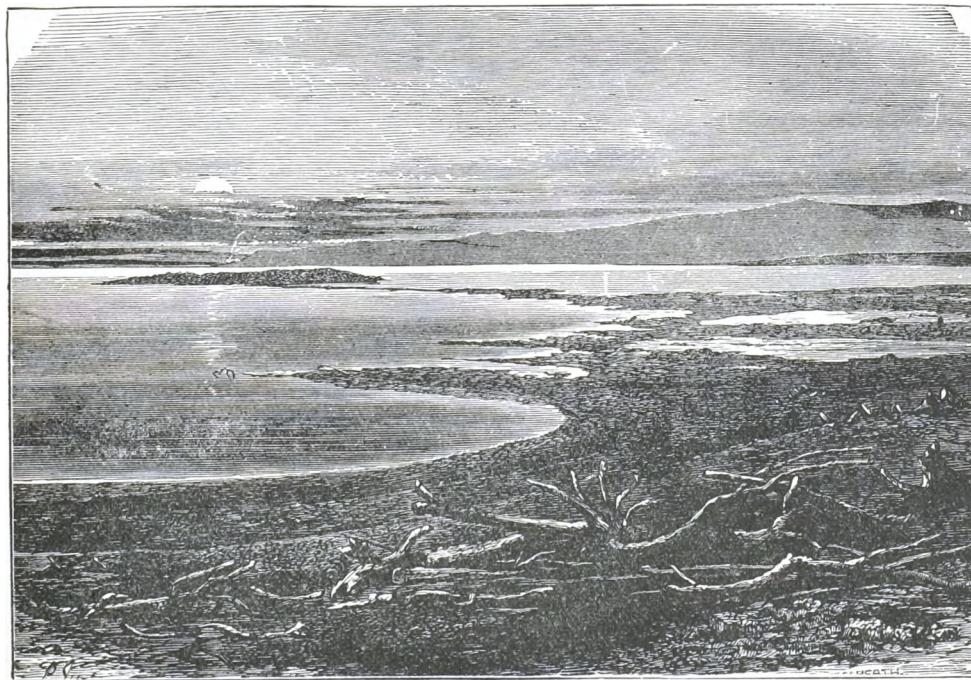
"I suppose they cannot afford to use much of their precious water for washing," said May. "But can you tell us any more about the Arabs?"

"A modern traveller has given a curious account of a tribe he met with near the Dead Sea, who wore a sheepskin, with the woolly side in, thrown over their mantles. At sundown, when they were going to prepare their evening meal, the use of these skins became apparent. Each man took a handful or two of grain, and, after pounding it between two stones, kneaded it with salt and water upon the outside of his sheepskin, thrust his cake into the hot embers, and his supper was soon ready. You may imagine with what interest the traveller looked on, calling to mind the kneading-troughs which the Israelites 'bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders' at the time of their hurried departure from Egypt."

"Oh, how very interesting! I always thought those kneading-troughs were wooden trays, like ours. How much easier they must have been to carry away," said May. "Things were often really so very different from what we fancy them, or even from what the pictures make them," she added, thoughtfully.

"You know, Aunt Edith," said Charley, when the Jews said they were Abraham's children, the Lord said to them, 'If ye were Abra-

ham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.' How unlike Abraham that Pharisee was who asked Jesus to eat with him! Abraham ran and begged those who came to him to let water be fetched that they might wash their feet, but Jesus had to say to Simon, who had *invited* Him, ' Thou gavest me no water for my feet ! ' "



DEAD SEA.

"Almost everywhere in the East it was the custom to offer a guest water for his feet, and sweet oil, as soon as he entered the house ; and if the host wished to treat any visitor with especial attention, he would welcome him at the door with the kiss of peace, and himself unloose his sandals. The proud Pharisee neglected to bestow upon the Guest whom he had invited the common, every-day attentions due from the

host to all who sat at his table ; it was reserved for the poor woman who came unbidden to the house to supply what Simon had neglected to give, as she stood, probably among the servants, 'at His feet, behind Him, weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed (them) with the ointment,' or fragrant myrrh."

"I have often wondered," said Charley, "how she had the courage to come in when they were all at dinner ; but I daresay she had seen Jesus, and perhaps knew what He had done for other people, and so felt she must get to Him anyway."

"I think you are right, Charley ; this woman, 'who was a sinner,' hearing that Jesus was at the house of the Pharisee, seems to have thought of nothing except that the One whom she knew to be the Friend of sinners was there, and that where He was, was the only place for her—however unwelcome she might be, however intrusive in the eyes of others. At the same time, you must remember that it was then, as it is now, no unusual thing in the East for strangers to come in during meal-time, stand about the room, or even sit down and talk with those at table."

"There was another woman who anointed the Lord, and she had an alabaster box of very precious ointment ; she *was* another woman, wasn't she, Aunt Edith ?" said May.

"Yes," replied her aunt ; "we are not told the name of the woman of whom we have been speaking, but we know that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anointed the head and the feet of her Lord, as He sat at meat in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany ; do you remember who sat at table with Him ?"

"Oh, yes," said Charley, "Lazarus, who had been called out of his grave, was there. It says, 'the house was filled with the odour of the ointment ;' how very sweet it must have been !"

"What is spikenard ?" asked May.

"It is an Indian plant, which grows straight and tall, and is the

colour of a green ear of wheat; it is still dried, and brought to Syria, mixed with other fragrant plants. ‘Nard’ was a general name for perfumes.”

“It must have been God who put it into the heart of Lazarus’s sister to keep her box of sweet ointment till she could give it all to Jesus, for it was just what He liked her to do. Every time she looked at Lazarus, who had been dead, she must have wanted to thank the Lord for raising him; but how surprised she must have been when Judas and the others said, ‘Why is this waste?’”

“Just as the hard thoughts of Simon the Pharisee about the poor woman of whom St. Luke tells us, brought from Jesus those words which must have been so sweet to her, ‘Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much,’ so the murmuring of those around the table of Simon the leper was answered by the Lord Himself. ‘Let her alone,’ He said; ‘why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on Me she hath done what she could; she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying!’”

“Yes,” said Charley, “it didn’t matter to Mary what Judas or anyone said, when she heard Jesus say that what she had done should be told all over the world, for a memorial of her. Aunt Edith,” he continued, “I have seen a picture of the Last Supper, in which Jesus and the disciples are sitting at the table, almost as we do; but when I learnt in Roman history of the couches upon which they lay at dinner, Mr. Elton told me that the Romans, in the very old time, used to have seats, and would have thought it very much beneath such a brave people as they were, to lie down at their meals; but that in the times of the Emperors they had copied the customs of the Eastern people, whom they had conquered, and liked to have beautiful couches, made of costly woods, or ornamented with tortoiseshell, and covered with splendid embroidered rugs. Did the Jews sit at table, or use couches?”

“In the time of our Lord the custom of reclining at table was

common, especially at entertainments ; it is thought that the Persians first introduced the triclinium, of which I can show you a picture.

"Let me see," said May. "Oh, yes; they are all lying down, and the servants are waiting. What does triclinium mean ?"

"The word means 'three couches.' You see these couches, were each large enough for three people to occupy, and were arranged at three sides of the table ; one couch was called 'highest,' another 'middle,' and the third 'lowest.' You know the Pharisees 'loved the uppermost rooms,' or places at feasts ; the middle place upon a couch was considered the place of honour."

"Then when Jesus sat down to the Passover supper with His disciples," said May, "John's place must have been on the same couch with Him, for it says, 'he leaned on His breast at supper.' Oh, how much better I understand it all now ; he was close beside the Lord, and he just looked up, and said, 'Lord, who is it ?'"

"We do not read of the triclinium in the New Testament," said Charley ; "it always says, 'as He sat at meat,' or 'they sat at the table with Him.'"

"The word is only once used (Mark vii. 4), and is there translated 'tables' ; if you look at the place, you will see the margin gives 'beds.' A room was said to be 'furnished,' which literally means 'spread,' when provided with a table and couches ; such furnished rooms were kept ready in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, for the use of people who came from a distance. At table it was the custom for the master of the house to say grace, or 'bless the food,' both at the beginning and end of the meal."



TRICLINIUM.

"How many times we read that Jesus 'gave thanks,'" said May: "when the people sat round upon the grass, and when He gave the disciples the cup of wine, and said, 'Take this, and divide it among yourselves.'"

Their aunt now told the children that she feared they would take cold if they stayed out of doors longer; but that if they would carry the chairs into the house, she would find an interesting little story to read to them before they went to bed. "I wrote it down," she said, "from the lips of a friend, who is the missionary spoken of in the story. He now lives at Ramleh, which is believed to be the ancient Arimathæa."

"Oh," said both the children, "that was the city from which Joseph of Arimathæa came; but do read, Aunt Edith."

"Not long ago a missionary was travelling among the mountains of Galilee. He was not alone, for his wife—a lady lately come from England—accompanied him. As she was not very strong, nor well accustomed to ride for many hours together, her husband had arranged with the Arab, who was their guide, that they should make the journey to the place where they were going in two days, not travelling more than seven hours a day. The guide readily agreed, and was paid accordingly. But an Arab cannot be trusted, and so, as the travellers rode on, hour after hour, and did not come to the place where they had arranged to spend the night, they began to fear that their guide had deceived them. It was even so. In order to get two days' wages for one day's work, he had purposely led them past the halting-place, and intended to push on to the journey's end that night.

"What was to be done? The missionary feared for his wife to take such a long ride, so he resolved to stop at the first village they came to, and try to get shelter for the night.

"At last they reached a small village on a mountain height, but they were not well received. 'You must wait,' they were told, 'till the chief comes home; we shall then know whether to let you in or

not.' As the weary travellers stood waiting in the yard, they remembered that it was the time of the evening meal, and, as they knew that it is the custom of the country if a guest arrives after three o'clock to give him whatever may be in the house, they were the less surprised at not having been welcomed more warmly.

"These people are very poor," they said to each other. "It must seem hard to them to give the meal they have prepared for themselves to strangers whom they have never seen; and yet they would consider the honour of the house gone for ever if they let us in and did not offer us all they had. Let us tell them we have our supper with us, and only desire a room in which to lie down and rest."

"When the poor people heard that the strangers were provided with food, they willingly admitted them, and offered to cook the chicken they had brought with them. After supper they were shown to the guest chamber. I daresay you have never been in such a poor room as this was: its only furniture was a mat spread for sleeping upon, and a small oil-lamp, but the missionary and his wife were very thankful even for such a resting-place. Utterly wearied, the poor lady threw herself upon the mat, and had all but fallen asleep when she heard a noise as of footsteps at the chamber door, and, raising her head, saw two old women creep cautiously into the room. What could they want? You may imagine the joyful astonishment of the missionaries when, after the evening greeting, quickly came the question, 'Can you tell us the story of Jesus?'

"Forgetting his weariness, the missionary began at once, in that bare room in the little village standing alone on one of the mountain heights of Galilee, to tell to those simple country-women, whose hearts God had touched, the wonderful story they had asked for. He had been thinking much of the life, and death, and ascension of our Lord, for he was writing, in very simple words, a little book of Bible lessons for the Arab children. So he just told them the 'old, old story, *simply*, as to a little child,' and, as the hours went on, the missionary's wife,

still lying on her mat, too tired to speak, heard her husband's voice as he—

‘Told “the story” slowly,
That they might take it in;
That wonderful redemption,
God’s remedy for sin.’

And by the dim lamp-lights he saw the rapt faces of the eager listeners, to whose ears it was no twice-told tale, but the ‘good news of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.’”



CHAPTER VI.

ON HOUSE-TOPS AND HOUSES.

AWILE we were talking about food last evening, Aunt Edith," said Charley, "I thought of one thing I particularly wanted to ask you about, but there was not time; I never could understand about John the Baptist, and his eating locusts and wild honey."

"Why, you know what locusts are like," interrupted May, "Auntie showed you that one which some one sent her all the way from Syria in a little box; it was just like those great grasshoppers in Switzerland, which make such a noise with their wings, only bigger."

"I know," said Charley; "but how could anyone eat such creatures as those?"

"I cannot tell you," replied their aunt, "whether *my* locust was one of the four kinds which are mentioned in the book of Leviticus as fit for food; but locusts, either roasted or boiled, are eaten to this day by the Bedawin, as the wandering tribes of Arabs are called."

"How *can* they eat such things?" repeated May, with a look of disgust.

"Perhaps they don't look any worse than shrimps, May," said Charley, "when they are boiled; and you know you are fond enough of eating them; perhaps if you had been an Arab girl you would have liked locusts just as well."

"Locusts and honey go together now, as they did long ago,

Charley," said Aunt Edith, smiling ; " the Arabs sometimes dry the locusts in the sun, take off their heads and legs, and then grind and mix them with flour to make a bitter kind of bread, which they eat with honey."

" But, Aunt Edith, why was Canaan called a land ' flowing with milk and honey ? ' "

" You must remember, May," said her aunt, " that cattle-feeding was the chief occupation of the people, so that the milk, not only of cows, but of sheep and goats, must have been most abundant. Leben, or curdled milk, almost forms the food of the poor in Palestine now, during part of the year. The ' wild honey ' which John the Baptist found in the wilderness must have been made by wild bees. M. Pierotti tells us that he has found honey stored up in holes in the rocks, and in hollow trees, and he once disturbed a swarm of these wild bees, which had taken the skeleton of a camel for their hive."

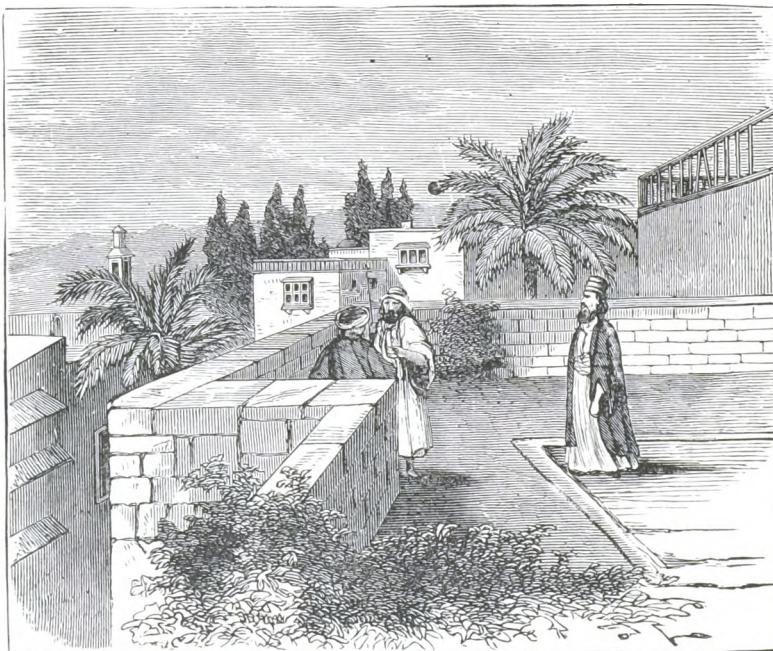
" Oh," exclaimed both children at once, " he must have thought of Samson finding honey in the carcase of the lion ! "

" No doubt he did," replied their aunt ; " we are told that wild honey was so abundant in the time of the Crusaders, that many of Edward I.'s soldiers died from eating too freely of it ; and in our time travellers have observed with interest that in the remote districts, where the habits of the people have changed very little since patriarchal times, milk and honey form part of every meal. But now that I have answered your question, Charley, I should like for us to talk a little this evening about the flat-roofed houses of the East ; for some parts of the Bible become much clearer to us when we understand how very unlike our houses Eastern dwellings are."

" I know what you mean," said May ; " I remember so well the time when I thought that the roof which was broken through, so that the man sick of the palsy might be let down into the midst of the people before Jesus, was a pointed roof, made of slates, like

ours, and I used to wonder however they could have stood upon such a roof without falling ; but since I have seen pictures of flat roofs, with people walking up and down upon them, I know better."

" Still I don't understand how the man was carried to the roof,"



HOUSE-TOP.

said Charley ; " were there stairs outside, as there are in Swiss houses ? Don't you remember, May, when we were in Switzerland, how we used to run up the stairs outside our little chalet, and then go indoors by the window from the gallery ? "

" Oh, yes," said May, laughing at the remembrance, " there never was anything more delightful than that gallery ; we could run about there on wet days, Aunt Edith, and see the blue lake and the snow mountains so beautifully from it."

"Are the houses in Syria built at all like chalêts?" asked Charlie.

"They are only alike in this respect, that both have an outside staircase, and a gallery or verandah. The better class of dwellings in Syria are built round a court, which is sometimes paved with marble, and ornamented with shrubs; from this court, stairs lead to the verandah, and outside stairs also lead to the house-top. The roof of the verandah is on a level with the flat roof of the house, but is generally made of some very slight material, so that it would not be safe to step from the terrace-roof on to it."

"Are the terrace-roofs quite flat?"

"They are slightly raised in the centre, to allow the rain to run off."

"I suppose they are as hard as a pavement," said May, "since people walk so much upon them."

"I fancy the mixture of small stones, lime, and ashes, of which they are made," said her aunt, "must give them something of the look of our asphalte pavements. But you must remember that I have been describing to you a well-built house. Some poor huts now to be seen near the Sea of Galilee, are as wretched as the poorest mountain chalêt, consisting of only one little room, with no opening but the door. The roof, which is used for a sleeping-place, and is reached by a ladder from the outside, is covered with a solid bed of earth, often overgrown with the 'grass upon the house-top, which withereth before it groweth up,' which is used in Ps cxxix. as an expressive figure of the short-lived prosperity of those who hate the people of God."

"But if the four men who carried the sick man broke a hole into such a roof as that, or into one of the hard asphalte roofs, I should think the people below must have thought the house was coming down upon them," said Charley.

"Which sort of house do you think it was, Aunt Edith, a poor hut, or one of those good houses with a verandah?" asked May.

"Let us look at two of the accounts given of the healing of the palsied man," replied their aunt; "will you read the early part of Mark ii., Charley, and then May shall read for us a few verses from Luke v., beginning at the 16th verse."

When both passages of scripture had been read, Aunt Edith asked Charley whether he could tell her where this mighty work of Jesus took place.

"It was at Capernaum."

"Yes; the Lord had returned across the lake to the city which was especially called 'His own,' the scene of so many of His works of power, and the report had gone abroad that He was at home, for that is the true meaning of the expression, 'in the house'; no particular house is referred to, but it is probable, since, besides the poor who always flocked to hear His gracious words, there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who had come from 'every village of Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem,' that the building in which the Lord was 'preaching the word' was not a small one. I will tell you what Dr. Kitto, who observed Eastern houses very carefully while he was in Palestine, and thought a great deal about this very scene of which we have read, says."

"Oh, Aunt Edith," said Charley, "is that the same Dr. Kitto who fell from the ladder when he was a bricklayer's boy, and became quite deaf? Mother says she will read us a book he wrote some day, but that is called 'The Lost Senses,' and is about his deafness, I believe."

"That same poor boy, after his terrible accident, by his patient industry became a great scholar, Charley, and wrote most interesting books, explaining difficulties in the Bible narrative, which, as I told you, are often made quite plain by a knowledge of the customs of Eastern people. He was for some time puzzled by what has puzzled you, and wondered how a roof, firm enough to walk upon, could have been broken through without danger to the people below; but he came to

the conclusion that it was probably when our Lord stood in the verandah, speaking to the crowd below, that the four men carried their helpless burden up the outside staircase to the housetop ; then, uncovering a part of the thin roof of the verandah, and standing firm upon the terrace-roof, they gently let the sick man down through the opening they had made, and laid him upon his little couch at the feet of Jesus. What did the Lord see, in this act of theirs, which no one else saw, May ? ”

“ It says : ‘ when Jesus saw their faith, He said, Man, thy sins are forgiveth thee.’ I suppose,” continued May, thoughtfully, “ Jesus forgave the poor man’s sins first because his soul was more than his body.”

“ But it must have been a wonderful payment for all their trouble,” said Charley, “ when the men who had carried him saw him, as soon as ever Jesus had said, ‘ Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thy house,’ rise up at once and take up what he had been lying upon, and go to his house, glorifying God.”

“ Was what he lay upon a folding bedstead, Aunt Edith ? ”

“ It was a mattress, I think, May ; mattresses, stuffed with wool or cotton, are generally used in the East for beds, and to ‘ make a bed ’ there only means to roll up the mattress upon which one has been lying, with its rug or coverlet, and put it in the corner.”

“ Oh, what an easy way of making beds ; but it would only do in warm countries.”

“ I must tell you what an English lady saw when she was staying at Tiberias, a city on the Sea of Galilee. At four o’clock one April morning she was looking from a terrace where she had gone, as soon as she was dressed, for air, when she saw a curious sight. ‘ The neighbours,’ she says, ‘ were not up, and I overlooked many households asleep on their roofs. They had laid their mattresses there, and slept in their ordinary clothes, with a coverlet thrown over them. As the daylight brightened upon their faces one after another began to wake

—the children stirring first. They rolled, and rubbed their eyes, threw off their coverlets, and jumped up, dressed for the day, apparently.'

"It was well they got up early," said Charley, "for the house-top would be a very hot place when the sun was shining, I should think."

"The richer people," said his aunt, "sometimes set up tents upon their terrace-roofs during the summer, and the poorer make little sheds there with mats, where they sleep to escape from the insects. M. Pierotti tells us that fires are lit upon the house-tops in times of rejoicing; that must be a very pretty kind of illumination; don't you think so, May?"

"Yes, indeed," said May; "I wish we might make a bonfire on *our* house when a birthday comes!"

"Aunt Edith," said Charley, "it was to the house-top that Peter was gone to pray when he saw the vision of the sheet let down from heaven full of all kinds of animals; I daresay he went there that he might be quiet."

"Very likely; the house-top seems to have been a place for retirement, for we read that 'Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house' the night before he anointed him to be king. There is one passage of Scripture, Charley," continued his aunt, "which used to puzzle me much: our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 17), when speaking to His disciples of the terrible time of distress which should come upon the land, said, 'Then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains; let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house.' It was only when I read the accounts of travellers, and found that the flat-roofed houses communicate with each other, so that, as one traveller says, 'a person might proceed to the city walls and escape into the country without coming down into the street,' that I understood the meaning. At Nazareth the road is actually so little like our idea of what a road ought to be, that, when riding along, a traveller once found himself upon the top of a house, looking into the yard. 'Happily,' he says, 'the roof was so strong that my horse did not intrude on the domestic privacy of the inhabitants.' This picture of part of a street



CAIRO.

in Cairo will give you some idea of the very irregular way in which Eastern towns are built."

"Yes," said Charley, "that house to the left seems almost ready to fall."

"It must be delightful to go to Nazareth," said May, "even though the roads are so bad. I always think Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, and Nazareth must be the places everyone would like best to see in all the world," and she repeated—

"At Nazareth, in olden time,
A peasant's cottage stood,
Where Joseph, the poor carpenter,
Toiled for his daily food."



NAZARETH.

"Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament," said her aunt; "we first read of it (Matt. ii. 22) as the place where the Child Jesus

dwell with His parents when they returned from their flight to Egypt. It is situated, as you see from this picture, in a hilly country, just at the south of the Lebanon range—indeed, the ancient city was built upon the slope of a hill, from the brow or ridge of which the wicked people of the place ‘where He had been brought up’ sought to cast the meek lowly Man, who was to them only ‘Joseph’s son,’ down. In the interior of Palestine, generally,” continued Aunt Edith, after a pause, “the chiefs of the villages have stone houses; the people who are pretty well off, wretchedly-built cottages of sun-dried bricks, and the poor people huts of clay. There is plenty of good limestone in Palestine, but the people are too indolent to use it. When a house is finished, it is usual to have a sort of festival to rejoice over it; but I must not forget to tell you that the houses of good Jews never *are* quite finished.”

“Why; are they too lazy to finish them properly?”

“No, there is a better reason than that, Charley; but, perhaps, I am not right in saying they are always left unfinished; I only know that the rabbis long ago ordered that one part of a house must be left unfinished, in remembrance of Jerusalem and the temple lying desolate, and so it became a custom to leave about a yard of the wall unplastered, and to write upon the bare space this touching verse from Psalm cxxxvii., ‘If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning,’ or the words, ‘The memory of the desolation.’”

“That writing on the house reminds me that we often saw texts over the doors of the chalêts at Chateau d’Oex,” said May.

“I dare say you remember, May, how when Moses charged the people to keep the commandments of God ever before them, he said, ‘Thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.’ Other nations, too, used to write their laws upon their gates, but I will tell you at some future time how foolishly the Jews of modern times have acted with regard to this precept; now, as our time is short, I want to read you from this interesting book a description

of the interior of a house in a Christian (by which I mean not a Muslim) village."

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Edith; we have been talking so much about the outside of the houses, I shall like to hear what is inside."

"May I look at the book?" asked Charley. "Oh, there are beautiful pictures! But what a monster of a book!"

"It is called 'The Land of Israel,' said his aunt, "and I am sure you will enjoy reading it yourself some day, though its size may frighten you now. But here is the description:—

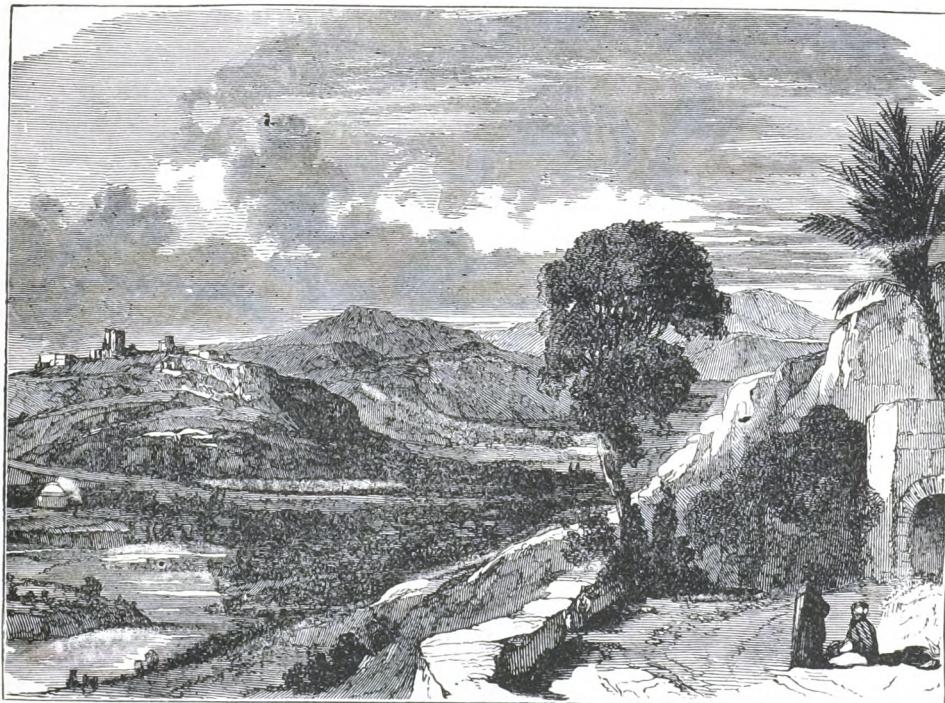
"Each house has a courtyard, with a high wall, for goats, camels, firewood, and bees. At the end stands the mud-built house, with a single door opening into its one room. A pillar and two arches run across it, and support the flat roof. The door opens into the stable portion, where horses and camels are standing before the manger of dried mud. Stepping up from this, the visitor finds himself at once in the simple dwelling-room of the family. A large matting of flattened rush generally covers one half, and a few cushions are spread in the corner, near the unglazed window. At the farther end are the mud stairs, leading up to the roof—the summer bed-chamber of the family. Furniture there is none, except a few cooking utensils hanging on wooden pegs, a hole in the centre of the floor for holding the fire, with a few loose iron rods across the top, and the quaint wooden cradles of the babies."

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Edith," said Charley; "it is a capital description—even the bees are not forgotten!"

"It seems that there is generally a pile of beehives in the yard, but the hives are not in the least like ours—they are made of sun-dried mud, and are said to look like gas-pipes laid in rows, or piled in pyramid form. These tubes are closed at each end, and the bees go in and out at a small hole in the centre."

"I suppose," said May, "great people have very beautiful houses. David said that he dwelt in a house of cedar"

“There was Solomon’s house, too,” said Charley, “which surprised the queen of Sheba so much when she came from the south countries; then there was the ivory house of King Ahab, perhaps that palace which he built at Jezreel, close by Naboth’s vineyard. Of course the



JEZREEL.

king’s dwelling was always as splendid as possible. Do you know, May, Nero actually had a golden house!”

“I have tried to give you rather a detailed description of an Eastern dwelling of a humble kind, dear children,” said their aunt, “because it was probably in the stable portion of such a house that He who was greater than all the kings of the earth found His lowly resting-place. We read that when Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem there was no

room for them in the inn. The khan, or house for the reception of travellers, was crowded, and it is probable that they, being shut out, took refuge in a poor cottage close by. Even there the strangers were only allowed a place in the portion allotted to the cattle, and there, in the long earthen trough from which the cattle fed, Mary laid her Babe.

“‘No peaceful home upon His cradle smil’d,
Guests rudely went and came, where slept the royal Child.’”

“But the angels were praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,’ because that day in the city of David the Saviour was born,” said May, softly. “Aunt Edith, what was that song you were singing to baby last night, something about the birth of Jesus, I think ?”

“It was written more than two hundred years ago, May ; it has a great many verses, but the part which I was singing to baby begins—

“‘When God with us was dwelling here,
In little babes He took delight.’”

“Oh, do go on ; tell us as many verses as you can remember.”

“A mother is singing her little child to sleep, Charley, and as she sings, she thinks of the Child Jesus, and how

“‘No peaceful home upon His cradle smiled,’
and says—

“‘A little infant once was He,
And strength in weakness then was laid
Upon His virgin mother’s knee,
That power to thee might be conveyed.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

“‘In this thy frailty and thy need
He friends and helpers doth prepare,
Which thee shall cherish, clothe, and feed,
For of thy weal they tender are.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep,

“ ‘ The King of Kings, when He was born,
Had not so much for outward ease ;
By Him such dressings were not worn,
Nor such-like swaddling-clothes as these.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

“ ‘ Within a manger lodged thy Lord,
Where oxen lay, and asses fed ;
Warm rooms we do to thee afford,
An easy cradle, or a bed.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

“ ‘ The wants that He did then sustain
Have purchased wealth, my babe, for thee.
And by His torments and His pain
Thy rest and ease securèd be.
My baby, then forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.’ ”

I am sure baby will like that song more and more when she is old enough to understand the words,” said May.

“ Do you remember, Charley,” said his aunt, “ one verse in the ninth chapter of Isaiah which gives some of the names of the One who lay, a helpless infant, in the manger at Bethlehem ? ”

Charley repeated—

“ Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulder ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

CHAPTER VII.

ABOUT ANCIENT TOMBS AND BURIAL CUSTOMS.

NOU remember, Aunt Edith," said Charley, "that poem you used to like to hear May and me repeat, about the martyr Marius? I could not help thinking of it yesterday, when I heard someone who came to dinner speaking to papa about the catacombs at Paris, for Marius was buried in a catacomb. Don't you know, May, it says they carried him—

‘ Pacing slowly, pacing lowly,
With the torch-lights in their hand,
Through the dark and winding chambers
Of the ancient catacomb,
Where the children of our Saviour
Have their hiding-place and tomb’?

You see there must have been catacombs at Rome, for Marius was a Roman martyr; and I want to know more about them, if you will tell us all you can, Aunt Edith."

"I had been thinking that we might talk a little this evening about the burial customs of the East, but as you would like to hear about the catacombs, Charley, we may as well begin with them," said his aunt; and she left the room, and presently returned with a large, dusty-looking book. "Some time ago," she continued, "I could not have told you much of these interesting places, but I have lately been reading from this great volume all that I could find about them."

"Then you will be able to tell us all about them from the very beginning?" said May. "I suppose they were made under ground, like tunnels, so that people could 'pace' through them?"

"I don't know that anyone could tell you their history 'from the very beginning,' May, for it is still a question among learned men how there came to be these 'dens and caves' outside the walls of Rome. Some have thought that they were merely quarries or pits, from which building-stone had been dug, which were afterwards used as places of burial for the dead; others believe that the early Christians at Rome, most of whom had been Jews, desiring for their friends a rock-hewn sepulchre like that in which our Lord was laid, bought land outside the city; for all burial within the walls of Rome was forbidden; and perhaps taking advantage of excavations already existing, formed those passages or galleries, with tombs at either side, which stretch for miles under ground along the Via Appia, at a short distance from Rome, forming a subterranean city, through the mazy windings of which no traveller dare venture without a guide."

"Ah! I see; it must be 'pacing *lowly*' through those underground passages, and the torch-lights would be necessary to show the way. I daresay people who visit the catacombs now carry torches; it would be dreadful to grope through those dark, silent places without a light," said Charley. "But, Auntie, what does catacomb mean?"

"The word is formed from two Greek words," replied his aunt, "and means a hollow place, Charley. These dreary vaults seem to have been unthought of from the first age of the Church's history, until, in the sixth century they were plundered by the Goths, after which the Popes began to remove the relics of the martyrs, and a visit to the catacombs was counted a pious pilgrimage. Then came centuries during which no one thought of their existence, until at last, in the year 1578, a sepulchral chamber was discovered by some labourers who were digging for earth."

"Let me see; that must have been in our Queen Elizabeth's time," said May. "How surprised everyone must have been. I daresay when

they had discovered one chamber they soon began to search for more. But do tell us what the tombs are like."

"If you could walk along the galleries, May, by the torch-light, you would see that the walls on either hand are full of niches, from the floor to the roof; within these niches the dead have been placed, and then the opening has been closed by a stone slab. Some travellers say that these 'loculi,' as the niches are called, remind them of berths in a ship, placed in order, tier above tier; while a French writer has likened them to the 'shelves of a vast library, where death has arranged his works.' There are thousands of these 'loculi'; here you may see a tiny niche small enough to be the resting-place of an infant a day old, and there one large enough for a full-grown man. Jerome, one of the most learned of the fathers who made the Latin translation of the Bible called the Vulgate, gives an account of a visit which he paid to these catacombs when he was a boy, about the year 354 A.D., which is interesting as the earliest description we have of them. 'When I was a boy,' he says, 'receiving my education at Rome, I and my schoolfellows used on Sundays to make the circuit of the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs. Many a time did we go down into the catacombs. These are excavated deep in the earth, and contain on either hand, as you enter, the bodies of the dead buried in the wall.' After speaking of the dreadful darkness, he says, 'Only occasionally is light let in to mitigate the horror of the gloom, and then not so much through a window as through a hole. You take each step with caution, surrounded by deep night.'"

"Oh, I was thinking he was a very lucky schoolboy," said May; "but I should not care to wander about in such darkness, even in the most interesting place in the world."

"I can show you," continued their aunt, turning over the leaves of the old book which lay upon the table, "a picture of the entrance to one of these underground cities of the dead."

"Oh, how their torches blaze," said Charley. "I should like some day to go and explore for myself; one could always take lights, you

know, May. But," he added, thoughtfully, "you said the tombs were walled up by slabs of stone, Aunt Edith; I wonder whether anyone has ever taken away the slab from a tomb?"



ENTRANCE TO THE CEMETERY SAINT PRETEXTAL.

"Oh, yes; and many curious things have been found behind those time-worn slabs. It has been the custom of almost all peoples to bury with their dead what they had used in life; and so in one tomb in the catacombs tools, telling of the trade of the man who was buried there, were found; lamps of bronze, silver, and amber, of which I can show you some specimens; little jars, bells, and in the tombs of children ivory dolls with jointed limbs have been discovered."

"I daresay little children in those long-ago times liked to take their dollies to bed with them, just as they do now," said May; "and so when the mothers laid their dead children in those little niches, they put their favourite dolls by their side, before the slab was fastened down."

"I must not forget to tell you," continued Aunt Edith, "of one circumstance which adds much to the interest of the catacombs. It is believed that in the times of persecution the early Christians not only used them as places of refuge, digging wells that they might not perish for lack of water while hiding in their dark recesses, but that it was their custom to hold meetings for prayer and praise, and for remembering their Lord's death amid the solemn silence of these dreary vaults, surrounded by the tombs of many who had sealed their faith with their blood."

"But is nothing written upon the slabs," asked Charley, "so that one could know who was buried there, and how long ago?"

"The time cannot be known certainly," replied his aunt, "for generally only the day of the month is given; but sometimes the name of the one whose dust lies hidden in the rocky tomb has been painted in vermilion upon the slab, while upon some tombs there are the well-known Christian emblems, a dove set free, a chariot at rest, a ship at anchor, all telling of rest and liberty, of the warfare of life being accomplished, of the voyager upon life's ocean having reached the haven where he would be, of the joyous freedom of the imprisoned spirit."

"And there must be some palm-branches," said May, "for the poem says that when they buried Marius they carved the name of Christ upon his tomb, and a little branch of palm besides."

"Yes, May; upon many slabs a palm-branch, the token of victory, is carved or painted; the colours of the paintings are wonderfully fresh. You would like to see these old pictures, though I am sure you would not admire some of them, for they are very roughly drawn. A favourite device is the Good Shepherd carrying a lamb upon His shoulder; then there is the raising of Lazarus, and many scenes from the Old Testa-

ment—the sacrifice of Abraham, the three young men in the fiery furnace, Moses striking the rock ;—all these, and many more, may be seen."

"As to the meaning of one very frequent symbol, a fish, there was much spoken and written, but at last it was discovered that the Greek



MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK.

letters which form the name are the initial letters of the words Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. I must translate for you the inscription upon one tomb, May, which is believed to be one of the earliest, for it will have an especial interest for you ; it is a martyr's tomb ;" and Aunt

Edith read the following epitaph:—“‘In the time of Hadrian, Emperor; Marius, youthful military commander, who lived long enough, since he spent his life and blood for Christ—in peace.’”

“Oh, what a beautiful inscription!” cried May; “and to think that that was the tomb of the very Marius who was given to the lions.”

“I can read the letters quite well, Aunt Edith,” said Charley, “only the ‘u’ is made like a ‘v’ all through, which rather puzzles me. I know many of the Roman emperors persecuted the Christians.”

“Alas! those mighty emperors, Charley, knew nothing of the faith and hope which led the friends of those whom they persecuted to the death to write upon their tombs such words as these: ‘Thou sleepest in peace;’ ‘In God thou shalt live;’ He lives beyond the stars;’ ‘Buried in peace.’ They, great and learned as some of them were, could only speak of death as the last farewell, and of the tomb as the ‘eternal home,’ ” said Aunt Edith, sadly.

“Those meetings of the early Christians in the catacombs must have been wonderful meetings, Aunt Edith,” said Charley, “for I suppose no one there was sure that his turn to die for Christ might not have come before they met again. I almost wonder they were not afraid to sing; but the poem speaks of their singing ‘The Burial Psalm’ when they buried Marius; so they used to sing even at the martyrs’ funerals. Can you tell us whether any particular psalm was sung then?”

“I cannot tell, Charley, but I have read that when a martyr in those early times was buried—and think what a burial it often was, just the fragments of the poor body which had been given up to the fury of beasts of prey!—songs of triumph, rather than of lamentation, were sung. These were favourite anthems: ‘Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath rewarded thee,’ ‘The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,’ ‘Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.’ ”

“Did the early Christians always sing at funerals?”

“I believe they did, Charley. We are told that no stranger hands

touched the dead, but that friend cared for friend, and that as the body, clothed in white, lay ready for the burial, one and another came for a last look. When the funeral day arrived, all felt that for one who slept in Jesus death was but the entrance to life ; and so the procession walked



LAMPS FROM THE CATACOMBS.

as in a triumph, and palm and olive-branches were carried, instead of the melancholy cypress-boughs of the Roman funeral trains. There were no hired mourners, no 'minstrels and people making a noise,' as at the Jewish funerals, and the body was laid to rest, facing the East, in token of the sure hope of a joyful resurrection at the coming of the Sun of Righteousness."

"I wonder," said Charley, "whether it was because they believed that their friends would rise from the dead that the Egyptians embalmed

their bodies? I thought of that when Uncle Alfred took us to the British Museum, and we saw the mummies wrapped round and round with strips of cloth. He told us that sometimes these bandages were a thousand yards long, and that they were believed to have some hidden meaning; but then the Egyptians embalmed cats and other animals, as well as people. Do you think they did believe in the resurrection, Aunt Edith?"

"We know a great deal, and yet very little, about the Egyptians, Charley," replied his aunt; "and there are many things connected with their religious rites so mysterious that we can but guess at their meaning. Still I will tell you a little about their treatment of the dead, that you may see how different the sad uncertainty of those who indeed sat in darkness and the shadow of death was from the sure and certain hope of the Christian, now that 'life and incorruptibility' have been brought to light by the Gospel."

"I know the Bible says that Moses was 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,'" said May, "but I should think they could not have been a very wise people, since they actually worshipped beetles. You remember, Charley, Uncle Alfred showed you a ring with a beetle cut upon it—a scarab, I think he called it—and he said they thought long ago that wearing such rings would protect them from all dangers."

"Oh, I remember; he said, 'That is a scarab, the sacred beetle of Egypt; some old Egyptian wore that ring long ago as a charm:' but while you were away looking at the birds, May, Uncle Alfred told me more about the scarab, and it is a wonderful insect. Do you know, he has often seen it making its curious nest in the soft mud upon the banks of the Nile. First it lays its eggs, then wraps them up in a ball of mud, rolling it quite round, and then the most wonderful thing happens; the beetle makes of its hind legs a sort of axis for this ball to turn upon, rolls it on and on to the desert, then digs a deep hole, buries itself, and lies there until at last a beautiful winged creature comes forth from the dark-looking chrysalis."

"Did your uncle tell you *why* it is supposed that the Egyptians reverenced this beetle?"

"No, Aunt Edith; he said he might tell me a great deal more when I was older, but he did say that the scarab, with its wings spread ready for flight, had been found upon some mummies. Don't you think the Egyptians must have had some hope of the mummy being changed one day, after lying long years, into a beautiful winged creature, as the chrysalis was?"

"Your uncle and I have had many a talk about this and other wonderful things, Charley, since he came home; and he thinks that Dr. Zincke, the writer of a very interesting book* which we have been reading, may not be wrong in believing that the Egyptians saw in this little creature, rolling along the sphere of earth which contained the germs of life, a symbol of creative power. He believes, too, that the gallery, a foot or more in depth, which this beetle excavates for itself gave the first hint of the wonderful excavated galleries in which the people of Egypt buried their dead, and that the appearance of the insect in its chrysalis state gave the first idea of the mummy, swathed about with its closely folding wrappings."

"I suppose no one will ever know whether this really was the case?" said Charley. "I should like, though, to know more of what really is known about the mummies. Uncle Alfred said many of them were four thousand years old; and he pointed to one which looked, if possible, older than the rest, and said, 'Perhaps that was once carried round at an Egyptian banquet, to remind the revellers that in the midst of life we are in death.' He told me something, too, about a curious old book, the 'Book of the Dead,' which, he said, had been found wrapped up with the mummies; do you know about that, Aunt Edith?"

"Before we speak of this strange book, which seems to have been

* "Egypt of the Pharaohs and of the Khedive."

buried with the dead man to be his guide during his passage amid many dangers to the unseen world, I must tell what an awful ceremony was performed before burial," said his aunt. "A mummy was sometimes kept in the house for a year, while feasts in honour of the dead were held, and the tomb was being prepared. We read of Joseph that they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt; and antique coffins of stone or sycamore wood are still seen in that country. But to be laid in a coffin was an honour only given to great men; most were simply embalmed and swathed, and laid side by side in the excavated galleries. At last the day came when the case containing the mummy was placed upon a bier and taken by sledge to the sacred lake, across which it was to be carried by a boatman named Charon, that it might be placed in a tomb on the further side. It was before crossing the lake that the strangely solemn scene of the judgment of the dead before forty-two judges took place. Before this tribunal anyone might bring an accusation, and from it even a Pharaoh was not exempt."

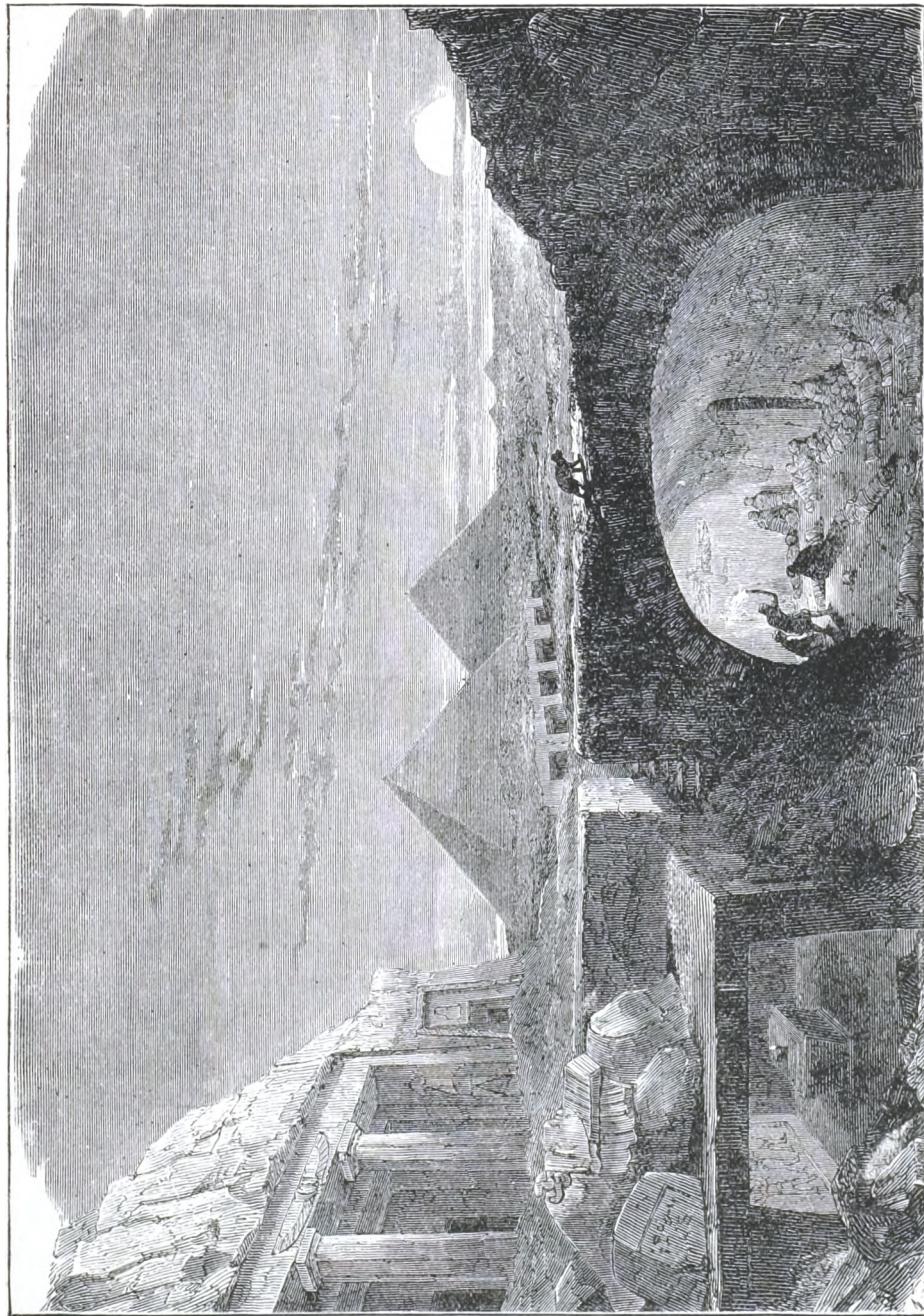
"And if the judges found the dead man guilty, what happened?"

"The number of years during which he was not allowed to be buried was measured by the greatness of his crimes; and it was believed that the spirit passed those years in terror and darkness, wandering from the body of one animal to that of another."

"But I suppose if he was not found guilty he was taken across the lake at once and buried, and his friends thought he was quite happy?" said May.

"They believed that he had been acquitted indeed at the bar of his fellow men, but that he must next appear in the hall of divine justice, which rewards and punishes; that in the unerring scales must be placed on the one side the figure of divine justice, in the other the soul of the mummy, while he himself stood by awaiting the dread sentence, and Osiris, Judge of the Dead, looked on."

"How dreadful it must have been for a man at the point of death to look forward to such a scene, Aunt Edith. But you have not told



MONUMENTS AND MUMMY PITS OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

us anything about the 'Book of the Dead,' which was buried with the mummies," said Charley.

"If we remember," replied his aunt, "that, as far as we know, there is no nation which does not believe that the soul lives on and on after it leaves the body, we shall not wonder that so many funeral rites show the anxiety of the survivors for the welfare of the departed spirit, and their wish to provide for its journey to the unseen world: so the North American Indian buries with his dead a kettle, a bow and arrows, a pair of mocassins, with a bit of deerskin for a patch in case of their wearing out; the Laplander supplies his dead friend with flint, steel, and tinder, that he may have light upon his way; the Greenlander when he buries one of his children lays a dog beside him as a guide, saying, 'A dog will find his way anywhere'; and the Egyptian laid within the swathing folds of the mummy a book, to instruct him how best to pass unharmed through all the dangers which would beset him before he reached the abode of light."

"Can you tell us anything more about the book?" asked May.

"It contained* sentences by which the accused might answer the charges brought against him at this terrible tribunal, as well as mystic words to be used as the mummy whose soul had been found true in the balance—for that, we are told, is the Egyptian expression for a justified man—passed through darkness, beset by snares and dangers on every hand, from one hall guarded by demons to another, until he reached the gate of the sun, and was admitted into the region of pure light, which was the dwelling of the sun-god. The book also contained hymns and prayers, to be repeated as the mummy was lowered into the tomb."

"They could not be hymns of rejoicing, like those which the friends of the martyrs sang, at those funerals under ground," said May; "that was a very dreadful sort of religion, Auntie."

"The voice of conscience, speaking in the heart, made these

* See "Egypt of the Pharaohs and of the Khedive," pp. 177-179.

proud and learned Egyptians feel, however little their knowledge of Him might be, that there was One higher than they were, Who took knowledge of all their ways, and to Whom they must surely give account. While they sought by their 'Book of the Dead' to furnish the soul, as it passed into the great darkness, with words to answer for itself, if by any means it might stand justified when weighed in the unswerving balance of divine justice, none of them by his wisdom could answer the question asked by Job, 'How shall *man* be just with *God*? ' The Christian, however poor and simple, knows that God is Himself the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus; and instead of looking in fear and dismay for a day when he must be weighed in the scale of eternal justice, he knows that he has been already weighed and found wanting, but that the judgment which he deserved has been fully borne by Another, and to every charge of guilt brought against him he can say, 'Thou hast answered, Lord, for me.'

"You said just now, Aunt Edith, that if we knew a little about the religion of the Egyptians we should see better how wonderful the true religion of the Bible is, and I have been thinking how much happier it was for the martyrs to die, even if they were torn to pieces by wild beasts, than for one of those poor people who did not know anything better than what their 'Book of Death' taught them. The martyrs knew that their names were in the Book of Life, and so it did not much matter what sort of death they died, for the pain would soon be over, and then the joy would never end."

"Yes, Charley; and we must remember, too, that the sting of death, even death in the most terrible form, was taken away by Christ, and that as the servants of Christ suffered for Him, 'faithful unto death,' He Himself stood by them in their hour of trial. I think it will interest you to hear," continued Aunt Edith, "how the writer from whose book I have been telling you so much describes his visit* to the

* See "Egypt of the Pharaohs and of the Khedive," pp. 126-131.

wonderful city of the dead at Thebes, where the tomb of the great Sethos, the Pharaoh of Joseph's time, has been discovered. It is cut deep into the side of a mountain, and along the sides of the passage leading to it are sculptures. The tomb was prepared during the lifetime of the great king, and the last chamber is unfinished, for he had died before the sculptures—the drawings for which may be seen sketched in red—were executed. You will be surprised when I tell you that the sarcophagus of this very Sethos is now in London. It is of alabaster, covered with beautiful sculptures."

"But what is that hard word, Auntie?" asked May; "doesn't it mean a tomb?"

"Sarcophagus was a kind of limestone, used by the Greeks for coffins, May,—so called because it was believed to have the property of consuming the body; now, any stone coffin is called a sarcophagus."

"But how wonderful that it should be here in England, after all these years! Who discovered it?"

"An Italian, Charley, named Belzoni, after the king's chamber had been hidden for more than four thousand years, entered it at last, and it has been robbed of its choicest treasure."

"Will you tell us what sort of sculptures there are upon those tombs at Thebes?" asked Charley.

"I will read you what Mr. Zincke says," replied his aunt, taking the book from the shelf and turning over the pages. "Yes, here is the place;" and she read—

"The sculptures in these tombs may be divided under three heads. First, there are those which describe events in the life of the occupant of the tomb. Then there are scenes from common daily Egyptian life, in which he took such interest as to desire to have representations of them on his tomb. Lastly, there are scenes which illustrate what was supposed would occur in the future life of the deceased.' The writer goes on," said Aunt Edith, "to describe the tomb of Rameses the Third, one of the warlike Pharaohs, with its many chambers, upon whose

walls, he says, are sculptured 'the king's kitchen, boots, armoury, musical instruments, the operations carried on upon his farms, the herds and fruits of Egypt, sacred emblems, funeral processions, a game, the trades and arts of life, such as weaving, pottery, glass-blowing.'

"Oh, Auntie, is it possible that all those trades were known thousands of years ago?" asked May.

"Yes, and many more," replied her aunt; "for another writer* tells us that 'every process of art and manufacture known in the year 1800 B.C. is shown upon the Egyptian monuments. There may be seen the fishmonger and poultreer; the cobbler and turner; the coachmaker, making the war chariot or the domestic car; the joiner, imitating the grain of other woods; workshops for gold and silver; the ring money then used for coin; the mason; the sculptor or statuary, with plummet, square, headstone, and trowel; the linendraper, tailor, and armourer.' The process of irrigation, too, is depicted, the wheel represented being the same as that now used at Babylon, as well as the planting and laying out of gardens; everything to do with corn, ploughing, sowing, reaping, treading out the grain, storing it in granaries, grinding it at the mills."

"Ah," said May, "I remember that the picture which you showed us of Egyptians reaping, was copied from an old tomb."

"The winepress is there, too," continued Aunt Edith, "and the wine bottles, which were large stone jars, rather like soda-water bottles in shape. The whole process of the manufacture of the famous fine linen of Egypt is clearly shown, as well as that of embalming and of painting mummy cases, &c."

"I wonder whether they had tools at all like ours?"

"When next you go to the British Museum, Charley, you must be sure to visit the Egyptian Room, and there you will see some of these ancient tools, and judge for yourself how far they were like our modern

* S. G. Wilkinson, "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians."

ones. But you must remember that *our* tools have changed very much ; the Egyptian distaff, spindle, and shuttle are said to be all just the same as those once in use in England. There is a hand-plough, too, to be seen there—you would think it more like a spade—the very implement with which the foreign bondmen in the pictures are represented



AMPULLA FROM CATACOMBS.

digging clay for bricks, while their companions are shown making the bricks, and counting them out to the Egyptian taskmaster, who is seated, with a goad in his hand, watching all the operations."

"Ah, I daresay the poor Israelites often felt the goads of those taskmasters if they did not give the full tale of bricks!"

"You will be interested to hear, Charley, that some bricks, too, have been discovered, mixed with straw and cemented with pitch, having sometimes the maker's name upon them, sometimes the signet of the Pharaoh of the time."

"I should like to know what was done in Pharaoh's kitchen thousands of years ago," said May.

"Then you would like, I am sure," said her aunt, "to have been present when an illustration of an Egyptian kitchen of four thousand years ago was brought to light. The chief baker is there, looking on while his subordinates work the dough with their feet. The loaves were in the shape of triangles, squares, or circles, and had hieroglyphics upon them showing that they were made of barley, wheat, or millet. Bowls, cups, knives, spoons, saucepans—all these are to be seen in the new Egyptian Room at the British Museum, so look out for them carefully when next you have an opportunity of going there."

"You may be sure we shall!" cried both the children.

"I understand now, Aunt Edith," added Charley, "why you said we knew so much, and yet so little, about those old Egyptians."

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CHAPTER VIII.

TOMBS AND BURIAL CUSTOMS.

(Continued.)

HE next day Aunt Edith told Charley and May that she would like to have a little more talk with them about the funeral customs of the East; and she asked them whether they could remember the first mention in the Bible of a sepulchre and a burial.

"I know that Abel's was the first death we read of," said May, "but there is nothing said about where he or Adam or Eve were buried—is there?"

"You are right, May," replied her aunt; "there is no mention of a funeral, nor any means by which we can know what the treatment of the dead was before the Flood—not until the time of Abraham."

"Oh, now I know," said Charley, quickly; "the first funeral mentioned is the funeral of Sarah."

"We will find the account of it," said his aunt, turning to the twenty-third chapter of Genesis. "You remember, May," she continued, "that when Sarah died Abraham was a stranger in a strange land; he had 'no inheritance there, not so much as to set his foot on,' but yet he had the pledge of the sure word of God that the land should belong to him, and that his children should have it for a possession. He showed his faith in God's promise, and also how

entirely he had left the land of his fathers behind by his anxiety to secure possession, even at a costly price, of a spot in that land of promise, which might be his own by right of purchase, and where he might bury his dead out of his sight."

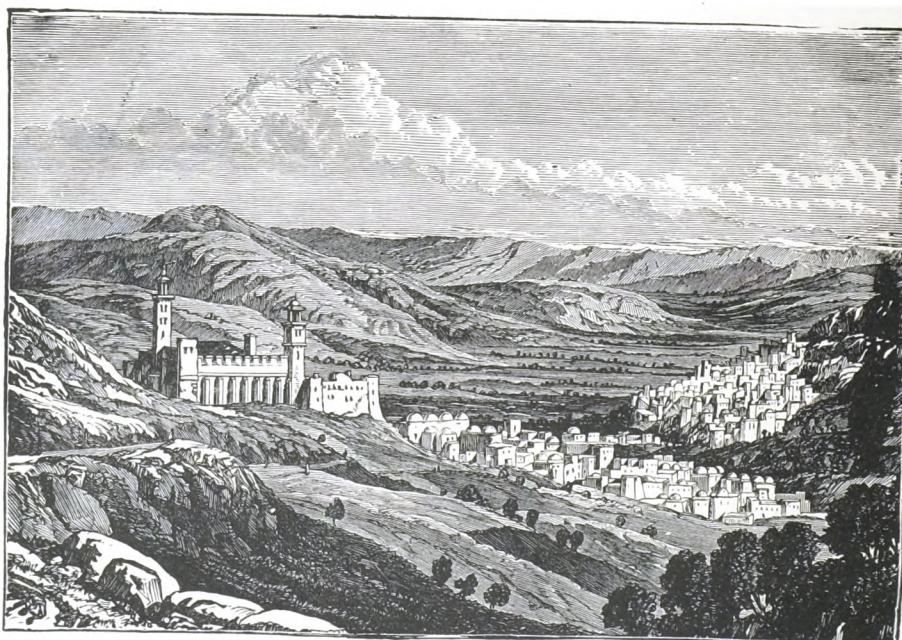
"He need not have paid anything," said Charley, "for the men of the country asked him to bury his dead in the choicest of their sepulchres. But who were the sons of Heth, Aunt Edith?"

"They were a family of the race of Ham, the ancestors of the Hittites, one of the seven nations in the Land of Canaan who were afterwards destroyed. Abraham, who had been called out from his own country and kindred by God, could not join himself to the idolatrous people of Canaan, and he refused the offer of the children of Heth, and would only take the cave of Machpelah at the price which Ephron asked for it. This cave, with the 'parcel of ground' which Jacob bought at Shechem, where Joseph's bones were laid, was the only bit of the promised land held by Abraham's descendants before it was conquered in the time of Joshua. Will you read a few verses, Charley, from verse 17 to the end of the chapter," continued his aunt, "that we may know what Abraham's possession was?"

"And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, the same is Hebron in the Land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth."

"Was that the same Hebron where David afterwards was made king? And is that cave there now?" asked May, when Charley had finished reading.

"The place is the same," replied her aunt; "and a very interesting spot it is. We are told in the Book of Numbers that it was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt, and it must have been a well-known place when Abraham came into the Land of Canaan nearly four thousand years ago."



HEBRON.

"It was called Kirjath-arba at that time," said Charley, "for it says, 'Sarah died in Kirjath-arba, the same is Hebron.' But I think it is called Hebron upon the map. Yes, here it is, not so very far south of Jerusalem :" and he pointed to the little map of Palestine in his Bible.

"It took its old name, 'City of Arba,' Charley, from Arba, the father of Anak, of the race of the giants."

“Oh, I remember,” said Charley, quickly, “how Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak.”

“You may remember, too,” continued his aunt, “that when the land was being portioned out among the tribes the city of ‘Arba, which is Hebron,’ was given to the Kohathites, of the family of Aaron.”

“I do not remember that, Aunt Edith, but I know that Hebron was one of the cities of refuge,” said Charley.

“I think,” said Aunt Edith, while she turned over a portfolio of drawings, “that you will like to hear the modern name of Hebron; the Mahomedans call Abraham El-Khulil, ‘the Friend,’ and the town is called by this name.”

“How wonderful,” exclaimed May, “it does seem, Auntie—as if they must have learned in some way that Abraham really was called ‘Friend of God’! Oh, is that a picture of Hebron? What is that building with a high wall all around it?”

“It is the mosque which has been built over the cave of Machpelah, above the very spot where not only Sarah, but Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob are buried.”

“Oh, yes, Jacob was buried there too, for though he died in Egypt his body was embalmed and carried to Canaan,” said Charley. “But is it certain, Aunt Edith, that that mosque covers the very cave? Has anyone explored it?”

“So carefully and jealously is it guarded by the Mahomedans,” replied his aunt, “that it is quite impossible for any traveller to explore the cave itself. He may enter the enclosure where the sepulchres of the patriarchs, as they are called, are shown, covered with beautiful silken veils, but the cave beneath the floor, where their true sepulchres are believed to be, has never been entered by any European. An Italian named Pierotti was allowed to go with the Pasha and look in at the iron grating which closes the entrance, and he saw a deep cavern; but when the Prince of Wales asked permission to explore it, he was not allowed to see even so far.”

"Well, God knows where Abraham's body is," said May; "the Mahomedans cannot hide it from Him; after having been buried out of sight for such thousands of years, when the resurrection day comes and Christ calls, it will be raised in glory. It does seem such a wonderful thing to think of, Aunt Edith; if there were no resurrection, we couldn't bear to speak of death or of the grave at all."

"It is indeed a wonderful thing, my child. You remind me of a beautiful thought which I met with the other day. After speaking of the way in which Christ has 'abolished death' for those who are His, making the very king of terrors himself but the messenger sent by the Lord of Life to lead them 'through the tomb where he hath no power to hold him,' as through an open portal, 'to the glory of the never fading day,' the writer adds—'Even as of old the captives were compelled to tell out the great deeds of their conquerors, so should this vanquished and stingless death for ever proclaim aloud the victory of the resurrection.' You remember," she continued, "how the patriarchs are spoken of in the eleventh of Hebrews?"

"It says, 'These all died in faith,'" said Charley; "and it says, too, that Abraham 'looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. I was thinking, Aunt Edith, of Rachel's sepulchre. She was not buried in the cave at Hebron, for she died just as Jacob was coming to Bethlehem, and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave. Is there any pillar to be seen now?'"

"A building called 'Rachel's Sepulchre' is shown, Charley, but no one believes it to be the true tomb."

"That must have been a grand procession," said May, who had been turning over the leaves of her Bible for some time, "when Jacob's body was carried back to Canaan. I have found all about it in the last chapter of Genesis."

"Do read it aloud, dear," said Aunt Edith.

Little May read several verses. "'Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of

his house, and all the elders of the Land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan. And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: for his sons carried him into the Land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.' You see," said she, as she finished reading, "the very place was called 'Mourning of the Egyptians'; for the margin says that is the meaning of that long name; and yet before they started on the journey they had mourned for Jacob threescore and ten days."

"Herodotus, the great Greek historian, tells us," said her aunt, "that the usual time of mourning was while the body remained with the embalmers, seventy days, and so long did the Egyptians mourn for Jacob: then, when the journey was nearly ended, came the 'very grievous mourning' and sore lamentation, lasting for a week, which so much impressed the people of the land 'beyond Jordan.' I suppose we, who try to hide our grief rather than to make a show of it, can have little idea of the way in which Eastern nations mourn in public, as they beat their breasts, screaming, weeping aloud, and uttering wild songs of lamentation."

"I should not like to have heard that great cry in the Land of Egypt," said May, "on the night when they rose up and found that the first-born was dead in every house; it must have been a dreadful sound."

"Dreadful, indeed," replied her aunt. "We may, perhaps, form

some idea of the wail which sounded from house to house upon that terrible night of judgment from an account given by Lane, in his 'Modern Egyptians,' of the lamenting over the dead which takes place at the present day. 'After death,' he says, 'the women of the family raise cries of lamentation, uttering the most piercing shrieks and calling upon the name of the deceased, "O, my master! O, my resource! O, my misfortune! O, my glory!" All the women of the neighbourhood come to join, and two or more public wailing women are hired, who beat their tambourines, exclaiming, "Alas for him!" and all the relatives, servants, and friends sometimes, with their clothes rent, beat their breasts and cry in like manner, "Alas for him!"' I remember, too," she continued, "once reading that a traveller in Ispahan was much startled by hearing a sudden and terrible cry. Running out quickly to see what could be the matter, he found that a woman had died in the house next to him. The cry continued a long time, then ceased as suddenly as it had begun, but only to begin again next morning at daybreak. Many voices joined in concert, and this wailing went on for four days, growing less by degrees."

"I daresay the 'minstrels and people making a noise' were crying aloud, like that in Jairus's house, when the Lord turned them all out of the room where the little girl was lying dead," said May. "It would have frightened her very much, I should think, to see such people when she came back to life; but as it was, she only saw Jesus, and Peter, and James, and John, and her own father and mother."

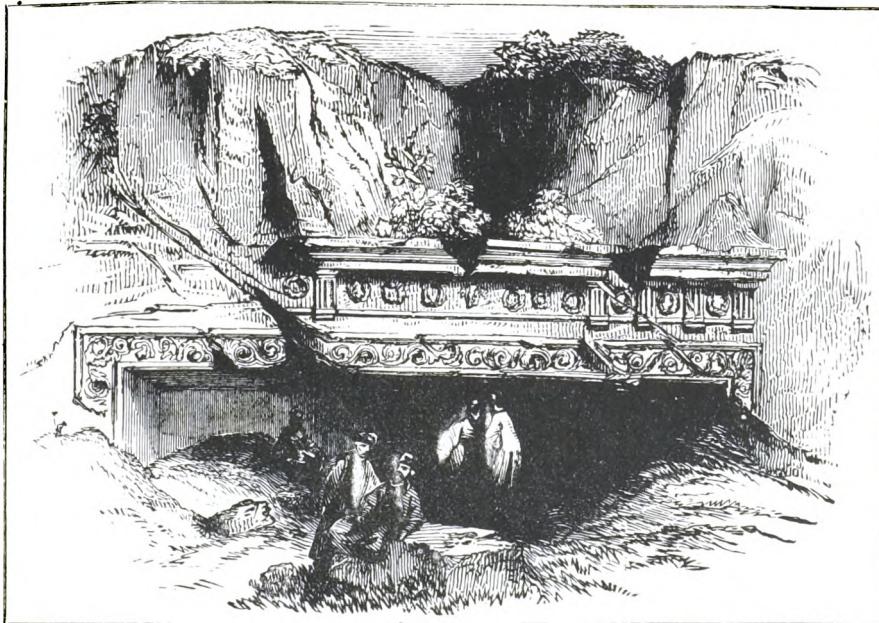
"The minstrels were, no doubt, hired mourners, May—women whose business it was to lament over the dead, and who were all ready to begin their funeral music, and cry, 'Alas for her!'"

"I know that one way of showing sorrow was by wearing sack-cloth," said Charley; "even the kings did that; the king of Nineveh covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes, and said 'Let man and beast be clothed' with sackcloth."

"Yes," added May; "and King Ahab, when he repented at the

words of Elijah, lay in sackcloth. It says he 'went softly,' too, Auntie ; what does that mean ? "

" It was a slow and solemn manner of walking, expressive of sorrowful humiliation ; sorrow for the dead almost always showed itself publicly : we find Jeremiah lamenting for Josiah, and all the singing



TOMBS OF THE KINGS.

men and singing women speaking of the king in their lamentations ; and you remember David's beautiful lament over Saul and Jonathan."

" I don't remember anything in the Bible," said Charley, " about carvings or paintings upon tombs ; and yet I suppose the tombs in Palestine *were* ornamented, for I have seen a beautiful photograph of one called 'Tombs of the Kings,' and that was carved with bunches of grapes. I thought the kings of Judah might have been buried there, or, perhaps, the kings of Israel."

" It is indeed a beautiful monument, though much defaced by

time; but it is quite certain, from its very ornamentation, that it is of much later date than the time of the kings. It is believed that all the architectural tombs near Jerusalem belong to the time when Judea was in the power of the Romans. This monument is often called the Tombs of Herod."

"Then where were the kings buried, Aunt Edith?"

"The kings of Judah were buried 'with their fathers in the city of David,' but we are expressly told of some who had done evil in the sight of the Lord that they were not allowed to come into the sepulchres of the kings. If you look carefully, you will find that the feeling of the people about wicked and oppressive monarchs found its expression in the place of burial assigned to them; of Jehoram we are told not only that he was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings, but that 'his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers,' which shows us that the eastern custom of burning spices and perfumes at royal funerals was practised by the Jews, who, perhaps, learned it from the Egyptians. Of King Asa, on the contrary, we read that they laid him in the bed (or bier), which was filled with sweet odours, and they made a very great burning for him."

"But you have not told us yet, Aunt Edith," said Charley, "whether these sepulchres of the kings can be seen now, nor where the kings of Israel were buried."

"It is believed," replied his aunt, "that the sepulchre of the eleven kings and the good priest Jehoiada was on Zion, close to the Temple, but no traces of it are to be found, which is not wonderful when we remember how that place has been altered by Romans, Christians, and Moslems. The apostle Peter could point to David's sepulchre, as well-known in his day, but the whole face of the country has been changed since then. With regard to your other question, Charley," she continued, "we read that several of the kings of Israel were buried in Samaria, their capital city, but I am not aware that any trace of their place of burial has been found."

“Then are there no really old tombs remaining in Palestine?” asked May.

“The most ancient,” replied Aunt Edith, “have been rebuilt and altered to such a degree that it is difficult to come to any definite conclusion as to their age. Scattered about in the Valley of Jehoshaphat are numbers of tombs, cut in the flat rock and covered by oblong slabs



TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS.

of stone, which may be very ancient; there are many such upon Mount Hor, near the spot pointed out as the burial-place of Aaron; but the common tombs at Jerusalem are so like these that no date can be fixed. The most remarkable remains of the more costly kind of sepulchre, containing excavated chambers approached by galleries, are those on

the Mount of Olives, called the 'Tombs of the Prophets,' which are thought by many to have been built in the time of the kings, and possibly to have been some of the royal sepulchres."

"Are the Jews buried now in sepulchres cut in the rock like that new tomb in the garden in which they laid the Lord?" asked May.

"I believe not," replied her aunt; "but I know that the people long clung to their old cemeteries in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and that after they were scattered it was the great desire of all Jews to be buried in the land which had been their own. 'He who rests in Palestine,' they used to say, 'is as if he were buried under the altar.' I have heard that they call their burial-place Beth-Hachaim, or House of the Living."

"I think that is a beautiful name," said Charley. "It reminds me of how Jesus once said, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him.' I should like to know," he continued, "the meaning of the words, 'as the manner of the Jews is to bury.'"

"They allude to the custom of wrapping around the body folds of linen covered with thick layers of spices and ointments," said Aunt Edith. "You know the first part of the verse you quoted is, 'Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices.'"

"Oh, yes," he replied, "I might have known what it meant if I had only thought of the whole verse."

"You remember, Charley," said May, "that hymn which begins—

'Sweet spices they brought on their star-lighted way,
And came to the tomb at the dawning of day.'

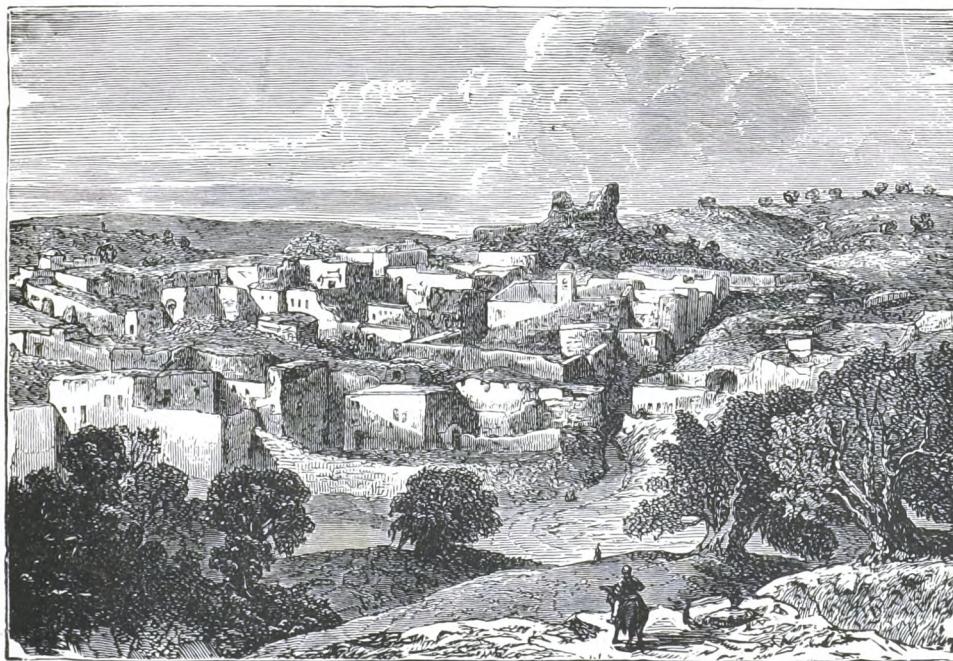
That was when the women came to the sepulchre very early, and found the great stone rolled away."

"I have heard," said Aunt Edith, "that the words 'rolled away' may be translated 'taken or lifted out.' It is true that the rock-hewn tombs were sometimes closed by stone doors, which could be rolled

along a ledge to the opening into which they were fitted ; but this was a very difficult sort of stone door to arrange, and very seldom used."

"It says in the chapter about the raising of Lazarus, that his grave was a 'cave, and a stone lay upon it,' " said Charley.

"Yes, the slab closing the end of his rock-cut grave lay upon or against it, until the Lord said, 'Take ye away the stone' ; and at His



BETHANY.

mighty 'Lazarus, come forth,' the dead man, clothed in the wrappings of the grave, left his rocky bed, and came forth into the light of day."

"How happy poor Martha and Mary must have been when they had Lazarus at home with them again," said May ; "there was no need for any people to come then to 'comfort them concerning their brother.' But what sort of place is Bethany now, Aunt Edith ?"

"It is only a poor Arab village, May, upon the road to Jericho. The Arabs call it El Azirezeh, in memory of Lazarus; and they pretend to show his house and his tomb; but the tomb is a sort of cellar in the middle of the village, and not at all like the ancient sepulchres."

"When the Jews saw Mary rise up quickly and go out, they said, 'She goeth to the grave to weep there,'" said Charley.

"It is no wonder," replied his aunt, "that they thought so, for it was, and still is, the custom for women to visit the grave three days after the funeral; they sometimes carry with them a palm-branch, which they break in pieces and leave upon it, or they strew flowers there."

"I have just thought, Aunt Edith," said Charley, eagerly, "that the man who had his dwelling among the tombs, and was so wild and terrible that no one dared to pass that way, must have lived in some old excavated sepulchres."

"It is very likely indeed, Charley, and seems more probable still when we remember that there are many such sepulchres in the country beyond the Lake of Tiberias, near where Gadara once stood, and also that as the strict Jews avoided a sepulchre as unclean, the poor man might make his dwelling there without fear of being molested. It is said that the little buildings which it was thought a mark of pious reverence to place over the graves of holy men, are still the refuge of poor sufferers who have lost their reason. Warburton tells us that he found in a Moslem cemetery a naked maniac, 'exceeding fierce,' fighting with a dog for a bone."

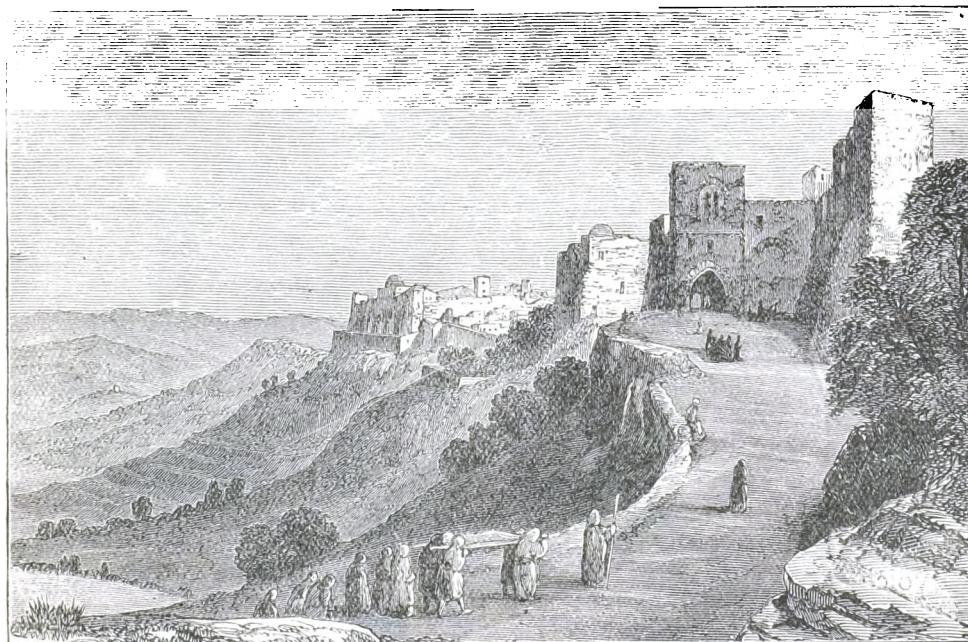
"How dreadful," exclaimed May; "certainly travellers see very sad sights sometimes, as they go on their travels."

"There is one thing I should like to tell you of before you say good-night, my little May," said her aunt, "and that is the custom among the Jews of writing upon the head of those who had died, Le-hovah, 'I am the Lord's'—this was their way of expressing the desire that ~~the~~ person might be among those who are *written unto life*."

"Thank you, Auntie,—that *is* very interesting to hear; but I hope

before I go to bed you will tell me one thing more. Is there such a place as Nain, where the 'widowed mother who lost her son' used to live, now?"

"It is only mentioned once in the Bible, May, but seems to have been recognised as a well-known place by the Crusaders.



BETHLEHEM AND FUNERAL PROCESSION.

"The Bible Dictionary says, 'The site of the village is certainly known, and there can be no doubt as to the approach by which our Saviour was coming when He met the funeral; the entrance must probably always have been up the steep ascent from the plain, and here on the west side of the village the rock is full of sepulchral caves.' Here is a picture of a funeral procession winding up the road leading to Bethlehem."

"What a number of people there are!" said May. "I wonder whether any of them are screaming, and if there is any funeral music playing?"

"I will read you the account which Miss Rogers, the lady who has told us so much about the customs in Palestine at the present day, gives of a Moslem funeral.*

"She says,—'One morning, very early, I looked from the window and saw a bier close to the door of a neighbouring house. It was a painted wooden stand, two strong poles projected at each end from the corners, and above it a canopy was raised, made of freshly gathered elastic palm branches: they were bent like half hoops, and then interlaced and secured lengthways, with straight fronds. I sketched it, and presently I saw the dead body of a man, handsomely dressed, brought out and placed upon it; his face was covered with a shawl. Four men lifted the bier from the ground, and resting the poles on their shoulders, bore it to the mosque. After a little while it was carried slowly along on its way to the Moslem burial ground, preceded by about forty men, solemnly silent, and followed by at least fifty women and children, shrieking wildly, singing, and screaming.'

"Between the palm fronds I could plainly see the figure of the dead man; the head was foremost: and I could not help thinking that if a voice endued with power to awaken the dead would tell the mother and the widow not to weep, and order the bearers of the bier to stand still, and say to the dead man, "*Arise*," it would be in his fête-day dress. that he would sit up under the canopy of palms, and begin to speak.'

"This, you must remember," said Aunt Edith, as she laid down the book, "is a description of a Moslem funeral; but as a funeral in Galilee in the time of our Lord passed along, there would probably have been a procession very like this; the hired mourners following the open bier upon which the body lay, uttering their wild lament,

* "Domestic Life in Palestine," p. 144.

while trumpets and flutes, tambourines and timbrels, made the funeral music, and those who met the procession often turned out of their way and joined it—for to show respect for the dead was counted an act of piety."

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CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT THE TABERNACLE;

OR, HOW GOD DWELT WITH HIS PEOPLE IN THE DESERT

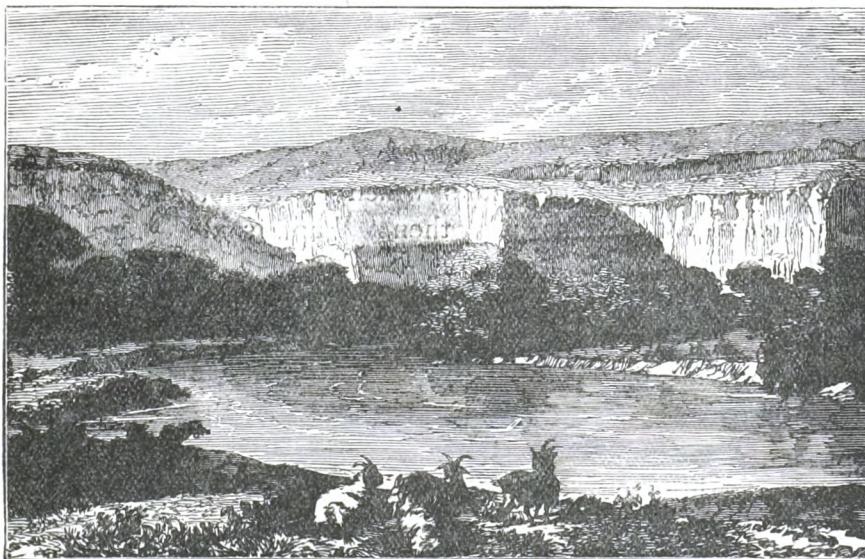
EWISH you had been with us yesterday, Aunt Edith," said Charley; "we had such a nice talk with a friend of papa's, who has just come from Syria. He told us ever so many stories about the country and the people. Just think, he met with robbers and with men almost as wild as wild beasts in his journeys along the banks of the Jordan; and he has lived quite a long time in the very places of which we read in the Bible. I do wish you had heard him, for I can never tell you half he said."

"I am sure I should have enjoyed hearing the stories, Charley; and I should like, too, to have seen your papa's friend, for I have heard of him as one who has suffered many hardships, leaving country, and friends, and home-pleasures and comforts behind, that he might be the means of bringing the word of God to many who, though they live in Bible lands, are still in darkness and the shadow of death."

"Then he must be a missionary," said May, "like that friend of yours who told the poor women of Galilee the 'story of Jesus.' You remember, don't you?"

"Yes, May; this gentleman, who was so good to you, is a missionary, and has spent many a long year travelling about the most

unfrequented parts of Palestine and Egypt, sometimes speaking the Name which is above every name to ears which had never heard it, leaving here and there in lonely places an Arabic gospel, or a little book which should tell, when he was far away, the story of Jesus and His love; quietly, day by day, bearing poverty, and loneliness, and toil for the sake of Him who said, 'If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be: if any man serve



BANKS OF THE JORDAN.

Me, him will My Father honour.' I believe this servant of Christ has suffered many things in His service, but we need not be sorry for him; no one ever yet was unhappy while suffering for Christ's sake."

"I am glad to think of that, Auntie," said May; "but I did not know this missionary had suffered such hardships and dangers; he only told us of pleasant things, of the blue sky without a cloud, and of

the lovely flowers, and how he had bathed in the Dead Sea and in the River Jordan."

"Oh, and he showed us beautiful pictures, too, which he had drawn—pictures of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and of the Mount of Olives," said Charley.

"I liked best of all that one where some Jews were crying over the stones of their Temple; a few stones—such large ones they looked in the picture—are built into an old wall, and there the poor Jews stood, pressing their faces close to them, and praying that God would soon build their city and temple again."

"And Jerusalem *will* be a beautiful happy city one day—'the joy of the whole earth,' papa said—and then God's temple will be there," said Charley. "But, Aunt Edith," he added, thoughtfully, "a great deal was said about this which I did not understand, and I could not ask questions just then. Papa said it pleased God to dwell with men, and he spoke of God having chosen a place on this earth to dwell in, and of how wonderful it was to think of such a thing. I thought when he spoke of the 'sanctuary of God' he must mean the temple, but May says he was speaking of the tabernacle. You know we saw a model of it not long ago."

"I should like to make this, if I can, plainer to you, Charley. A little while ago, you remember, we were speaking of houses; now we will have a little talk about the place in which God was pleased to dwell in the midst of His people."

"Where shall we begin?" said Charley; "I suppose I had better find about King Solomon's reign, for he built the temple?"

"You are right; Charley, the Temple was indeed that 'exceeding magnifical' house which God allowed Solomon to build for Him. But just now I want you to go farther back in the history of God's ancient people, that we may see where the wonderful fact of His being pleased to dwell in the midst of His redeemed ones is first recorded. You

remember, do you not, that when the Israelites stood upon the shore of the Red Sea, in their first joy and thankfulness for the great deliverance God had wrought for them, they sang a song of triumph and victory?"



EGYPTIAN CHARIOTS.

"Oh, yes, Aunt Edith, I know where that song is—in the fifteenth of Exodus;" and Charley found the place and read the first two verses: "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God,

and I will prepare Him an habitation ; my father's God, and I will exalt Him."

"Now will you, May," said her aunt, "find the last chapter but one in the Bible, and read the third verse ?"

"Here it is, Auntie," said May ; and she read the beautiful words written by the aged apostle John in the Isle of Patmos : "'I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.'"

"I asked you to read these verses, dear children," said their aunt, "that you might see that as soon as God had a redeemed people upon this earth, He put into their hearts the desire to prepare a dwelling-place, that they might have their God ever with them, and then graciously answered the desire He had Himself given, by saying to Moses, 'Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them' ; and that, at the very end of God's book, there is the same thought still, for there we read, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.'"

"I remember, when I was learning the eighth chapter of Proverbs to say to you, Aunt Edith, you told me that it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who says there, 'My delights were with the sons of men.'"

"I am glad you remember so well, Charley ; by-and-bye I hope you will be able to trace all through the book of God the thought, wonderful beyond all our comprehension, of His being pleased to make Himself known, not only as a God of power, but as a God of love,—even taking up His abode with His redeemed people in the wilderness, where the bright cloud which rested upon the tabernacle gave token of His presence amongst them."

"But you do not mean that God first came to dwell on earth when the tabernacle was set up, do you ?" asked May. "There was something like that said at the lecture we heard, but I thought God dwelt with Adam and Eve long ago, before they had sinned ?"

"It is true that Adam and Eve in Eden heard the voice of God

walking in the garden, but then God could not dwell with His creatures, who, because of their sin, became afraid of Him, and hid from Him. Abraham was called the friend of God, but it was not to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob that God spoke of making Him a sanctuary that He might dwell among them, but to those people whom He had rescued from the cruel bondage of Egypt—those people upon whose doors the blood of the paschal lamb had been sprinkled, who were emphatically called 'the redeemed of Jehovah.'

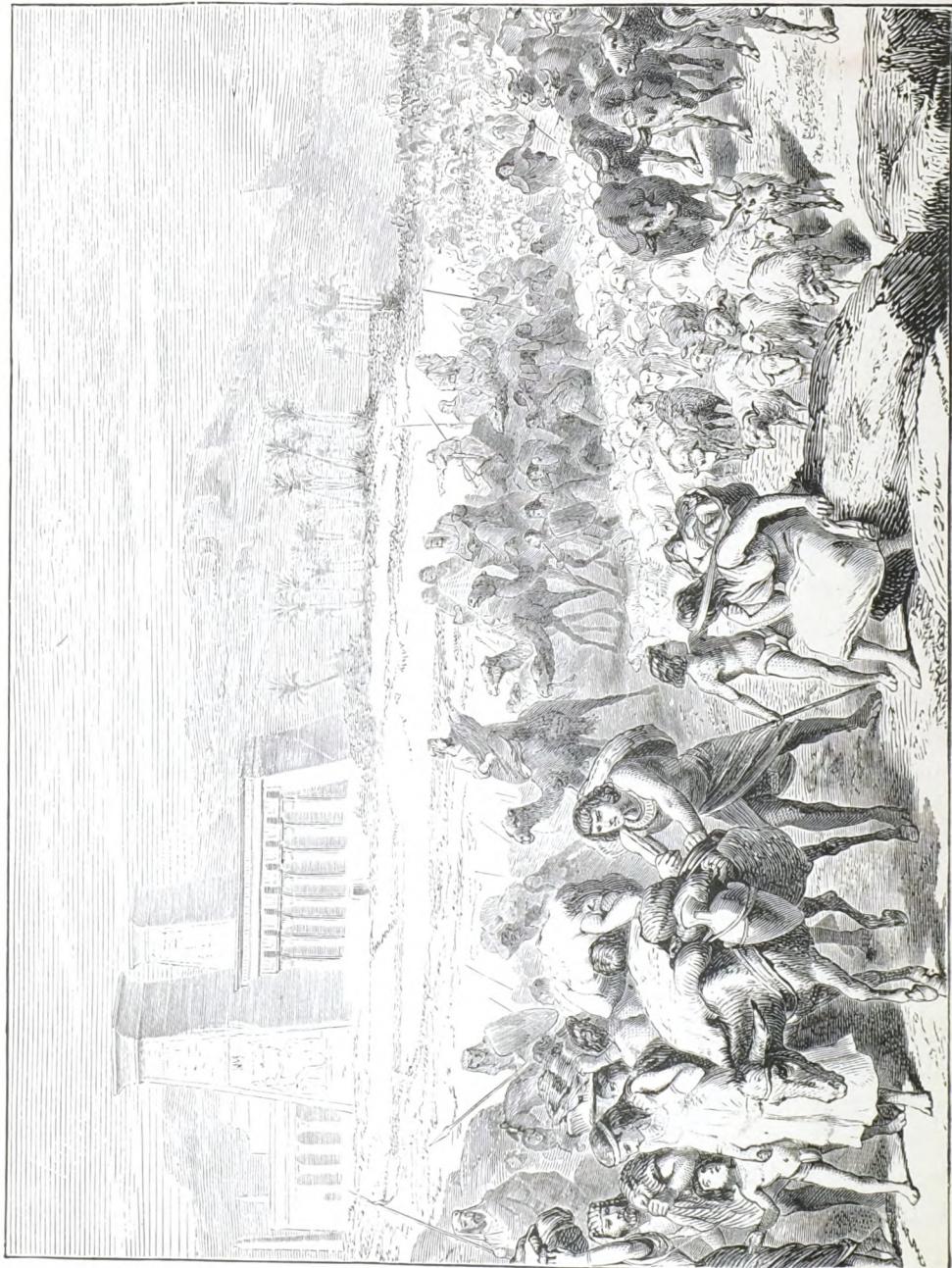
"I know that when the Israelites had killed those lambs, and put the blood outside their houses, they were perfectly safe, and, although the destroying angel was going all through the land of Egypt smiting the first-born in every house, *they* were saved from death by the blood of the passover lambs. But is that why you call them a 'redeemed people'?"

"They were a blood-bought people, Charley, belonging to God, His own redeemed possession. God had said, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you.' We know from the New Testament, which so wonderfully explains to us what is taught in types and figures in the Old, that the blood of a lamb could not really avail to take away sin, but that all the sacrifices, from the first lamb which Abel offered to God, pointed to the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot,' who 'was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world,' the Lamb of God whose blood cleanseth from all sin. You know why Abel brought a lamb as his offering to God, do you not, May?"

"It was because Abel believed what God had told him."

"Yes, we are told in that chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews which speaks of so many who believed God, that it was by faith that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; and that God had respect unto Abel and to his offering."

"Cain did not bring anything to die instead of himself, so his sacrifice could not be accepted," said Charley. "It was a long time before I understood about the Passover," he added, "and why the



THE EXODUS.

people had to put the blood of the lamb outside their houses ; but now I know that the blood on the doors showed that a life had been given instead of the lives of the people inside ; a lamb sacrificed for them so that *their* lives should not be taken."

"If you understand that it was only because of the sacrifice of the lamb, accepted by God in his stead, that any Israelite could be saved from the destruction which was all around, you will see plainly that it was because they were His redeemed people that God said, 'I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.'"

"I suppose when the Israelites saw the cloud on the tabernacle they knew that God had accepted the sacrifices which they had offered, for you said the cloud was the sign of His presence with them."

"Yes, Charley ; that beautiful shekinah, or glory-cloud, which rested on the tabernacle, and afterwards filled the house which Solomon had built, was the sign of the presence of God among His people until the sad day came when the glory departed, driven away by the sin of the chosen nation, as we read in the prophecy of Ezekiel."

"Then did the beautiful cloud never come back ?"

"The glory-cloud did shine again upon this earth, May, but there were few who saw it, or knew that the blessed Babe who was born in Bethlehem, whose coming was announced by the heavenly host in the words, 'on earth, peace, goodwill toward men,' was the One in whom every type and shadow was fulfilled, Emmanuel, *God with us*. I think you can repeat a verse from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel which speaks of this."

"I cannot remember any," said May, "though I know when some of the disciples were with Jesus on the mountain, when He was transfigured, and Moses and Elias were talking with Him, a bright cloud overshadowed them ;—that must have been the glory-cloud."

"Is this the verse, Aunt Edith ?" said Charley—"The Word was

made flesh and dwelt among us ; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'"

"That is the very verse I was thinking of, Charley. It is interesting to remember that the word translated 'dwelt' contains the idea of taking up one's abode, as in a tent."

"Oh, I see what you mean, Aunt Edith. And now, will you tell us a little about the tabernacle being set up, and of the time when the children of Israel were going through the wilderness ?"

"I should like that, too," said May, "for you know, Auntie, we heard at the lecture all about the way in which the tabernacle was made, and we saw a beautiful little model of it, and of all the golden things which were inside. There was the court all round, and the brazen altar, and the laver, and the most holy place where the ark used to be ; and we were even allowed to come quite close and see where the sacrifices were offered, and look at the tablets of stone which were inside the ark, and feel the coverings of skin and goats' hair and the beautiful embroidered veil ; and we were told the meaning of all these things so plainly that we could not help understanding. Do you think the Israelites understood the meaning of the tabernacle, and the altar, and the ark, and the candlestick ?"

"We cannot tell how much they understood. Many things are plain to us, now that the clear light of the New Testament shines upon the Old, which must have been dark and mysterious to them. Still I think the sight of the tabernacle, where the glory of Jehovah was seen to enter and abide, and where the cloud by day and the fire by night gave token of the presence of God ever with them—the God who guided them through the desert, the God who gave them bread from heaven, the God who 'clave the rock and the waters gushed out,' running in dry places like a river—must have spoken wonderful things, even to the heart of a child, concerning the loving kindness of Jehovah, and the rest and security of being thus cared for by Him."

"I should think the children must have been afraid to do an

unkind thing or say a naughty word, when they could see by the cloud by day and the fire by night that God was so near."

"I am sure, dear children, the thought that everything we do and



"HE CLAVE THE ROCK, AND THE WATERS GUSHED OUT."

say is said and done in the presence of the Holy Lord God should be enough to keep us, as well as those who actually saw the sign of His presence, 'in the fear of the Lord all the day long.' Surely there was much that even the youngest child could learn from the fact that Jehovah had thus taken up His abode in the midst of His people; but no child of those days could understand that the skin-covered tent over which the cloud brooded, the beautiful embroidered veil, the holy vessels, all spoke of the perfection and beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, just as clearly as the never-ceasing sacrifices told of Him who was to offer Himself without spot to God, and having offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sit down at His right hand."

"I was thinking how much I should have liked to have lived long ago and seen the real tabernacle, and the real curtain, and all the beautiful things," said May; "but it is better to understand what they meant, even if we can only see little models of them, because they were only types, and their meaning was much more beautiful than they were."

"It is well for us to read of these types and shadows," replied her aunt, "and to take heed to all which those who have been taught by God may have to say to us about them; but we must not be too ready to think we understand their meaning. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the tabernacle and all its 'furniture' is spoken of, and we are told that all those things were 'patterns of things in the heavens.' It has been well said that God, Who gave the patterns, alone can teach any of us the deep meaning which lay hidden in them."

"I suppose," said Charley, "the Israelites must have quite understood all about the sacrifices, for they could remember how they were saved from the destroying angel, which killed the first-born of the Egyptians, because they had the blood of the passover lambs upon their doors."

"But still it is much better for us, is it not, Auntie?" said May; "for we know that Jesus, the Lamb of God, has died, and that He has

finished His work *for ever*. Last night we heard a sermon on the text which says, 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ;' and the preacher said that, although so many goats, and lambs, and bulls had been sacrificed in old times, God never told us about '*precious* blood' till His own Son had given Himself for our sins."

"The tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows in very clear contrast the great difference between those sacrifices in which there was a 'remembrance again of sins every year,' and the one offering by which Christ has 'perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' Yes, May, we may well say that God provided 'some better thing' for us; it has been said that 'better' is the motto to this epistle which brings into such strong contrast the shadows of heavenly things and the heavenly things themselves."

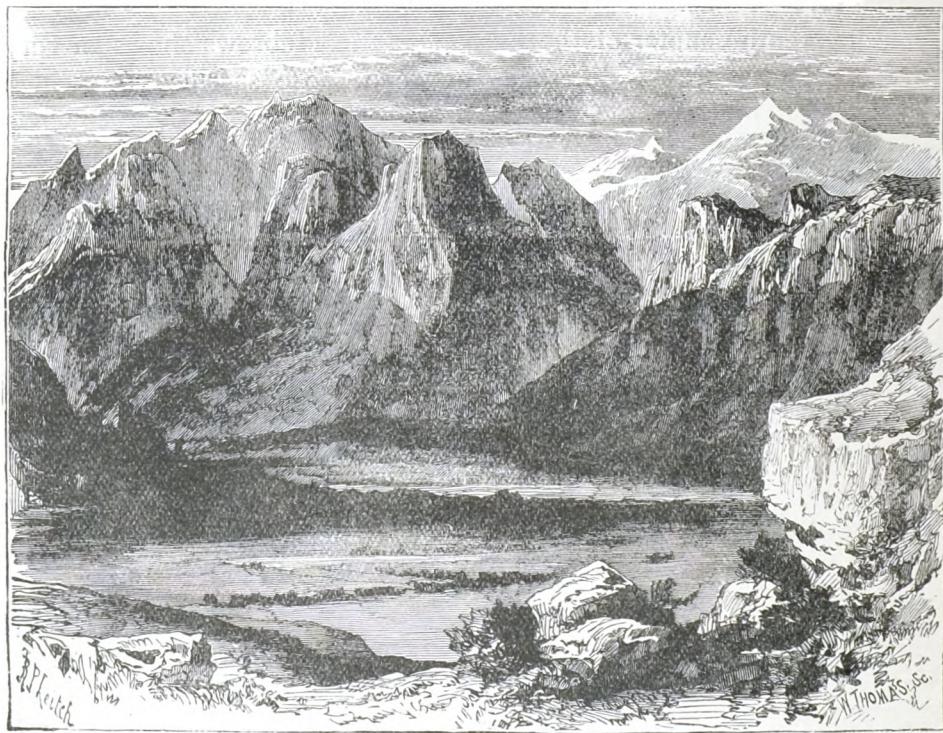
"I don't wonder, since the tabernacle and the beautiful things for the service of God meant so much, that God not only gave Moses the patterns, but chose the workmen to make them," said Charley, thoughtfully.

"No man, however gifted, could be a judge of what was fitting for the house of God. To Moses it was said of these sacred things, 'Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount'; and though Bezaleel and Aholiab may have been cunning workmen, yet for *this* work it was necessary that they should be filled with wisdom and understanding, that they might 'know how to work all manner of work for the sanctuary.'

"I suppose God taught the women too, who were wise hearted, to spin the beautiful colours for the curtains, and to work the veil with 'cunning work' of cherubims."

"Yes, May, there was no part of the work left for anyone to do 'out of his own head,' as you say sometimes; all was under the direction and guidance of God; and so when the work was finished and the tabernacle reared, we read that 'the glory of Jehovah filled it.'

God thus marked the tent in the wilderness as His habitation, and the pillar of cloud which rested there was, as you know, not only the token of His presence with His people, but also their guide during all their desert journeys. The moment the cloud was lifted up from the



SINAI.

tabernacle, the silver trumpets sounded and the whole camp began to move; while Moses said, 'Rise up, Jehovah, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.' Whenever the cloud rested the whole camp rested, and Moses prayed, 'Return, O Jehovah, unto the many thousands of Israel.' You will find,

an account of their departing from Mount Sinai; Charley, in the tenth of Numbers."

"I suppose there were a great many people?"

"We read of their being counted in the earlier part of the book; it is believed there were more than two millions."

"What a great army! It must almost have been like the army of Xerxes. Do you know, May, my history book says there were regular store-houses of food provided for those soldiers all along their march, and that when they came to a river they sometimes drank it dry."

"And yet God fed *His* great army in the wilderness, day by day, giving them manna for their hunger and water for their thirst, in that dry and thirsty land where no water was to be found," said Aunt Edith.

"Of course the wilderness was a very dry place, nothing but sand everywhere."

"I used to think, like you, May, of the wilderness where there was no way, as a sandy waste; but those who have been there, do not speak so much of the sand as of the great rocks. One traveller says:—'The rocks were the most diversified I ever saw. I noted them upon the spot as being black, green, crimson, lilac, maroon, yellow, golden, and white; and their form was that of a whole host of cones.' Then, as he went on, up a steep, narrow pathway among these barren rocks, he says he could not help thinking 'What a place this was for the Hebrew mothers and their babes! They who had lived on the banks of the never-failing Nile and drunk their fill of its sweet waters, must have been aghast at the aspect of a scene like this, where the eye, wandering as it will, can see nothing but bright and solemn rocks.'"

"What a place to be in! They could never have found their way if God had not led them," said May.

"I want to ask you one more question, Aunt Edith; can you tell how large the camp looked when the people were all resting in their tents, and whether they all kept close together or were just scattered about?"

“ I am glad you thought of that, Charley ; the circumference of the camp is believed to have been more than twelve miles : whether on the march or at rest all was arranged in the most perfect order. When at rest, the tabernacle was guarded by the twelve tribes, which were divided into four camps, each containing three tribes, and altogether forming a perfect square, each side showing its own standard. The families of the Levites were encamped directly around the court, the Gershonites having the charge of the framework and curtains of the tabernacle, the Kohathites having care of the ark, the table, the candle-stick, the altars, ‘ all the vessels of the sanctuary and all the service thereof,’ and the Merarites having charge of the boards, bars, sockets, and pillars of the tabernacle and of the court. The Eastern side, the entrance whereby God was approached, was guarded by Moses and Aaron and the priests.”

“ Then the tribe of Levi was not counted with the other tribes ? ”

“ That tribe was numbered separately, being set apart for the service of God ; but there were still twelve tribes, for the tribe of Joseph was divided, and formed the two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. The tabernacle was the centre around which all the tribes were ranged, for God, who had promised to dwell with His people, was pleased thus to gather them around Himself.”

“ I am sure,” said May, “ the people must have been glad to hear the sound of the silver trumpets, and to know that they might begin to march on to the land which God had promised them.”

“ They had been encamped for more than a year near Mount Sinai, and no doubt it was a moment of glad expectation for them when the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle, and they first took their journey according to the commandment of the Lord. We can fancy how much they must have looked forward to that good land, and how glad they must have felt to know that they had really left Egypt, where they had suffered such hard slavery, behind for ever.”

"Did they march in the same order—the tabernacle in the middle and the tribes, with their standards, around it?" asked Charley.

"No, the order was a little changed; the tabernacle, with its curtains, was carried after the first three tribes—Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon; and the ark was carried first of all, for God Himself would lead His people along their unknown way, and would seek out a resting-place for them."

"Can people now travel by the very same way?"

"No, May; it has been found impossible to track the Israelites along the journey, for the old names of places are lost, and we cannot really be sure of their route till they reached Kadesh-barnea, which you can find on the map."

"Here it is," said Charley, "close to the land of Edom. I remember, it was from that place the spies were sent."

"Of the position of even Kadesh-barnea we cannot now be quite certain, but it is a memorable name in the history of the Israelites: from this place, so near the borders of the promised land, they had to turn back again to wander for forty years in the dreary, monotonous desert, until of all those who had sung the song of triumph on the shores of the Red Sea, none should be left except the faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb. Such was the terrible punishment of those who, in their unbelieving fear, reproached God."

"How sad it must have been to hear the people crying all night, after they had heard about the giants in the land of Canaan, and wishing they had died in Egypt, or in the wilderness," said May.

"And then they wanted to make a captain, that he might lead them back to Egypt," said Charley. "I can't help being sorry," he continued, thoughtfully, "that they ever sent the spies at all."

"But God told them to send them—so it was right, wasn't it, Aunt Edith?"

"It would have been right, May, if God had given them the command; but we find in the first chapter of Deuteronomy, where

Moses reminds the people of the great facts in their history, he tells them that it was at their own suggestion that the spies were sent, though Moses himself approved of it. It must indeed have been



THE SPIES AT ESHCOL.

a wonderful scene : the despairing, angry people reproaching their God, Moses and Aaron on their faces, while Joshua and Caleb, with their clothes rent in token of grief, pleaded with them, saying, 'It is an exceeding good land ; if Jehovah delight in us, then He will bring us in and give it us. Rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us ; their defence is departed from them, and Jehovah is with us ; fear them not.' Then, when they were about, in their blind fury, to stone Joshua and Caleb, suddenly the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tabernacle."

"How little they thought that God had heard all they said, and that they were really going to die in the wilderness," said May. "But, Aunt Edith, did the tabernacle go back into the wilderness with them ?"

"Yes ; God did not forsake His rebellious people, and the ark, the sign of His presence among them, was with them in all their wanderings during those thirty-eight years of which we know little, except that it was a time when God was teaching them, even by these sad wanderings. It has been thought that the Book of Job was written by Moses during the years in the desert. The Israelites came back to Kadesh at last, the very place from whence they had started, but only the children of those who had displeased God returned ; all the generation that had done evil in the sight of Jehovah was consumed."

"I know they must have brought the tabernacle back with them, Aunt Edith," said Charley, "because, you know, the ark went over Jordan, and was carried round and round the city of Jericho."

"I remember you read to me about the ark being carried by the priests into the midst of the river Jordan," said May, "and of how it stayed there until all the people had passed over, and was a type of the Lord Jesus going down into the river of death and destroying all its power, and making it life for those that trust Him."

"You remember very well, May. I think, Charley, you can tell us why the ark was carried round and round Jericho ?"

"It must have been as the sign of the presence of God, I suppose. I have often thought how the people inside their strong walls must have watched the procession, and wondered at the army marching past, all silent, and at the ark carried by the seven priests blowing their trumpets of rams' horns. Just imagine all this going on, day after day, for six days: then, on the seventh, the seven marches round, and then the tremendous shout as the walls fell crashing down. But, Aunt Edith, I don't remember what became of the tabernacle after the people came to the Land of Promise."

"It is believed that it remained at Gilgal during Joshua's wars, but was removed to Shiloh, and there kept from the last days of Joshua to the time of Samuel. I will write down one or two references about this for you, and you can look at them by-and-bye." And their aunt gave Charley a slip of paper, on which she had written, "Josh. xviii. 10; Judges xviii. 31, xxi. 19; 1 Sam. iv. 3."

"Thank you," said he; "I like sometimes to find out things for myself; I remember them so much better. Are there any ruins at Gilgal now? It must have been such an interesting place to the Jews—the place where they first slept after crossing the Jordan."

"And it was at Gilgal they set up those twelve stones which were taken from the dry bed of the river," said May.

"It is interesting, too, as being the place where the first Passover in the land of Canaan was kept," said their aunt. "But there are no remains of a town there, Charley; indeed, modern travellers have not been able to decide where Gilgal was, and can only suppose it must have been situated upon a rising ground not far from Jericho. I had no idea," she continued, looking at her watch, "that it was so late; we must have had a much longer talk than usual. And now we must all say good-night, for it is so long past May's bed-time that yours has come, Charley."

CHAPTER X.

THE HISTORY OF THE TABERNACLE.

(Continued.)

“**O**N Sunday evening, when it was so wet, I looked at those references you wrote out for me, Aunt Edith,” said Charley, “and I see that even while Joshua was alive the tabernacle had been moved from Gilgal to Shiloh; for when Joshua was dividing the land into seven parts he ‘cast lots in Shiloh before the Lord.’ I suppose the tabernacle must have been there?”

“Yes,” replied his aunt, “you are quite right; and if you will bring me your Bible I will show you how in the beginning of the chapter which tells us of the division of the land, we find that ‘the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there.’ Allusion is now and then made to the ‘house of the Lord at Shiloh’ in the book of Judges; and in the last chapter we read of a yearly feast, which caused the people to assemble there. During those troubled and lawless times, however, we find very little mention of the sanctuary of Jehovah.”

“But in the time of Samuel, the tabernacle must have been still at Shiloh, because, you know, when the people were beaten by the Philistines they said they must fetch the ark from Shiloh, that it might give them the victory. Don’t you remember, Aunt Edith?”

"Yes, Charley: the people who had so long forgotten their God remembered in their distress the wonderful deliverances He had given them in past times, and they sent for the ark which had been carried in solemn procession around the walls of Jericho, in the vain hope that by its presence amongst them they should be saved from their enemies."

"Oh, do go on to that time, if we are going to have a talk about anything this evening, for I never could understand how it was that the ark of God could be taken captive by the Philistines."

"First, will you tell me, Auntie," said May, "where Shiloh was, and whether there is any part of the tabernacle there now?"

"Shiloh was a town in that part of the land which was given to the tribe of Ephraim, situated in the hill country, not far from Bethel. It was an important place during the time that the ark rested there, and the people went to it every year, to the feasts of the Passover, of Pentecost, and of Tabernacles. It is now called Seilun, and is marked only by an old tower and a great many broken pillars lying about."

"I thought I should like to know about Shiloh, because it was there that Hannah went to pray for her son, and she brought him there that he might belong to God, and came to see him every year, with the little coat she had made him. Now, will you tell Charley about the ark being taken, and me, too, for I don't understand how such a thing could be?"

"Such a thing never could have been, dear children, if the people of God had not forsaken Him, until at last He allowed the very sign of His presence among them to pass into the hands of their enemies. You remember how plainly God had told them they were to destroy every vestige of false worship; He had charged them, as children of the living God, to have nothing to do with the profane customs of the people whom they had allowed to remain in the land, but to go up to the place where He had placed His name, and worship Him there. If you read their history carefully you will see how very soon they

began to make terms with their enemies, letting them live close beside them, under tribute ; and how, at last, they began to tamper with their idolatrous worship—perhaps led away by admiration of their religious festivals, which were very grand and showy—and to pay homage to their representations of various objects of nature, particularly the sun and moon. We read of even Gideon having an ephod, or priestly robe, which seems to have been, in some degree, an object of worship. The men of Ephriam had a golden image ; Micah had a silver idol."

"I remember even the priests were wicked in the time of Eli," said May ; "perhaps that was partly why God allowed the ark to be taken. It seemed as if His people did not care to have Him for their God any more."

"And you know," said Charley, "God had said that the family of Eli should never more be His priests, because Hophni and Phineas despised God's offerings, and taught the people to think nothing of them."

"Terrible things, indeed, were done at Shiloh ; but at last the solemn moment came when what had been spoken by God to Samuel was to be fulfilled. When the Israelites were beaten in a great battle fought with the Philistines in the plains of Esdraelon, they seem to have thought the presence of the ark among them would act as a charm, and give them a sure victory. 'Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of Shiloh unto us,' they said, 'that when it cometh it may deliver us out of the hands of our enemies.' So they fetched the ark from Shiloh."

"But had God told them He would be with them ? "

"Indeed, He had not, May ; they might bring the symbol of His presence into the battle, but they only did it to their own confusion. The Philistines were afraid when they heard the shout of the people at sight of the ark, for they said, 'God has come into the camp. Woe unto us ! Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods, the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues ? '

"They did not know that the Israelites had offended their mighty God, and so He would no longer do wonders for them," said Charley.

"Terror only nerved them to fight more fiercely, and with their iron chariots they won a great victory; 30,000 Israelites perished, and the conquerors carried off the ark in triumph to their own country, and placed it in the temple of their fish-god Dagon."

"How long did the ark remain in the country of the Philistines?" asked Charley.

"Seven months. At the end of that time, horror-struck at the mysterious Power which accompanied it, they sent it back. Wherever they moved it, from city to city, the strange gods were overthrown, and famine and disease fell upon the people."

"Where did the Israelites set up the ark when it was sent back to them, Aunt Edith?"

"The Levites received it, May, and removed it to Gibeon, where it remained until the time of David."

"Did you say Eli was the last priest at Shiloh?" asked Charley. "I thought," he continued, "that Samuel was a priest?"

"It has been well remarked," replied his aunt, "that the priestly office must needs have ceased at a time when all that gave it importance was in the enemy's hands, and the centre of relationship with God had been given up by Him to the enemy. In Samuel God raised up a prophet, by whom He made known His will. But of Samuel we



DAGON.
(From Layard's *Monuments of Nineveh*.)

cannot speak to-night. We must pass on to the time when David, having become established in the kingdom as the king after God's heart, laid siege to Jerusalem, and took the stronghold of Mount Zion, which he made his royal residence, and which, when the ark was



DAVID DANCING BEFORE THE ARK.

placed there, became the great sanctuary of the nation. You will find Mount Zion very often spoken of in the Psalms. It is believed that the sixty-eighth Psalm was sung when the king himself went in state, with 30,000 people, and brought the ark from Gibeon with joy and shouting."

"Oh, yes ; and David danced for joy."

"You are thinking of the second removal of the ark, May. We read in the First Book of Chronicles that after Uzza had been struck

dead for touching it, it remained in the house of Obededom until the tent which David prepared for it on Mount Zion was ready. Then, as it was borne on the shoulders of the Levites, the king, not in his royal robes, but in a linen dress, showed his joy by dancing 'before Jehovah with all his might,' as they 'brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting and with sound of trumpets; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before Jehovah, and he blessed the people in the name of Jehovah.' "

"Perhaps David was thinking of how, though he might not be there to see it, there was another great day coming, when there was to be a wonderful time for rejoicing, and a grand procession," said Charley.

"Ah, you mean the day when the ark was to be carried by the priests from the sanctuary on Mount Zion across the beautiful bridge which had been made to connect the two hills, and set down in its place under the overshadowing wings of the golden cherubim in the temple built by King Solomon on Mount Moriah," said their aunt— "Yes, that was indeed a time of rejoicing."

"Oh, Aunt Edith ! how I should have liked to have seen that procession! We have just come to the chapter which tells of the dedication of the temple, in our Bible-class at school; and I remember it is said that the tables of stone which Moses put into the ark at Horeb were still there, and that the priests and Levites, dressed in their white robes, carried the beautiful golden vessels, and that the Levites who were singers, and the priests who were trumpeters, made one sound in praising the Lord. It must have been beautiful—a joyful sound, indeed," said May; "and you know, Charley, although you were not there to hear the beautiful music, you can tell the very words they sang—'O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.' That was what they sang, wasn't it, Auntie ? "

"It has been thought that several of the Psalms were sung then, and that some of them had been especially written to celebrate the

joyful day to which David looked forward, though he knew he should not see it. It is probable that the beautiful Psalm beginning, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,' was sung just as the ark was borne in through the court of the temple to its new resting-place. You remember the verses at the close of it—' Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in ?' And now," continued their aunt, " I want to ask whether either of you can tell me what was the particular sign which God gave to show that He had taken up His abode among His people when His dwelling-place was first set up in the wilderness ? "

" Oh, yes," cried both the children, " it was the cloud of glory ! "

" The same bright cloud which had rested on the tabernacle came and filled with glory the beautiful house which Solomon had built for God to dwell in ; for we read that ' the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud : for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.' God, whom the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain, was pleased to dwell in the house which had been built for His name ; and we cannot wonder that the joyful Feast of Tabernacles—for the dedication of the temple took place at that time of the year—was prolonged another seven days, and that the people so favoured by their God ' went to their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness Jehovah had done for David His servant and for Israel His people.' "

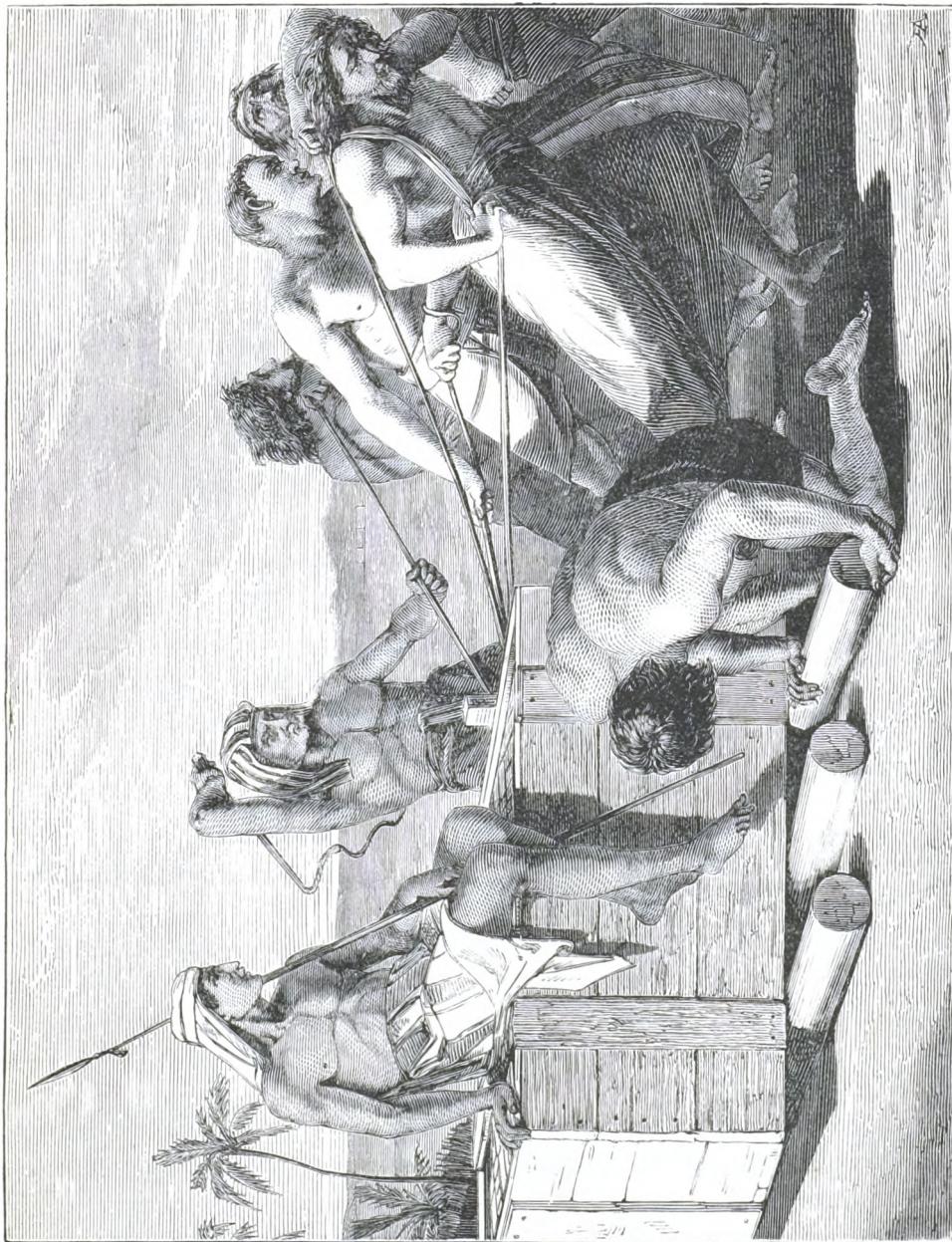
" I don't suppose," said May, " that those who saw that magnificent temple thought much about the little tabernacle of old times ; yet that was the first place where God showed His glory. I was thinking the other evening when we came home so late, and the moon was shining so that you could see everything almost as clearly as in the day-time, how much I should have liked to have seen the tabernacle at night in the desert, with the tents of the Israelites all around it, and the pillar of fire shining over it, as if God were keeping watch over His people as they slept."

"And I," said Charley, "should like to have stood on some mountain near, at sunrise, and seen the fiery pillar disappear when the morning came, and the pillar of cloud take its place; and then, perhaps, as I watched, the cloud might have risen, and I should have seen the great multitude fold their tents and move on through the desert, following the cloud by which God showed them the way. But, of course, the most beautiful part of the tabernacle was inside," he added, thoughtfully. "I wish, Aunt Edith, you had been with us when we saw that model of which I told you. The more I think of it the more sorry I am that such a beautiful thing should have passed away."

"It was, indeed, a beautiful thing, Charley; but you must not forget that we found, in our last talk about it, that it was only a shadow of that which can never pass away. Now that we have nearly come to the last days of the tabernacle, dear children," continued their aunt, "it may be interesting to go back and speak a little of its first days. Have you thought of how the wonderful love of God shines through all this story of His people, which we have been following, while we have been trying to trace the history of the dwelling-place which He allowed them to make for Him?"

"I have not thought much about it, Aunt Edith; but I know that if God had not loved the people and pitied them so, they could never even have got away from Egypt."

"We are not told, Charley, that the people in Egypt had any thought of God. We know that they sighed by reason of their hard bondage, but we do not read that they cried to God, or asked Him to save them from their cruel masters; they groaned in the bitterness of their labour and sorrow, seeking rest and finding none, and their cry reached the throne of Jehovah. Before they called He heard, and the answer came: 'God had seen the affliction of His people; He had heard their groaning, and was come down to deliver them.' This was what the oppressed, heavy-hearted Israelites had never thought of



EGYPTIAN_TASKMasters.

they did not even know the greatness of their misery and helplessness, but God did, and so He undertook to save them out of their distress."

"So, when the Lord Jesus was here,—He knew there were hundreds of poor people who were wanting what He could give, though they did not know it, and He said 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,'" said little May.

"God said of the oppressed Israelites, in Egypt, 'I know their sorrows.' He knew the unexpressed longings of their hearts, and He knows that, deep in the heart of each of us, there is a sore want, an unsatisfied longing, the dumb cry of a helpless human soul, not knowing its own need, understood only by Him."

"Do you mean that we are unhappy because we have got away from God, and do not know how to come back?"

"You remind me of some words spoken by one who lived very long ago, Charley: 'Thou hast made us for Thyself,' he said, as he thought of these things, 'and our heart is restless till it resteth in Thee.' Even a child knows what it is to have desires and feelings which he cannot understand and cannot tell to anyone. As soon as the consciousness that he is an immortal creature, and must live for ever, breaks upon his mind, he is filled with thoughts of fear and unrest. Eternity stretches before him like a boundless sea, and he asks, what is to become of him during that everlasting existence upon which he knows he has already entered."

"I know that is true, Aunt Edith, for I remember once, when I was staying with you, I woke in the night, and tried to think about what would never end, and I was so frightened that I called you; but when you came I could hardly explain to you how I felt, or what was the matter."

"I have not forgotten that night, Charley; but I did not know that you would remember it,—you were a very little boy then. What did I say to you?"

"You said such thoughts were too great for me, and I must just

remember that God, who loved me, was greater than all my thoughts, and that everything belonged to Him, and that the Lord Jesus, who had given Himself for me, and died to save me from all I was afraid of, was close to me, though I could not see Him, and took care of me, and loved me always. I remember I wondered what made Him care for me, but I was very sure He did, and I was not unhappy any more ; though you stayed with me till I was asleep, I should not have been afraid if you had gone away."

"You knew you had a Friend with you, One who had searched your inmost heart and found the trouble that was there."

"Yes, that was just what I meant to say. I think it was because of the wrong things I had done," Charley went on in a low tone, "that I was so much afraid ; but all at once the hymn we used to sing long ago came into my mind. I said it over and over again, and it seemed better and truer each time :—

‘But though we’re sinners, every one,
Jesus died.’

"Then I remembered how the Lord Jesus had once said to a sinner, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' and I thought He said it to me. I have never been afraid to die since, because I know if I left this world Jesus would have me."

"God, who heard the sorrowful sighing of the poor oppressed bondsmen in Egypt, so long ago, heard *your* cry, and drew near to you that night, as you lay, a little child trembling at the thought of the great unknown future. The heart, with its strivings and longings, only gets further away from God, but at one word from Him all is peace, the struggle ceases, and there is a great calm."

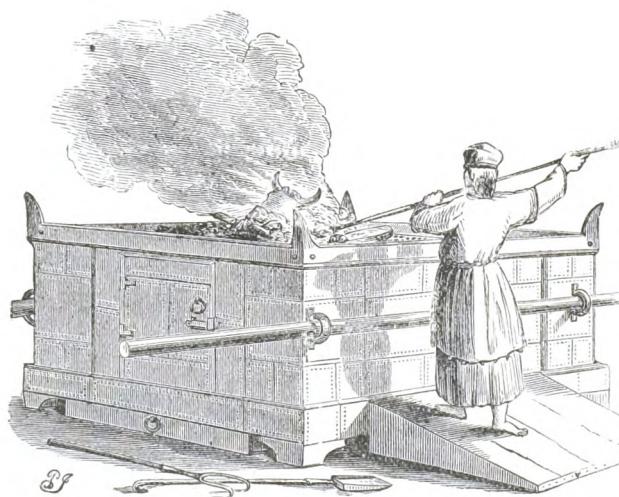
"I like that text," said May, "'We love Him because He first loved us.'"

They were silent for a little while, and then their aunt said—

"Will you tell me, dears, a little about that model you saw, which so much interested you ?"

“I will try, Aunt Edith,” said Charley. “You must imagine a square, or rather an oblong open space, in the desert, enclosed by pillars,—twenty brass pillars on the north, twenty on the south, ten on the west, and six on the east, for there the entrance was. The tops of these pillars were of silver, and so were the hooks from which the curtains hung. We saw these curtains of white linen set up, and the curtain hung before the entrance.”

“Oh, yes; and you know, Aunt Edith, that beautiful curtain of blue and purple and scarlet was instead of a door, and we were told to think of how the Lord Jesus had said, ‘I am the Way.’ The gentleman who explained it all to us said the altar, too, was a type of Christ; but Charley must tell you.”



ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERINGS.

“No one could come in to the outer court except by this veiled gateway, and just inside was the great altar, made of wood covered with brass, where the fire burnt the sacrifices. Every morning and every evening a lamb was offered on this altar for the whole people, and they could see the smoke rise up to heaven. It was to this altar, just inside the gate of the outer court, that the people brought their offerings; the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the offering and then killed it, and the priest sprinkled the blood around the altar, and put it also upon the four horns of the altar—the corners, you know.”

"Can you tell me why the sacrifices were offered, May?"

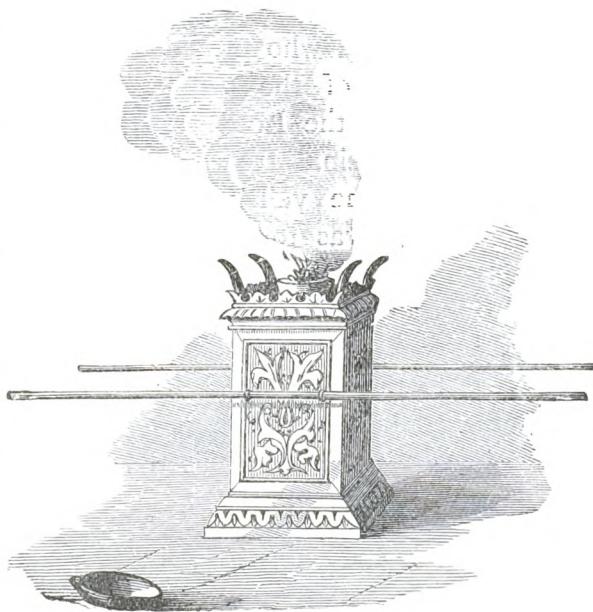
"To make atonement for sin. God saw the blood of the sacrifice, which was the life of the animal which had been killed, instead of the sin of the man who offered it."

"And the man who offered it saw the blood, too, on the horns of the altar," said Charley; "and you remember, May, when a priest had sinned, the blood of his offering was put upon the horns of the golden altar, on which the sweet incense was burnt, in the place called the 'holy.'"

"We learn from this, dear children, that God, against whom the sinner has sinned, alone could appoint what should make an atonement or covering for sin, and He had said that by blood, and blood alone—the life of another given instead of the for-

feited life of the one who had done the wrong—atonement could be made. Thus God Himself provided the means by which His ancient people could approach Him, and because of which He could dwell among a rebellious people, with hearts no better than ours, sinning every day. You know why the offerer laid his hands upon the head of his offering, do you not?"

"Oh, yes," said May; "it was to show that whatever creature it was that he brought was to be counted guilty of what he had done, and



GOLDEN ALTAR.

that he had deserved to be treated just as his offering was treated. It must have made him very sorry for his sin when he saw an innocent creature die because of it."

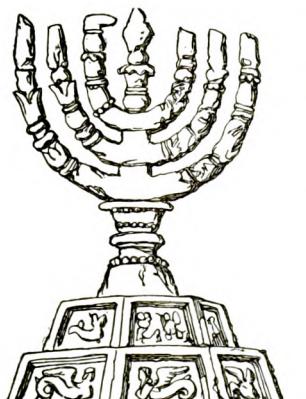
"The sight must indeed have brought the solemn truth, 'the wages of sin is death,' right home to the conscience of the offerer; but how thankful he must have been to God, who thus allowed him to bring his offering, and who said of his sin, 'it shall be forgiven him!' It was God who provided the sacrifices, and even appointed what the poorest of the people should bring; but we know that only the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, His holy Son, could ever really atone for sin. It was only after His precious blood had been shed that the veil which shut all the people out from the presence of God was torn, and the way to heaven, of which the most holy place was a type, made open for every one who should come unto God by Him. But will you not go on with your description, Charley?"

"Next to the altar stood the great brass laver, where the priests washed their hands and feet, and then came the tabernacle itself,

in which the beautiful veil hung which divided the 'holy' from the 'most holy.' The outer court, where the great altar and the laver stood, was called the 'holy place.'"

"You must not forget to say what was in the 'holy,'" said May.

"The golden candlestick, the golden altar of incense, and the table of shewbread were there. The priests kept incense constantly burning on the beautiful little altar, and the great golden lamp, with seven branches, ornamented with flowery work, lighted up the whole place, so that the priests who entered it could see the blood that made atonement for their sin on the horns



PICTURE OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK,
FROM THE ARK OF TITUS.

of the altar, and the beautiful curtain worked with figures of cherubim, and all the splendour of the gold."

"The priests might see the beautiful veil," said May, "but they could never go inside."

"No," replied her brother; "but don't you remember what we were told about the great Day of Atonement? On that one day in the year, the high priest lifted the veil and went into the 'most holy,' where the ark was, and he carried in the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, which was the covering of the ark."

"Were you told what the high priest going in and sprinkling blood upon the mercy-seat typified?"

"Yes, we were told, Auntie; but I can't tell how to explain it."

"God has Himself given us an explanation, so that we cannot doubt its wonderful meaning. In the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews we read that Christ, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy of holies, having found an eternal redemption.

"I want you to find that chapter, Charley, and read from the verse beginning, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true,' to the end."



CHAPTER XI.

ABOUT THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, AND THEIR TRADITIONS.

“ **Y**OUR mother has been telling me of the meeting to which she took you last night, Charley. She said that the gentleman who spoke last mentioned many interesting things about the Jews which he had seen and heard in his missionary travels.”



“ Oh, yes ; he told us much more than I can remember ; but I liked best seeing the curiosities he had brought home. There was a saddle with a very large stirrup, and a queer-shaped horse-shoe, and a bit and bridle not at all like ours. Then there was a plough with one handle, and a pruning-hook shaped just like a spear, only ending in a hook instead of a point.”



A PLOUGH WITH ONE HANDLE.

"And he showed us a goad," said May: "a long stick, Auntie, with a sharp nail at one end to prick on the oxen, and a little trowel at the other to clear the earth from the plough."

"But there was one thing we both wanted you to explain to us. Can you tell us what phylacteries are? We were shown a large one and a small one, but they both looked like little square boxes, and I could not understand what Mr. Hall said about them. I know there is something in the Bible about broad phylacteries, but I can't tell where it is."

"You will find it in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew. Let us look. Ah, I see May has found the place. The Lord is here speaking to the people about the Scribes and Pharisees, and among the works which they did 'to be seen of men,' He mentions that they 'made broad their phylacteries.' Now let us turn to the Book of Exodus. In the thirteenth chapter, verse 16, we read, 'And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt.' Moses was speaking to the people of that 'night to be much observed' when the Lord brought them out of the land of Egypt, and telling them that the mercy of this great deliverance was to be ever before them, and that their little ones were to be told of it in time to come. The language he used we call figurative, and we find the same expressions used about the law and commandments of Jehovah in the Book of Deuteronomy: 'Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.'

"Do you think, May," continued her aunt, "that if your mother told you to keep her wishes always before your eyes, or her words always in your heart, you would know what she meant?"

"I should know that mother meant me always to remember what she liked me to do, and to do it, Auntie."

"So I think these directions of God were understood by the Jews at first, but by-and-by they began to forget the real meaning, and at

last they took to the plan of actually wearing parts of the Law in little boxes upon their foreheads and arms."

"I remember Mr. Hall said the Pharisees used to pray in corners of streets with their phylacteries on."

"Yes, Charley; the Pharisees always wore their phylacteries, while the common people only used them at prayers. In the time when our Lord spoke of them, almost all Jews wore them. The modern Jews wear them only at morning prayers."

"But you have not told us what they are, Aunt Edith."

"They are strips of parchment, with four passages of Scripture written upon them, rolled up in a case of black calf-skin, and tied to the left arm, just above the elbow, by a leather thong. If to be worn on the forehead, the four strips were rolled up, and put into four little cells within a square case, on which a Hebrew letter was written, and the 'frontlet' was kept in its place by two thongs, inscribed with Hebrew letters. The Pharisees are supposed to have made their phylacteries 'broad' by increasing the size of the leather case in which the passages from the Law were enclosed."

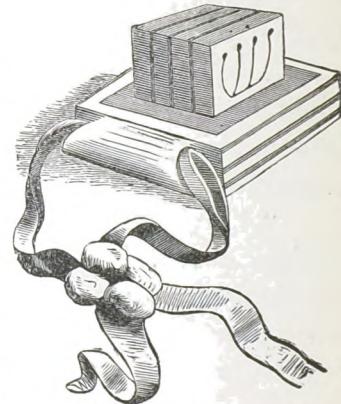
"What were the passages, Auntie?"

"You can find them out another time, Charley; I will write down the references for you."

And Aunt Edith wrote upon a slip of paper, "Ex. xiii. 2-10, 11-17; Deut. vi. 4-9, 13-23."

"Thank you; I should like to see what texts a Jewish boy carries about with him," said Charley.

"I must tell you, however, that probably the boy who wears them has no idea what they are; for when once a phylactery is enclosed in its square case, the strips of parchment are never unrolled and read.



PHYLACTERY CASE.

The Jew of to-day, at least, is well content to wear the *letter* of the Law without troubling himself further, and it has become a dead letter indeed to him. The word means 'safeguard,' and the phylactery is worn as a charm against evil spirits."

"Auntie, I don't quite know who the Pharisees were."

"Well, Charley, I will tell you as much as I think you can understand about them; but first I must ask you whether you remember about what time Ezra lived?"

"I don't know, only that it was when the Jews were coming back from Babylon."

"Yes; that was about 450 years before the birth of Christ. For a thousand years they had had the Law which God gave by Moses; but you must remember that when they came back from the Captivity they were a very different people from what they once had been. The ark was lost, and not only were copies of the Law very scarce, but the language in which it was written would be very little understood."

"Oh, now I know why Ezra had the Book of the Law read aloud, and explained to the people; it was because they could not make out the sense for themselves, wasn't it?"

"Yes, May; the Scripture of that time was explained to the people, who had come from Babylon so ignorant that they almost needed to be educated afresh in the ordinary dialect of the day. It is believed, too, that Ezra was allowed by God to undertake the important charge of arranging the Books of the Law, and, as some think, of compiling the Books of Chronicles. He is also said to have instituted synagogues, for the reading of the Law and for prayer, for it is not likely that there were any before the Captivity, and to have founded the great college, or great synagogue, which was the beginning of that Supreme Court or Council of the Sanhedrim, which managed all the affairs of the Jews in the time of our Lord. This was the 'council' of which Caiaphas, the high priest, was a member; you know he spoke



HEZEKIAH WITH HIS LETTER.

those remarkable words, 'It is expedient that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not.'

"I remember it says, 'This spake he, not of himself.' But was it not a good thing that the people should be taught the Law?"

"Yes, indeed, it was; but you know, Charley, how soon we spoil the best things if we are left to ourselves. By-and-by this reading and explaining the Law grew to be a regular business, and those who professed to interpret the Scripture added to it their own interpretation, wherever they thought they could explain it better by doing so. By degrees they began to teach what the people were not slow to believe, that, besides the written law, there was an oral law to complete and explain it. The grand doctrine of the Pharisees was that there was no precept of which God had not given full explanation to Moses, to hand down by word of mouth, and this 'oral' or unwritten law constituted the 'tradition of the elders,' of which the Lord so often spoke."

"Can you tell me who was the first Pharisee?"

"No, May; but I can tell you the names of two great Jewish doctors or rabbis who lived not long before the birth of our Lord—Hillel and Shammai. There were many differences between them, but they both agreed in giving great authority to traditions. Gamaliel, who was the teacher of St. Paul, was the grandson of Hillel, but it is said that he was not so strict a Pharisee."

"I don't understand how they pretended to have got the 'oral law,' Aunt Edith."

"The Mishna, a book in which the traditions were collected, Charley, has this sentence: 'Moses received the oral law from Sinai, and delivered it to Joshua; Joshua delivered it to the elders; the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue.'"

"Is there anything else in the Mishna?"

"There are many things that even a child like you, May, would laugh at, but which were part of the 'heavy burdens, grievous to be

borne,' laid upon the poor people by those who professed to guide them. Washing the hands before meat was the grand test of a true Pharisee, for they had made an ordinary Syrian custom into an act of worship. I will only tell you some of the rules about this one thing. 'How much of the hand must be washed?—To the wrist, some said; but this was a disputed point.' 'What kind of water must be used?—Not sea water, not mill water, not water which has done any kind of work.' 'How much water for both hands?—A certain measure; a drop short of it would make the washing a sin.' 'How must the water be poured?—With a certain degree of force.' When I tell you that even about these rules they had endless differences and disputes, and that they held that until the hands were cleansed an evil spirit rested upon them, so that if a man rubbed his eyes on first awaking he was in danger of losing his sight, you will see how terrible a system of bondage this oral law became, and will not wonder at the way in which the Lord denounced it, and bade the people beware of the doctrines of the Pharisees."

"But Nicodemus was a Pharisee."

"Yes, dear children, but a Pharisee drawn by the mighty power of God outside his religion of the commandments of men to seek, even by night, Him who spake as never man spake, and whose kingdom was not of this world."

"I suppose," said Charley, "it was not only about such things as washing their hands that the Pharisees were particular."

"That was one thing about which their traditions were very explicit; they also very strictly observed alms-giving, prayer, fasting, and keeping the Sabbath."

"Don't you remember, Charley," said May, "how the Pharisee, when he went to the temple to pray, said, 'I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess'? What did he mean, Aunt Edith: was that giving to the poor?"

"He meant that he gave to the service of God the tenth part,

not only of his corn and wine and oil, but of the very smallest part of his gains, such as 'mint and anise and cummin.' It is said that a strict Pharisee made a point of gathering the tenth sprig of every garden herb, and presenting it to the priest. These trifling observances were of more value in their eyes than judgment, mercy, and the love of God, and the Lord told them so. It is easy to be attentive to outward rules and self-imposed duties, while there may be no thought of doing the will of God from the heart, and seeking to please Him in ways unnoticed by others."

"I am sure that proud Pharisee had no mercy in his heart to the poor publican who went to pray at the same time with him," said May. "I always knew the Pharisees were proud, because people say even now, 'as proud as a Pharisee'; but I didn't know what they were proud of."

"The saddest thing about the Pharisees was this pride, which led them to despise others; the poor and unlearned were looked down upon by them as 'the brute people of the earth,' while they counted themselves, and those who were instructed in the Law, the 'holy people.' We can almost fancy we see the two men brought into such strong contrast in the parable which the Lord spake to 'certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous,' and counted all others as nothing; the one with his long robe, bordered by the deep blue fringe, with his phylacteries bound upon his brow and upon his arm, standing and thanking God that he was not like the rest of mankind, not unjust, not an extortioner, not like this publican; and the man who, feeling that he was indeed in the presence of God who searches the heart, could only as he stood afar off smite upon his breast, with the cry, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.'"

"I suppose the publican could not hear what the Pharisee said about him, for it says—I have found the chapter, Aunt Edith, it is the eighteenth of Luke—it says, 'the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself.'

"It was not the custom of the Jews to pray in silence, Charley, and it certainly would be very unlike the Pharisee in the parable to do so.



PHARISEE AT PRAYER.

Some people think that the words, 'with himself,' mean that he was as it were praying to himself, making a speech all about himself, as one who felt that he had need of nothing, rather than as one who comes to make known his wants to God."

"He did not pray exactly," said May: "at least he did not ask for anything, or tell God he was sorry about anything he had done, or thank God for His goodness to

him. He could not have any answer to a prayer like that."

"I am sure," said Charley, "it must have displeased the Lord Jesus very much, that way the Pharisees had of despising others; for He loved the poor, and had compassion upon ignorant people. Still, I suppose they did pity the poor in a sort of way, since they thought so much of giving alms, though that might have been only to get a good name. Was it to them that Christ said, 'Take heed that ye do not your alms before men,' Aunt Edith?"

"No, that was not said to the Pharisees, but to His disciples, in the hearing of the people around. The word He then used does not mean simply giving away money, but has a much wider meaning, and is often translated 'righteousness.' The meaning of the word 'alms' itself is 'mercifulness;' so you see, Charley, a man might give away a great deal to the poor, and be counted a great benefactor, and yet not give alms in the true sense."

"Then, fasting was another thing which the Pharisee was proud of. Had God told the Jews to fast?"

“Under the Law there was one great fast. If you look at the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, Charley, you will see that upon the day of atonement the people were to ‘afflict their souls.’ This was interpreted to mean fasting during the whole day. We read also of fasts being kept during times of distress or sorrow, as when, in the time of Samuel, the people gathered together at Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted, saying, ‘We have sinned against the Lord.’”

“And David fasted for sorrow, Aunt Edith. He said, ‘While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept.’”

“Yes, May, King David’s fast was for sorrow for his sin, and that he might humble himself under the mighty hand of God. In the Book of Nehemiah we have an affecting picture of how the people who had returned from the Captivity, after the second temple was finished, assembled ‘with fasting, and with sackcloth and earth upon them,’ and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.”

“I suppose the Pharisee did not fast twice a week for any particular reason?” said Charley. “Perhaps the Mishna had set down some days for fasting.”

“Certain days were appointed—generally days connected with some great national calamity or sad event in the history of the people, such as the breaking of the tables of the law by Moses, the return of the spies, the storming of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The second day of the week was kept as a fast by the strict Pharisee, because upon that day Moses went up to Mount Sinai; and the fifth, because upon that day he came down from the mount.”

“That does seem a foolish reason!”

“Not more foolish, May, than we might expect on the part of people who had given up the word of God that they might keep their own tradition. Their boasted knowledge of the Law and the Prophets might have taught the Pharisees what was the fast which the Lord had chosen: ‘to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo

the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke——.”

“Oh, Aunt Edith! and instead of keeping God’s fast they were binding heavy burdens upon people, and not touching them with one of their fingers! But you said they prayed ‘to be seen of men,’ as well as fasted; I should have thought to stand praying in the corners of the streets would not have been so much for other people to see them as if they had gone upon the housetop, as Peter did, when he saw the vision of the great sheet let down from heaven.”

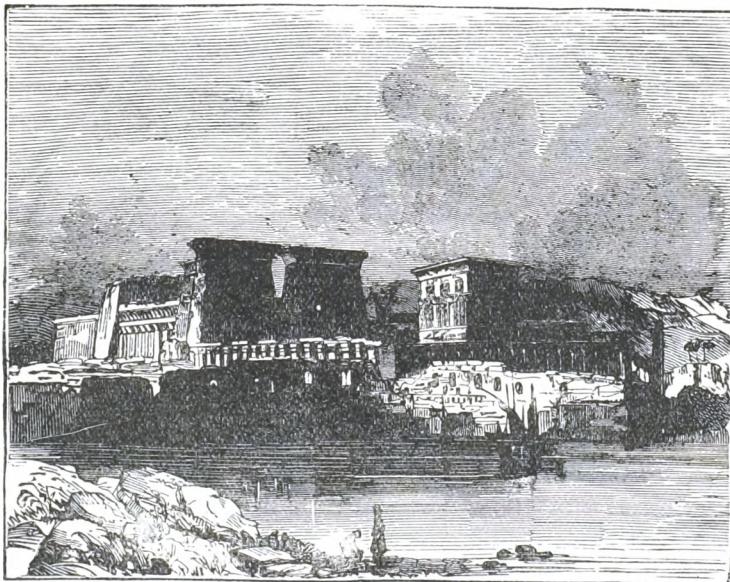
“The word does not mean what we should call the corners of the streets, but rather broad, open spaces in the city; there the Pharisee would be very conspicuous, standing with his tallith or praying-veil upon his head, and with his hands ‘spread abroad to heaven.’”

“When Christ was warning His disciples not to be like the hypocrites, who prayed so that every one might see them, He said—it is a little further down in the sixth of St. Matthew, May—‘Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.’ Does that mean just saying the same words over and over, Aunt Edith, as the false prophets in the time of Elijah did, when they called out, ‘O Baal, hear us!’ from morning till noon?”

“The rabbis had laid down such rules as these about prayer, Charley: ‘Every one who multiplies prayer shall be heard; the prayer which is long shall not return empty.’ This alone would show us how far from the knowledge of God they were; for God had said, ‘Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear.’ The word translated ‘vain repetitions’ means saying the same thing over and over in a mechanical way, as a stammerer who was trying to speak plainly might do, the lips moving while the heart was far away. We are all in danger of falling into the same snare, dear children, and while we see so clearly where others were wrong let us distrust our own hearts, and ask the Lord to deliver us from all hypocrisy.”

"I think I know what you mean, Aunt Edith, but I never quite understood what a hypocrite was."

"A hypocrite first of all only meant a man who answered in a dialogue, May; but very soon, from one who acted a part in a play, it came to mean one who played a part, pretending to be what he was not."



BABYLON.

"Then the scribes were people who pretended, too, for Jesus said, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!' Who were the scribes?"

"I know—Ezra was one," said Charley, "and there was Shebna, the scribe, who came out to speak to the King of Assyria's messengers."

"The scribes, in the times of the kings, were probably what we should now call their chief secretaries, whose office it was to write the royal letters or edicts. It was after the return of the exiles from

Babylon that the name took a new meaning, and was applied to those who copied or edited the sacred books, and taught them to the people. Of Ezra himself, we read that he was 'a ready scribe in the law of Moses, for he had prepared his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.'

"You told us of how Ezra put the Books of Moses in order, but after that did the scribes still go on copying in the New Testament times?" asked May.

"They were rather regarded as the interpreters of Scripture, and were very much looked up to as students of the Law and the Prophets; the lawyers devoted themselves especially to the interpreting of the Law; they, as well as the Pharisees, tried to 'set a fence' around the Scriptures, as something too holy to be meddled with, and too dark and mysterious to be understood by the common people. If you look at the eleventh chapter of St. Luke, Charley, you will see that the Lord, as He sat in the Pharisee's house, addressed the words which you quoted just now, about laying grievous burdens upon others which they did not touch themselves, to the lawyers."

"I see, Aunt Edith; and further on in the same chapter there is, 'Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.' That means that they would not let the people read for themselves, and that what they interpreted for them was wrongly explained, doesn't it?"

"The custom of a key, as the symbol of his authority to interpret the Scripture, being given to one who had himself studied at the feet of some learned teacher, may be alluded to in the verse you read, Charley."

"I wonder whether any of the people, who heard what Jesus said to His disciples when He taught them upon the mountain, thought He was a scribe!"

"It would seem very likely, May; the name 'Master,' by which He was so often called, means Teacher, and we are expressly told that the

people were astonished at His teaching, 'for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' They were accustomed to hear those whom they regarded as their teachers begin their discourses by quoting what Hillel or Shammai had said, but the Lord Jesus said '*I say unto you.*'"

"Perhaps, when the chief priests and scribes came to Jesus, and asked Him by what authority He did those things, they wanted to know whether any 'key of knowledge' had been given to Him. But now will you tell us about the Sadducees, Aunt Edith?—they were not friends of the Pharisees, were they?"

"No, Charley; the two parties were constantly opposed, except when we find them making common cause against Him whom they both alike hated—the One who, as the Light and the Truth, had exposed their dark and deceitful ways."

"I suppose the Sadducees were worse than the Pharisees, for they said there was no resurrection; but how did they first begin? I don't remember anything about them in the Old Testament."

"As the Pharisees, from their name, were the 'separated people,' so the Sadducees might be called the 'Zadokites,' for they took their name from Zadok, who was high priest in the time of Solomon."

"But how did they come to believe that no one would rise from the dead?"

"They especially opposed the Pharisees in this respect, that they denied the oral law; they believed the Law of Moses, but they said nothing about the resurrection could be found there."

"But that was not true, Aunt Edith."

"Although the great fact of a future life is recognised all through the Bible, Charley, there is very little direct teaching as to the resurrection in the Old Testament, except as light from the New falls upon it. A teacher among the Sadducees once said to his disciples, 'Men should not be servants who do their Master's will for reward.' That sounded very well; but soon the pupils of this man improved

upon what he had said, and began to teach that, as we ought not to look for the reward of piety, so there was no life to come where rewards could be given."

"I think, all the same, when he came to die, he would feel sure in himself that there was a life to come."

"I think so, too, May, for life and death become very real to the departing soul. Many of the Sadducees were priests, and they were especially disliked by the Pharisees because they courted King Herod, and tried to obtain favour and influence under him. The most bitter enmity, however, was between the Pharisees and the Herodians, a set of men who held the doctrine of the Sadducees, but looked up to Herod as if he were to be the one to save the nation from the Romans. Yet we find that the Pharisees took counsel even with these their enemies 'how they might destroy' Jesus."

"It was very dreadful to hate the One who came to *give* His life, to lay it down willingly, that He might save us," said May; "but there is one thing I have been wanting to ask, Aunt Edith. When the Lord Jesus was twelve years old, and stayed behind in Jerusalem, His parents found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors—you know that lovely picture, where the grave men, with their long beards, are sitting round, and Jesus is in the midst of them, and there are doves flying about. Who were those 'doctors'?"

"A room in the temple was set apart for a school, to which scholars might come and be taught by the learned men or teachers of the law. You know doctor means teacher. The learned men sat upon a high seat, then the older students upon a bench below, and the younger upon the ground, literally 'at the feet' of those who taught them."

"I wonder what kind of things the children learnt," said Charley.

"When a Jewish boy was seven years old his mother began to teach him the Scriptures, chiefly passages from the Book of Deuteronomy, and what were called the Festival Psalms. One of



THE CHILD TIMOTHY LEARNING FROM HIS MOTHER.

them was the psalm you are so fond of repeating, May : 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.'"

"Oh, Aunt Edith, it does seem strange that the Jewish children should learn the same psalms as we do, and yet, in one way, they belong almost more to them. But do go on."

"It was when a boy was thirteen that he for the first time put on his phylacteries ; he had then become 'a child of the Law,' and was expected to study it under the direction of the great teachers. I have read that among the favourite questions in the temple-school were these, and others like them : 'What is the great commandment of the Law ?' 'What may or may not be done on the Sabbath ?'

"The first one reminds me of how one of the scribes asked the Lord Jesus, 'Which is the first commandment of all?' And you know, Aunt Edith, how they were always finding fault with Him for doing cures on the Sabbath day."

"Yet we read, Charley, that when our Lord, in the presence of the sick man at the table of one of the chief Pharisees, Himself put the question, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?' they held their peace ; and when, after he had healed the poor man, he again turned to them with the question, 'Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?' they could not answer."

"I suppose they would not have counted it breaking the Sabbath to pull the ox or ass up out of the pit, would they ?"

"One of the questions gravely discussed among them turned upon this very point, and it had been decided that food might be let down, so that the poor beast should not starve, but that he might not be released until the Sabbath was over; how far their practice corresponded with their interpretation of the Law we cannot tell,—but we must not talk any longer to-night, dear children."

"Just one question more, Auntie ; was any one who liked allowed

to go into the synagogue to read and preach, as Jesus did when He came to Nazareth?"

"Yes, Charley; any one known by the ruler of the synagogue to be a good man, having some knowledge of the Scriptures, might read the lessons appointed for the day, one from the Law and one from the Prophets, and he might also address a 'word of exhortation' to those present. Have you ever thought how startled the congregation at Nazareth must have been on that day when the Man whom they knew as the son of Joseph, the One who had grown up, living His holy life among them, and whose father and mother they knew, after unrolling the volume of the Prophet Isaiah and reading from it the wonderful prophecy concerning Himself, rolled up the book and gave it to the attendant, and sat down, with the words, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears'?"

"I think I can say the verses which He read," said May; and she repeated, "'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' And Jesus Himself was the One who was doing all that," she added, softly; "no wonder the eyes of all those in the synagogue were fastened on Him."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SEA OF GALILEE AND THE COUNTRY OF OUR LORD.

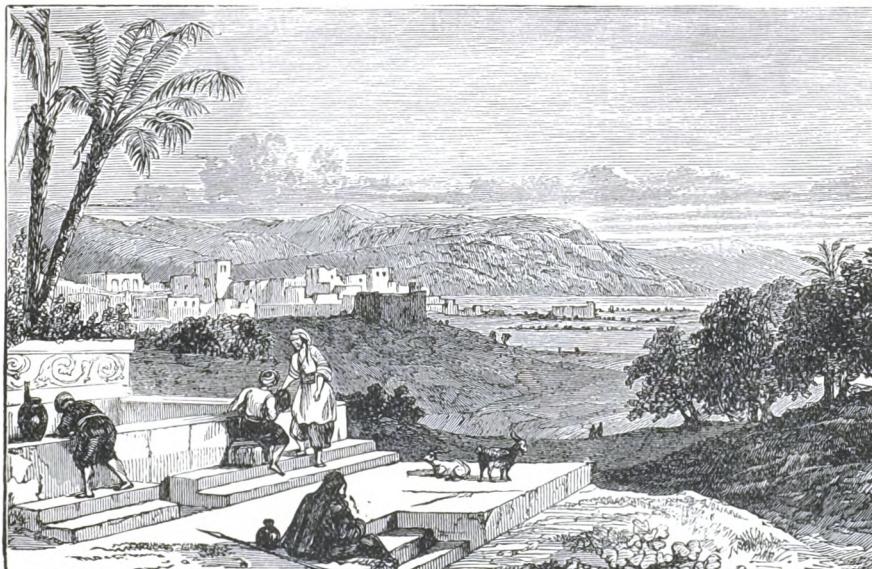
AUNT EDITH," said Charley, "can you tell us anything about the Sea of Galilee? It seems to be called by so many names, that I am often puzzled when I try to understand just *where* things in the Bible happened."

"Oh, and I do so want to know what it is like, and whether it has beautiful mountains round it, like those lakes we saw in Wales last summer," cried May.

"I think I must try to answer Charley's question first," said their aunt, "and then, May, I will tell you what travellers say about the lake itself. The whole province of Galilee has been well called 'the country of our Lord,' for His early years were spent at Nazareth, and it was in the small villages bordering on the lake that He 'went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.' This alone would be enough to make the name of Galilee a sacred name indeed to the Christian; but you must remember that it sounded very differently in Jewish ears, and in the time of our Lord to be a Galilæan was by no means an honourable distinction. The country was first called 'Gelil Haggioim'—Land of the Heathen; for, from long before the days of Joshua, a Gentile people had dwelt there."

"But did not the Jews try to turn them out?"

“Yes, indeed they did, Charley; but there these ancient tribes remained, and the country was still called ‘Galilee of the Gentiles.’ It increased in size as more strangers came into the land, so that in the time of our Lord it occupied a third part of Palestine. The population was then very mixed; the Greeks and Egyptians had built and fortified noble cities—Sephoris, which Josephus tells us was in his



CANA OF GALILEE.

time its largest city, and the seaport, Ptolemais, which has been called the ‘Dover of Galilee.’ These cities were full of pagan temples, and foreign governors lived there, protected by garrisons of Roman troops.”

“But did no Jews live there, Auntie?”

“Oh, yes, May; don’t you remember that Nazareth, and Caper-naum, and Cana were in Galilee?” said Charley. “But, Aunt Edith, you haven’t told me yet about the different names of the lake.”

"It was called in the time of Moses the Sea of Chinnereth, from a town of that name, the site of which is now unknown. We next hear of it as the Lake of Gennesareth. This name, which means 'Garden of Sharon,' was taken from the fertile plain lying near, the wonderful beauty of which is described by Josephus. Later still it was called the Sea of Galilee, from the province of which it formed the boundary."

"I think I remember that Tiberias was one of its names," said Charley; "it says in the last chapter of St. John that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias."

"Yes; Herod Antipas—the same King Herod before whom the Lord Jesus was brought for trial—built a new city on the western side of the lake, and called it Tiberias, in honour of the Roman emperor. This city has long since fallen into decay, but at the time when it was Herod's capital it was so important as to give its name to the lake. The Arabs still call it Tibaria, and the only name by which it is now known to the country-people is 'Bahr Tibaria,' Lake of Tiberias."

"I am glad it has the same name now as it had in the time when Jesus was here, Auntie," said May; "but," added she, thoughtfully, "I don't remember a word in the Gospels about Sephoris or Ptolemais, or about His going to the City of Tiberias."

"It is not likely that the Lord ever entered these stately foreign cities. He, who was meek and lowly in heart, would have been a Stranger indeed amid the pomp and luxury which made them so famous. You must remember, too, that He said, 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The Jews lived in villages of their own, for the foreign customs of the Greeks and Romans gave great offence to them, and the idolatrous worship practised by these strangers made everything connected with them 'unclean' to a strict Jew. He could not eat or drink at the same table with a Greek, or a Roman, or an Egyptian; in fact, everything he touched in a Gentile town defiled him. The little hill-side villages of Nazareth, Cana, or

Nain, and those bordering on the lake, as Magdala, Bethsaida, or Capernaum, were the scenes of the Lord's teaching, of His miracles, of His ceaseless acts of divine power and love."

"I suppose the Lord Jesus saw those splendid foreign cities just from a distance when He was in Peter's boat on the lake," said May; "but can people go to Capernaum and Bethsaida now?"

"You remember how the Lord spake of those cities—so favoured, yet so guilty—in which most of His mighty works were done, comparing them with Sodom and Gomorrah. It is remarkable that so entirely have the chief scenes of His ministry perished from off the face of the earth, that at this present time learned men are busy trying to find out as nearly as they can the places where Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida once stood."

"Perhaps they may dig up some stones with writing on them, if they hunt about where any ruins are to be found."

"No inscription has yet been discovered, Charley, which enables us to say with certainty where any of them stood. Major Wilson thinks he has found the site of Capernaum, which was called the Lord's 'own city,' in Tell Hûm, where there are extensive ruins; a regular cemetery has been discovered there, and a remarkable Jewish synagogue—'the white synagogue'—built of beautiful limestone. Two miles north of Tell Hûm lie some ruins which the Arabs call Kerazeh. Here, too, are remains of a synagogue, and this is believed to be the ancient Chorazin. If this is the case, the site of Bethsaida is further north, just where the Jordan falls into the lake. I think you will be interested in hearing of some tombs which Captain Warren found at Tell Hûm—one is made of limestone blocks, and is below the surface of the ground; the other, large enough to hold a great many bodies, is above ground, and bears marks of having been whitewashed within and without."

"That must have been one of the very tombs of which the Lord spoke—the 'whited sepulchres,' which indeed appear beautiful outwardly,

but are within full of dead men's bones. How dreadful it must have been to the proud Pharisees to be compared to such things! But now, Aunt Edith, will you tell us about the Sea of Galilee—the very sea over which Jesus came walking in the stormy night to the poor disciples, and on the shore of which He showed Himself to them after He was risen, and asked Peter three times, 'Lovest thou Me?'—Oh, how I should like to see it!"

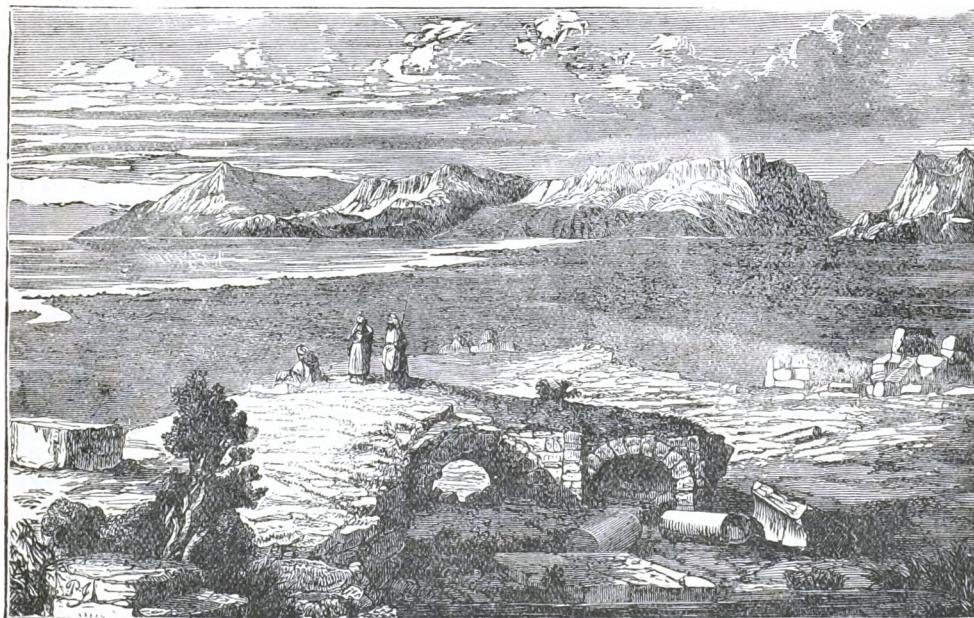
"It must look very different now that the country is all deserted, though of course the lake itself remains the same: low brown hills still surround it as of old, and beyond them the snowy peak of Mount Hermon rises, sharply defined against the clear Eastern sky. On the north side the Jordan enters—a swift, muddy stream, which can be traced far out into the lake, as, you remember, we used to trace the Rhone waters in the Lake of Geneva. There are beautiful little bays there, and at Gennesareth Major Wilson describes the beach as 'pearly white, with myriads of minute shells; on one side washed by the limpid waters of the lake, and on the other shut in by a fringe of oleanders, rich in May with their blossoms red and white.' He says he found it 'difficult to realize that the borders of the lake, now so silent and desolate, were once enlivened by the busy hum of towns and villages, and that on its waters hostile navies contended for supremacy.' The waters are said to be bright, clear, and sweet, and their surface is often blackened by shoals of fish."

"Ah! how long ago it is since Andrew and Peter were casting their nets there," said Charley, "when Jesus called them to Him, that they might become fishers of men."

"I think it must have been in one of those beautiful little bays by the shore that James and John were, sitting in their boat with their father mending their nets, when Jesus called *them* too," said May. "How kind it was of Him to care to have them with Him! It was very wonderful, wasn't it, Auntie?"

"We may well wonder at the love which led Him, who 'knew

what was in man,' to call around Himself those who, though deeply attached to their Master, were yet to grieve Him so often by their faithlessness, and to forsake Him at last. But I should like you to find one or two of the places of which we have been speaking upon the map, and then, perhaps, you will each tell me of any particular



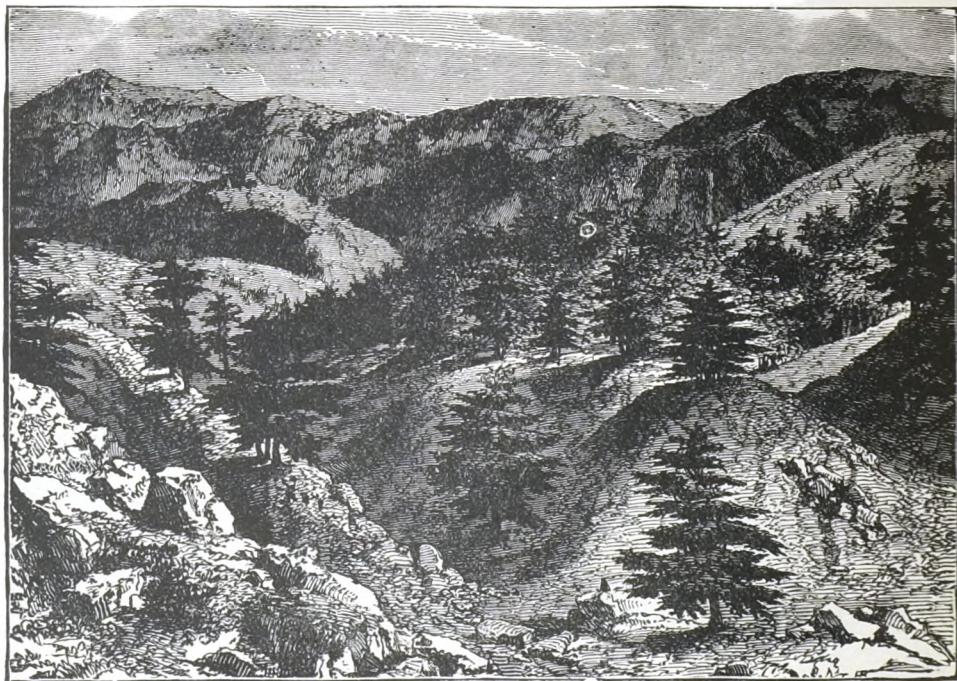
THE SEA AND PLAINS OF GALILEE.

scenes in the life of our Lord which you remember as having taken place there, for, you know, the shores of that lake, upon whose waters He trod, as you were reminding us, May, are associated beyond all other places, even of the Holy Land, with His ministry on earth."

'I know Nazareth must be in Galilee,' said May, 'for that was where the Lord Jesus was brought up. Nurse was teaching Freddy a verse beginning like this—

‘Saviour, to Thy cottage home
Once the daylight used to come ;
Thou hast often seen it break
Brightly o'er that eastern lake,’

and I said, ‘I wonder what lake that was,’ but she could not tell.”



MOUNT LEBANON AND ITS CEDARS.

“Yes, May, here it is”—and Charley pointed to the map. “I remember you told us, Aunt Edith, that the streets of Nazareth are so narrow and crooked that a traveller, when riding along, found himself upon a house-top. Is there anything very interesting in the town now ?”

“The Nazareth of to-day is described as beautifully situated upon one of the hills of the Lebanon range, upon the place where the

ancient village stood. The most interesting thing to travellers is the town well, the only place which they can be quite sure is unchanged since the times of which we read in the Gospels. I remember that one writer says, 'The Child Jesus must have trodden the path down to it, coming with His mother, as now the women, with their rolls of silver coins, go with their water-jars on their heads, their little ones trotting by their sides.'

"But what can the rolls of coins be for?"

"I should have told you, Charley, that the women of Nazareth wear cloth caps covered with silver coins—some few are rich enough to afford gold ones—and a fringe of coins hangs across their foreheads: the weight of silver which even little girls will wear upon their heads is astonishing."

"You spoke about Mount Hermon," said Charley; "and here it is, Aunt Edith, at the south of the lake."

"You will find Mount Tabor, the other mountain of Galilee, a little further north; it is a green hill with a rounded top, the sides dotted with trees, forming a striking contrast with the snow-clad Hermon," said his aunt.

"I know those two mountains are spoken of together—I think it must be in one of the Psalms—'Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name.' I should like Hermon best, for I remember how beautiful it was to see the white snow-mountains in Switzerland, looking so pure and cold, when all the grass in the valleys was brown with the hot sun."

"Mount Hermon has been called the Mont Blanc of Palestine, May," replied her aunt. "It must have been a great refreshment to the inhabitants of the once busy, populous district of Galilee to look upon those beautiful mountains; and we can believe that the eyes of the Lord Himself, as He

'Wandered as a homeless Stranger
In the world His hands had made,'

often rested upon that snowy peak, piercing the clear blue Syrian sky."

"It seems to me, now I think of it," said Charley, "that almost all the life of the Lord Jesus was spent in Galilee. You see, He was so many years at Nazareth, and then He went to be baptised by John the Baptist in Jordan, and then came back to Galilee again, and began to preach."

"You must not forget, Charley, that St. John tells us of our Lord's earlier ministry in Judæa and Samaria."

"Oh, yes," said May; "it was when Jesus was weary with His journey, as He was coming back to Galilee, that He sat on the well at

Sychar: see, that is between Judæa and Galilee. I should like to know, Auntie, if there are any beautiful flowers growing near the Sea of Galilee, besides those oleanders which are like a fringe to it."

"It depends upon the time of the year. In spring, all is green and lovely, and the scarlet anemones show like stars among the grass; the gay tulips, too, and tall blue iris may be found; but the scorching sun

of summer soon parches the land, and makes all brown and bare."

"Every now and then it says that Jesus and His disciples departed into a desert place; does that mean the real wilderness, or only a part of the country where there were no houses?"

"I will read to you what a very interesting writer says of these 'desert' or 'solitary' places, Charley. 'A remarkable feature,' he tells us, 'of the Lake of Gennesaret was that it was closely surrounded with desert solitudes. These desert places, thus close at hand on the table-lands or in the ravines of the eastern and western ranges, gave



THE OLEANDER.

opportunities of retirement for rest or prayer. Rising up early in the morning while it was yet dark, or passing over to the other side in a boat, He sought these solitudes, sometimes alone, sometimes with His disciples.”

“It was to a mountain, Aunt Edith, that Jesus went to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God; do you think that was Mount Tabor?”

“I believe no particular mountain is meant, May, but rather the hill country, what we should call the mountain-side. But I see you are poring over the map, Charley; do you want to find any particular place?”

“I was trying to find Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter; Philip came from it, too; but I see there are two Bethsaidas—look, Aunt Edith—one near Capernaum, and one at the very head of the lake, just where the Jordan flows into it.”

“The name of both towns means ‘house of fish,’ and both were near the lake. Western Bethsaida was the town of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, and was probably close to the water’s edge. The eastern town, Bethsaida-Julias, was growing into importance in the time of our Lord, for Herod had rebuilt it, and given it a new name to please the Emperor Augustus, whose daughter was called Julia. It was outside this town that the healing of the blind man took place.”

“Oh, I remember, he ‘saw men as trees walking,’ until Jesus touched his eyes again, and then he saw everything clearly,” said May. You said we might try to remember things which happened at the different places,” she continued, “and I should like to remember that scene when the thousands of people sat down upon the green grass, and were fed with five loaves and two fishes; but I can’t tell where it happened.”

“By comparing the accounts of the feeding of the five thousand given in the Gospels, we find that the ‘desert place’ to which our Lord invited His disciples to come ‘apart and rest awhile’ was near

this modern Bethsaida. They left Capernaum, crossed the lake, and landed somewhere near the mouth of the Jordan, where the grassy plain was covered with the rich verdure of spring, for it was the time of the Passover, about April. If you refer to the sixth chapter of St. John, May, you will see why it was that such great multitudes, when they saw the boat in which the Lord and His disciples had set sail leaving Capernaum, ran round to the north of the lake, and met them as they landed."

"I have found it," said Charley, "and the lake is called 'Tiberias' here. The multitude followed Jesus 'because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased ; and Jesus went up into a mountain.' I suppose that means the hill-side, as you said, Aunt Edith ?"

"Yes ; we must imagine the crowds of people assembled in the plain below. How beautiful are the words in which St. Mark tells us that the Lord Jesus, when 'He saw much people, was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd ; and He began to teach them many things'—things concerning the kingdom of God, St. Luke tells us—and healed them that had need of healing. Probably many among the crowds were pilgrims travelling from Northern Galilee to keep the Passover at Jerusalem."

"I daresay that was why so many people were 'coming and going,' so that Jesus and His disciples had not time to eat. *We* should be quite vexed to be followed and interrupted like that," said May, "but the Lord Jesus was different in every way from us."

"You may well say that the blessed Son of God, as He passed through this world, was unlike us, May. Do you remember His words after He had been talking—His brief hour of rest broken, for He could not rest where sin and misery were—to the Samaritan woman, when His disciples prayed Him to eat the food which they had brought ?"

"He said, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work,'" said May, reverently.

"I was thinking how much two hundred pennyworth of bread would have been," said Charley, "for I know their pence were worth more than ours."

"When Philip spoke of the two hundred denarii, he wished to show how large a sum of money would still be insufficient to meet the wants of the multitude. A penny a day was the wages of a day labourer, and was equal to about sevenpence-halfpenny of our money. Two hundred pence would be as much as he could earn in a whole year—about £7. The country people were poor then, though not so poor as they are now, and the barley loaves and dried fish which the little lad of the company had with him were just samples of their ordinary food. I must tell you," continued Aunt Edith, "that, where we read that the Lord commanded His disciples to make them all sit down 'by companies upon the green grass,' the word translated 'companies' means rather 'parties,' having the idea of social groups gathered together, and the word translated 'ranks' does not mean rows, but rather beds of flowers or herbs."

"It makes one fancy what a beautiful picture it would have made, if there had been any one there to paint it—the people all sitting round waiting, while the Lord Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves. I suppose 'blessed' means the same as 'asked' a blessing, as papa does?"

"It *may* just mean that, for St. John tells us that the Lord 'gave thanks,' Charley. We are not told what He said, but it was the custom for the father of a family to ask a blessing on the food, in such words as these, 'May God, the ever blessed One, bless what He has given us.'"

"Still I should like to know what the Lord really said, and I often think I should like to have seen how it all happened—whether the pieces of bread grew larger in the hands of the disciples."

"I don't think it is a good plan to try to imagine how the wonderful works done by the Lord Jesus came about, Charley," said his aunt. "Let us reverently study every detail which God has been

pleased to give us through the pens of those who were eye-witnesses of them, but remember that our own imaginings and the thoughts of our hearts can only lead us astray when they try to find out more than God has told us in His word. It is enough for us to know that the loaves and fishes were 'brought to Jesus,' and that, receiving the food from His gracious hand, the disciples distributed it to that great multitude, and that everyone was satisfied ; not one was left out or forgotten, but all had 'as much as they would.'

"I daresay the disciples were surprised that they should be told to gather up the fragments," said May, "and it must have been tiresome work picking the crumbs up from the grass ; but I suppose the Lord wished to teach them not to be wasteful. What sort of baskets did they use then, Aunt Edith ?"

"Those mentioned in connection with this miracle were the small baskets of wicker-work in which the people used to carry their food. You may remember that, in the account of the feeding of the four thousand in Decapolis, we are told that they took up seven baskets of the broken pieces which were left. These baskets were much larger, and were made of twisted rope."

"That must have been a very large basket in which St. Paul was let down, when he escaped from Damascus."

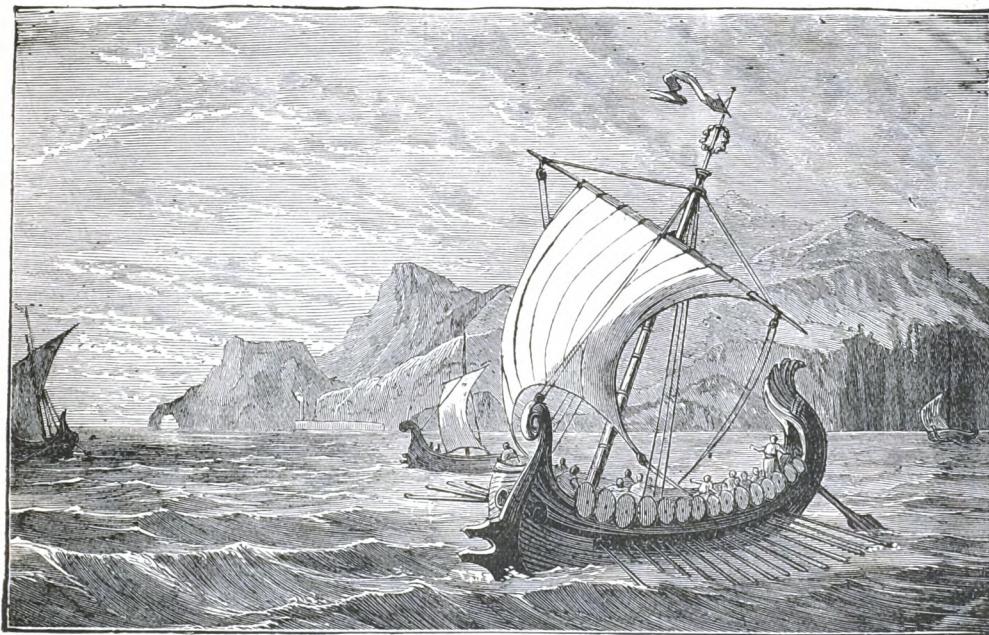
"I was just going to tell you, Charley, that that was one of the rope baskets. But what were you asking, May ?"

"I wanted to know, Auntie, whether there are ever storms now upon the Sea of Galilee as there were in those times. You know you said the lake was not very broad, and yet the disciples were 'toiling in rowing,' and could not get to the other side, until Jesus came into the ship and the wind ceased."

"Oh, yes," said Charley, "of course there must be storms now ; for however much people may change, lakes and mountains do not alter."

"Sudden storms are common to all inland seas, May," said Aunt Edith. "You know," she continued, "how calm and still the blue

lake used to look when you were in Switzerland? Sometimes, however, by a sudden rush of wind sweeping through the mountain valleys, its placid surface is broken up into a thousand waves with white foamy crests: just so it is with the Sea of Galilee. I read an



SEA OF GALILEE.

account, not long ago, of a party of travellers having started in fair weather to sail across; but, before they reached the middle of the lake, they had to take down their sails, for the waves were beating into their boat, and threatened to overwhelm them."

"I can not find Decapolis, where you said the four thousand were fed; which side of the lake was it?"

"It was the country to the east and south-east, Charley; I think you know enough about words to understand that the name means 'ten

cities.' When the Romans conquered Syria they gave special rights to these cities, and the district took its name from them."

"We read a good deal about fishing in the New Testament," said Charley, thoughtfully; "perhaps it was because several of the disciples were fishermen. I wonder what their boats were like, and whether fish are caught now just as they were so long ago; you always say that the ways of doing things have changed as little as possible, Aunt Edith."

"We do not know much about the boats, though there seems no doubt that in the time of our Lord there were a great number, both for fishing and merchandise, plying up and down the lake. Now all around it is so silent and deserted that Dr. Robinson tells us that as he drew near he saw 'a single white sail,' and found it belonged to the one crazy boat which was used, not for fishing, but for conveying travellers from place to place."

"Then is there no fishing now? Surely the fish are not gone: you said there were shoals of them."

"It is not so much that the fish have deserted their old home as that the fishing is neglected, Charley; there are said to be fourteen different kinds of fish in the lake, though many of them are not good for food. The best is a sort of trout, which is caught in a curious way."

"Oh, do tell us about it."

"The fishermen do not use a rod, but merely tie some hooks, made to look as much like thorns as possible, at short intervals upon a piece of cord; they bait these hooks with shrimps, and then, standing upon the shore, throw the line as far as they can into the water, and seldom fail to catch a fish; but I should have told you that the line is weighted with bits of lead, so that it does not float upon the surface."

"Peter was told to cast a hook into the sea, and the first fish which came up was the one which gave him the piece of money for the tribute. Perhaps he fished just in the same way, by throwing a cord from the shore."

"I think it is very likely, Charley. Fish are often taken now by the easy means of throwing poisoned crumbs into the lake. the poor fish eat them greedily, soon turn over quite dead, and are washed ashore, and taken to market."

"Oh, Aunt Edith, what a way of fishing!"

"You see, there is no deep-water fishing now, and the people do not care how they catch the fish so long as they get them."

"I wonder what sort of a net that was which Simon and Andrew were casting into the sea when the Lord Jesus said, 'Come ye after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men'?"

"It is believed to have been a round net, which was thrown from the shore, a 'casting-net.' The word used by St. Luke in the account of the miraculous draught of fishes is different, and means a bag, or basket-net, which might be let down into the deep water from a boat. Again, in the similitude in the thirteenth of St. Matthew, the net to which the kingdom of heaven is likened is a great drag-net, let down from a boat, and pulled in by fishermen standing upon shore, and landing the fish upon a shelving bank. This sort of net is used in England, and is sometimes half a mile in length."

"I remember," said Charley, "that net 'gathered of every kind,' good fish and bad."

"You see that a large hauling-net must bring in fish of all kinds," said his aunt. "These differences in words may seem small and unimportant, but words have a mighty power of their own, and remember, dear children, everything which may help us to understand the Bible better is worthy of our careful study."

CHAPTER XIII.

ABOUT DRESS.

AND now," said Aunt Edith, after Charley and May had been giving her a full and particular account of their week in the country, "*I must tell you something.*"

"What is it?" said Charley; "*you* have not been away."

"And so I can have nothing to tell, you think. Well, though I have been staying quietly at home, certain tales concerning travellers have reached my ears, and one of them is about the pleasant talkings and readings grandmamma and her dear grandchildren had together. A little bird told me that *she* liked them very much; what do the children say?"

"Oh, we had the best times of all with grandmamma," said May; "we were going to tell you, Aunt Edith, for those talks with her were a little like a great many we have had with you; though we generally read to grandmamma, yet she often let us stop and ask questions, and speak of what we had been reading."

"And what books did you read, May?"

"Only one besides the Bible, all about a Jew boy, Isaac—what was his other name, Charley?"

"Levinsohn," said Charley.

"Oh, yes, Isaac Levinsohn. He was a Russian boy, Auntie, who is not much more than twenty now; so, you see, he tells about things among his people just as they are at this time, and that makes it

more interesting. Isaac had a good Jew for his father, one who fasted every Monday and Thursday, as the Pharisees did; and he wanted his son to be a learned and wise man, so he gave him to the charge of a rabbi, who taught him all that a Jewish boy ought to know."

"And he thought more of his rabbi than of his own parents," said Charley, "for he says that quite as much as the words of the Bible, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' he respected the words of the Oral Law, which says, 'The fear of the rabbi is as the fear of God.' They call the Oral Law the Talmud now, and after awhile Isaac's rabbi tried to make him give up the Bible and read nothing but the Talmud; and he studied so hard that, when he was ten years old, he passed an examination before several rabbis, and they were all pleased with him, and said he might become one himself when he was grown up."

"But did he give up reading the Bible—I mean, of course, the Old Testament?"

"No, Auntie. Isaac loved the Bible much better than the Talmud, which was only like a lesson-book to him, and a very hard lesson-book too; and so he used to read it at night and early in the morning; then he used to go to the synagogue, with his phylacteries on, to pray, and he tried to serve God in the way his rabbi told him."

"But one thing made him unhappy all the time," said Charley; "he was always thinking about his sins. He did not so much mind when he was a little boy, because he was told that his father would bear his sins for him until he was thirteen; still he kept thinking what he should do when the day came on which he should begin to bear his own sins. He had a very unhappy thirteenth birthday, for, when he said, 'Father, won't you bear my sins a little longer—even a month longer?' his father said, 'No, my son; you must bear them yourself now, I can do no more for you.'"

"And his rabbi, too, could teach him, but he could not bear his

sins for him," said May; " and so at last, Aunt Edith, what do you think happened ? "

" I am sure I cannot tell, unless God taught him, by His word, to know One who had done for him what his father and his rabbi could never do."

" He did go on reading the Bible," said Charley, " and one day he read how God had called Abraham to go out from his country and his kindred. The more he thought of it, the more sure he felt that God was calling him in the same way, and at last he made up his mind to go away from his father's house, as Abraham did, and he told his parents that he must leave them; for, perhaps, he might find peace away from home."

" Poor boy; and did he really go ? "

" Yes; his parents could not bear to part with him, but when they saw that his heart was set on going, they gave him their blessing, and away he went, all by himself, to travel from Russia to Germany. His father wrote him a parting letter, bidding him keep his phylacteries perfect, and keep the oral and written laws."

" And did no one befriend him on his travels, May ? "

" I can't remember very much, Aunt Edith, but I know that he often had not enough to eat—sometimes he lived upon potatoes, which he took from the fields as he passed along—and he grew more and more unhappy until, after he got to Germany, as he was wandering about, he even thought of killing himself."

" But there are so many Jews in Germany. Did he not find any of his own people who would be kind to a poor lonely boy from a strange country ? "

" Some Jews were kind to him," said Charley, " especially one family who had known his mother, but, when he spoke of what was troubling him, no one understood him. At Hamburg he went into the synagogue to pray, and he rejoiced when he saw the holy ark at the east end, with a beautiful veil hanging over it, and upon the veil

the name JEHOVAH in letters of gold : he approached quite near to pray, and then felt much happier."

"But he was soon unhappy again," said May, "for, when he went to the inn, they put him to sleep in a room where there was no little box over the doorpost—they ought to put a box with some passages of Scripture in it, a sort of phylactery, over the doorpost, to remind them of how the blood of the Passover lamb was put upon their doorposts in Egypt. Isaac could not sleep in that room, so he asked leave to change to one where there was a box over the door."

"But you have not told me how he made himself understood, now he was in Germany ; did he speak German ?"

"I think he got on pretty well in Germany, Aunt Edith," said Charley, "but when he came to England, he did not know what to do. Do you remember, May, how he went to a shop in London, and said, 'Gib mir a pen,' because he thought he could write better than speak ?"

"Oh yes, and how whenever he met a Jew, even in London, he saluted him, and said, 'Peace be unto you.'"

"Poor boy, it must have had a friendly sound to him, that familiar greeting, in a strange country !"

"Very soon after he came to London he met with a German who had been a Jew. Mr. Stern—for that was his name—noticed his sad look, and said to him, 'Are you a Jew, my brother ?' Then Isaac told him all his story, and found that he, too, had once left his home and his country to find rest for his soul."

"Was not that wonderful, Auntie ?" said May. "I am sure God must have let them meet ; for Rabbi Stern, as Isaac called him, was a Christian now, and he could show him the true way."

"And he was so much surprised when Mr. Stern showed him those verses in the fifty-third of Isaiah, and other chapters—he did not know what to think ; but still he was glad to go to Rabbi Stern's house, and he loved him, and felt towards him as if he were a great prophet

like Elijah, yet he did not like to hear him always saying, 'Believe in the Messiah.' "

"But very soon he did begin to trust in Jesus," said May, "and he wrote to his father, saying—

"I heard a sweet, unknown voice say
 'Come unto Me and rest ;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon My breast.'

I suppose he did not wish to mention the name of Jesus to his father, knowing that it would only offend him, and so he changed the first line of the hymn. Still he did speak of Him, for he said that the words of the Messiah, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest,' seemed just to suit one who was so weary and worn out as he was."

"What did his father say?"

"Oh, he begged him not to listen to the Christians, but to hold fast what he had been taught from his childhood. He said he must not believe that the Messiah *had* come, but that He *would* come; 'Our eyes are sightless,' he said, 'with crying for the Messiah, who ought to have come long ago, and would have come, but for the sin of Israel.'

"But Isaac wrote back to his father," said May, "those very words from Isaiah which Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth, when He 'stood up for to read,' and he said that those words gave the character of the Messiah as Rabbi Stern spoke of Him, and that he was quite sure that if the Christian religion were not the true religion, then the Bible itself could not be true."

"You see, Aunt Edith," said Charley, "all this time he had been reading about the Messiah in the Old Testament—he had not once seen a New Testament; but now his friend gave him one, and as he read it, it seemed just like a key to unlock all the hard things which he had not understood before, and the next time he wrote home he said, 'The Messiah has come, and I believe in Him.' "

"But did he also learn," said Aunt Edith, "that the Messiah who had come had died to be his Saviour, and did he indeed find rest?"

"Oh, yes," said May, "he did indeed. He found that even the love of his dear parents was nothing like the love of Jesus; they could not help him, though they would have given their lives for him, but the Lord Jesus made him quite happy, and was his friend when his parents forsook him."

"They were dreadfully angry," said Charley, "when they found that their son had really become a Christian. His father and mother and sister all wrote to him, begging him not to break their hearts and bring them to shame by becoming a disciple of the Nazarene; for, you know, they thought Jesus was only a man, and a wicked man, who had deceived many people. When they found they could not turn Isaac away from his faith, they said he was no longer their son, that they once had a dear son Isaac, but now they knew him no more."

"Wasn't it dreadful, Auntie? And all the letters which he wrote came back to him, for no one at his home would take them from the postman, and they just counted him dead."

"He must indeed have been in need of comfort, May."

"You remember that verse in the Psalm, Aunt Edith—'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up'?"

"Yes, I remember, Charley."

"Those words were the greatest comfort to Isaac. He had often read them before, and repeated them when he said the Psalms through, as his old rabbi taught him to do; but now they seemed quite fresh, as if he had never seen them before, and he was happier than he had ever been. I remember," he continued, "one thing which he said, to show how happy he was, 'Above all, why I believe in Jesus is because I feel that the yearning of my soul He has silenced.'"

"That is very beautiful," said his aunt. "I am glad," she continued, "that you have been able to remember, and bring home for me to share it with you, such an interesting story of the way in which this

young Jew was brought to believe that the One who grew up as a child in His lowly home at Nazareth was indeed the Son of God, the wonderful One of whom the prophets had spoken; and that the Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected of men, was the One who had borne *his* griefs and carried *his* sorrows, by whose stripes *he* was healed."

"Now that we have told you all that we can remember," said May, "perhaps, Auntie, you will not mind telling us a little about the clothes people used to wear long ago in Palestine. The disciples were told not to put on two coats, but I should have thought in such a hot country they would be glad to wear as little as possible."

"And I want to understand about the fringes," said Charley, "those fringes which they wore at the four corners."

"I shall be glad to tell you all I can," replied their aunt, "but we do not know very much certainly, and can only imagine what the dress in old times may have been from noticing what is now worn by the Arabs."

"I have often wondered what the mantle of Elijah was like," said May.

"Then I am sure you will be surprised to hear," replied her aunt, "that it was probably merely the skin of a sheep or goat with the wool on; such sheep-skin cloaks are still worn in the East, where the changes from heat to cold are much more sudden than we should imagine. It has been thought that this rough outer garment was generally worn by a prophet, as in some way characteristic of his office. Zechariah speaks of the time when the 'prophets shall be ashamed . . . neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive'; and the

Lord warned His disciples to 'beware of false prophets, which come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.'"



ARAB DRESS.

"And John the Baptist was clothed with raiment of camel's hair," said Charley; "was that part of the skin of a camel?"

"I think not; it must have been a coarse cloth not unlike the sackcloth worn by mourners, which was woven from the rough shaggy hair of the camel; for of the fine hair a cloth of beautifully soft texture was made."

"I suppose woollen cloths must have been worn in the very early times, because all the people kept sheep."

"You are right, May; sheep-shearing is spoken of in the Book of Genesis."

"Then I wonder whether all the dresses were of the same colour, just white; though, I forget, there must have been black sheep too."

"I believe black sheep are now very uncommon in Palestine, though brown ones are often seen there. Scarlet thread is mentioned in Genesis, so you need not imagine the dresses of the patriarchs as having been all white or brown."

"Then there was Joseph's coat of many colours, Auntie. Do you know, long ago I used to think it must have been made of patchwork, in some splendid pattern!"

"There is some doubt whether the coat which Jacob gave to his best-loved son, and which was brought back to him stained with blood, was 'of many colours'—the word describing it may be translated, we are told, 'a long coat with sleeves'—but we have abundant proof that the art of dyeing was known to the Israelites before they went into Egypt, in which country they are believed to have learnt how to weave linen, for the 'fine linen' of Egypt was very celebrated."

"When we went to that lecture the other day," said Charley, "there was something said about that, and also about how the Jews were forbidden to wear a dress made of wool and linen mixed. We saw the dress worn by an Arab now, and as you say, things have altered so little, I can fancy what the ancient dresses must have been like better than by only hearing you tell about them. I should think

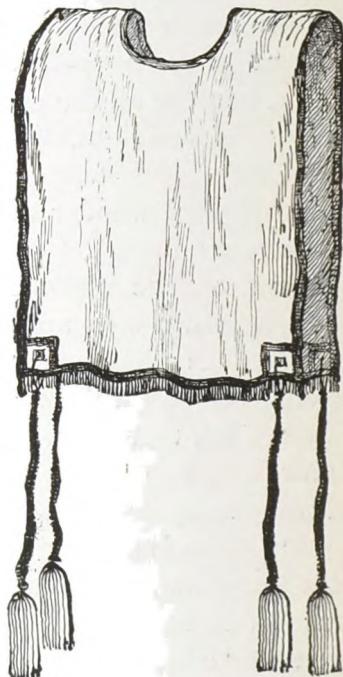
men could not do much work if they always went about with such long robes, like dressing-gowns, trailing after them."

"I think you know more than I do about the dresses, Charley, for I have never seen any of them; but I will tell you what I have read on the subject, for a knowledge of what purpose the different garments served helps to make some passages of Scripture plainer. The word translated 'coat' does not mean the outer garment, as with us, but the inner one, rather like our shirt or vest, but much longer. This was made of wool, or linen, and was girt round the waist, so as to fold over, and this fold made a pocket. A man who was clad only in this inner garment was spoken of as 'naked,' as Peter was when he girt his fisher's coat about him and cast himself into the sea to meet the Lord. Over this inner tunic another was often worn. May was surprised that the disciples should have been told not to put on two coats, but it was usual, when on a journey, to wear two of these inner garments, and they added very little to the heat."

"Yes, I understand now, Aunt Edith; I shall never think again that a 'coat' in the Bible means a heavy, warm thing like a great-coat; but what was the outer garment like? The Arab's dress which we saw seemed like a rug more than anything else; didn't it, Charley?"

"Just like a square woollen rug or plaid; was that girt, too, Aunt Edith?"

"Yes, this outer garment, being long, and worn over the shoulders, with the ends, to which the fringes were attached, hanging down



GARMENT WITH FRINGE.

in front, was girded so as to form a second pocket; the words 'good measure.....shall men give *into your bosom* apply to the habit of carrying things in the fold of the robe. You can easily see, Charley, that while this heavy mantle was left at home by a man when at work —'he that is in the field,' our Lord said, in allusion to this, 'let him not return back to take his clothes'—or thrown off when in haste, as by the blind man who 'cast away his garment as he rose and came to Jesus,' it was necessary for a man when on a journey, if any energetic action were required, to gird his long loose robe tightly about him; the expression 'girded loins,' therefore, gives the idea of perfect readiness for immediate action, all that would hinder it being removed."

"I remember," said Charley, "how those men who stoned Stephen laid down their clothes—that must have been their outer dress—'at a young man's feet whose name was Saul,' and how St. Paul afterwards said that he was consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

"Then it says that Elijah girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab's chariot," said May, "and you know when Elisha sent Gehazi on before him, to lay his staff upon the face of the Shunamite's child, he said 'Gird up thy loins, and go.'"

"And the angel said to Peter, 'Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals,'" added Charley. "I suppose, Aunt Edith, the hats which the three children wore in the burning fiery furnace were turbans, such as the Arabs wear now?"

"I was reading some time ago, Charley, that learned men believe that the 'hosen' and 'hats', mentioned in that wonderful chapter in the Book of Daniel answer, the one to the inner and the other to the outer garment worn by the Hebrews. If this is the case, it is interesting as showing that the captive Jews were still allowed to wear their own dress; but what it most concerns us to know, in connection with the clothes of these faithful young men, is that so complete was their

deliverance from the devouring flame that even the smell of fire had not passed upon them."

"I was thinking," said May, "of how, when the Lord Jesus came riding into Jerusalem, the people cast their garments in the way; now I understand that they only took off those loose rugs, and were quite dressed without them. Was it the custom, when they wanted to do honour to a person? You know how Sir Walter Raleigh laid down his cloak for Queen Elizabeth to walk upon it."

"It was and still is done in the East, as a mark of respect, or of desire to welcome a great man. I remember reading that the crowds at Bethlehem threw their garments under the feet of the English Consul, whose aid they were imploring."

"When Jonathan gave David so many things, after his return from the slaughter of the giant," said Charley, "his girdle is mentioned, with his sword and his bow, as if it were the chief part of his dress. I suppose it was a very grand one. Do they still wear girdles in the East?"

"I believe they are worn by both men and women. The girdle was made of linen, often richly embroidered, and one end of it, being turned back, formed a purse."

"The disciples were told not to take money in their purses," interrupted May.

"The word there used means 'girdles,'" said her aunt, "and just illustrates this use of the fold formed by tucking in the end of the long piece of cloth which has been wrapped round the waist. I should have told you," she continued, "that the priests' girdles were made of linen, worked with scarlet, purple, and blue."

"'No scrip,'" repeated Charley, thoughtfully. "What was that, Aunt Edith?"

"A wallet for food. I have seen one of those used by the shepherds in the Lebanon district, which was merely the skin of a kid, slung at the side."



EASTERN MANNERS AND DRESS.

"I daresay David's scrip, into which he put the smooth pebbles from the brook, was just like that," said May. "Then the disciples were to be shod with sandals, not shoes. I don't quite understand the difference."

"Oh, a sandal is only a shoe for the soles of the feet," said Charley. "Made of wood, isn't it, Aunt Edith? You know, May, the monks, long ago, always wore sandals, unless they went barefoot."

"Sandals, such as were worn by the poor in the East, were made of wood, or leather, fastened by strong thongs over the instep; this thong, or lace, was called the latchet. The office of carrying and unfastening the sandals of great men fell to the meanest of their slaves."

"And that was what John the Baptist said he was not worthy to do for Christ, because he knew that, although He might look like a poor man, He was the Son of God," said May. "I always thought," she continued, "that a latchet must be a sort of clasping thing, like the latch of a door."

"It simply means a little lace, May. You must remember what I told you of the custom of taking off the sandals, or slippers, upon entering a house. They were given to a servant to 'bear,' and you can form some idea of how menial an office that of unfastening them was accounted, when I tell you that there is a saying signifying that all services which a servant does for his master a disciple does in like manner for his teacher, except unloosing the shoes."

"When it says that Mary wrapped the Child Jesus in swaddling clothes, what does that mean—a long robe?"

"No, May, it refers to the custom of the country of fastening wrappings of linen tightly around the body of an infant, so that the legs and arms were confined."

"I am sure our baby may be glad that he was not born in the East, for he does so love to kick his little legs about, and to clap his hands. Can you tell us how the older children were dressed, Aunt Edith?"

"I have read that, when they were three years old, they put on, for the first time, the fringed outer garment."

"Oh, now you are coming to the fringes," said Charley; "will you tell us about them?"

"We find in the Book of Deuteronomy that God commanded every Israelite to wear at each corner of his upper garment a fringe, or tassel, of blue; two 'fringes' hung down at the bottom of the dress, and one at the shoulder, where it was fastened. It is thought that the 'hem' of our Lord's garment, which was touched by the poor woman of whom we read in the gospels, was one of these fringes. I should tell you that the Pharisees were very particular about the number of threads of which their fringes were composed; they wished them to correspond with the number of precepts which they reckoned that the Law contained."

"But God gave His people the fringes at first to remind them that they belonged to Him; I remember hearing that explained once," said Charley. "I suppose," he added, "when the soldiers 'parted the raiment' of Christ after they had crucified Him, the 'coat,' which was without seam, for which they cast lots, must have been that inner garment of which you were telling us."

"Yes, Charley, and it is thought that the prophecy concerning the 'parting of the garments' of our blessed Lord was fulfilled by the four soldiers dividing among them, perhaps by loosening the seams, the large square outer garment. By-and-by, when you are able to read the New Testament in the language in which it was written, you will find that there are different words used for these outer and inner garments, and I hope you will always remember that every 'little' difference, as we should call it, is of very great importance, and should be carefully noticed when we are reading the Bible."

CHAPTER XIV.

ABOUT DRESS.

(Continued.)

“**W**E have been thinking of all sorts of things to talk about this evening,” said Charley, “because, you see, this is our last chance, Aunt Edith, if you really are going away to-morrow.”

“I am afraid we shall not get on very well if we try to talk about ‘all sorts of things.’ Charley,” said his aunt, smiling; “Suppose you tell me what you have been particularly thinking about since our last talk; we were speaking then of the different garments worn in the East, were we not?”

“Yes, Auntie,” said May, “and Charley thought yesterday of one thing which you had forgotten: he said you had not told us a word about wedding garments, and you know they are mentioned in the Bible, for there is the parable about the man who came to the marriage of the king’s son, and when the king came in to see the guests, he said, ‘Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?’ I have often wondered how it was—perhaps he was too poor to buy a proper dress, for the people were called from the highways and hedges; and yet, when the king asked him how it was he had come without one, he was speechless—he did not say one word to excuse himself. What do you think, Aunt Edith?”

“I think, dear children, that when that solemn question was put to him, the man who had dared thus to intrude into the presence of the

king was speechless because he had not a word to say, not an excuse to offer. It was the custom for the giver of the feast to provide dresses for all who were invited to a wedding; therefore, for any one to present himself among the guests in any other dress, however fitting it might be in his own eyes, was an insult to him who had not only provided the feast but also the garments in which the guests were to appear at it."

"Oh, then, the man without a wedding garment *was* to blame," said May, "for he might have had one if he had chosen—just as the prodigal son had the 'best robe' brought forth and put upon him, instead of his own poor clothes," she added, thoughtfully.

"Just as any wanderer from the far country," said her aunt, "may now be 'clad in beauty not his own,' may now come to God, not in any dress of his own providing, but clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus rendered fit for His holy presence. As soon as we have the very faintest sense of what befits the presence of God, we feel our own unfitness to be there—our need of the 'wedding garment.'"

"I see," said Charley; "if the man had known what it was to be invited by the king, he would have felt that his own clothes would not do at all, and would have been glad to have a dress given him which would make him fit to be there. Will you tell me, Aunt Edith, who the 'children of the bridechamber' were?"

"Perhaps they were the ten virgins who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom," said May.

"I believe 'children of the bridechamber' meant the guests invited to a wedding," said their aunt, "or perhaps the companions of the bridegroom who went with him to fetch the bride home."

"How curious that they should be called children," said May.

"It is not an uncommon expression in the East, May; 'children of death,' or 'of the sword,' would mean those who were appointed to die. So we read of 'children of pride'; and our Lord spoke of the 'children of the kingdom,' 'children of this world,'—

"Oh, yes, and 'children of light,' and very often 'children of men,' said Charley. "Then who were the ten virgins, Aunt Edith? Were they the bride's companions?"

"I think I had better tell you a little about the marriage customs of the East, Charley," replied his aunt, "and then if you do not understand anything, you can ask me, and I will explain it if I can."

"Thank you, Auntie," said May; "I daresay we shall understand. When Charley asked about the 'children of the bridechamber,' I was just going to ask who the 'friend of the bridegroom' was. You know John the Baptist said, 'the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.'"

"You must not forget, May, that he added, 'this *my* joy therefore is fulfilled.' When I tell you," continued Aunt Edith, "that often as long a time as a year passed between the ceremony of betrothal and the marriage, and that during all that time it was not customary for the bridegroom to have any communication with his future wife, except by means of a friend, you will see that this friend of the bridegroom was very important to him, and also that when the marriage day had come, his office ended. In speaking of himself as the 'friend of the Bridegroom,' John, the forerunner of Christ, beautifully recognises this. As it has been said, he was 'near enough to Jesus to be glad and rejoice that Jesus was all.'"

"Did the bride have a wedding ring, Aunt Edith?"

"I don't know, May; but I have read that it is the custom among modern Jews for the bride to wear a ring from the time of the feast of betrothal."

"It says, 'Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?' so I suppose when the wedding day came, the bride wore a very splendid dress," said Charley.

"The Hebrew word translated 'attire,' Charley, is said to mean a bridal girdle; the bride also wore a wreath of flowers, but I cannot tell you much more about her dress. You must remember that the grand

marriage ceremony was the progress of the bride from her father's house to that of her husband; to this there are many allusions in Scripture. It was at nightfall, or even later, that the bridegroom, accompanied by his 'companions'—you may remember that Samson had as many as thirty—started from his house 'with the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness,' for he was attended by a band of singers, and with 'the light of a candle'; for as it was after sunset, when dark-



BRIDAL PROCESSION.

ness rapidly comes on, those who accompanied the procession carried lighted torches."

"In the parable, it must have been dark at the time of the procession," said May, "because it says, 'At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh.' But you have not told us about those virgins who took their lamps, Aunt Edith."

"I think they were, as you said, May, the bride's companions; they seem to have been in waiting that they might join the procession

as it passed from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom—for it was there, or at the house of his father, that the marriage feast was prepared."

"I wonder whether their lamps were like those of which you showed us a picture—I mean the earthen lamps which were found in tombs?"

"The word is the same as that translated 'lanterns,' Charley, where we read that those who came with Judas on the night of His betrayal to take the Lord carried 'lanterns, and torches, and weapons.' These 'lamps' or 'lanterns' were bundles of tow, steeped in oil, fastened to the end of sticks; such a light would be entirely dependent for its brilliancy upon the supply of oil, yet the flax might smoulder for some time after the oil was exhausted. If you remember this, you will understand the cry of the foolish virgins, 'Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out.'"

"They could not light the bridegroom home if they had no oil," said May, "and that was what they came for; so the only ones who went in with the bridegroom to the feast were those who were ready for him. It reminds me of that sad song Mabel used to sing—

'Too late, too late; ye cannot enter now!'"

"Can you think of any very beautiful dress, Charley," said his aunt, "which did not belong only to the wearer, but passed at his death to the one who succeeded him in the office which he filled?"

"I suppose you mean the king's robes," said Charley, doubtfully.



LAMPS.

"No, I believe you are thinking of the beautiful dress which Aaron wore."

"Oh, yes," said May, "because you remember how, before Aaron died upon the top of the mountain, Moses took off his garments and put them upon his son. You meant the high priest's dress, which his son wore after him, didn't you, Aunt Edith?"

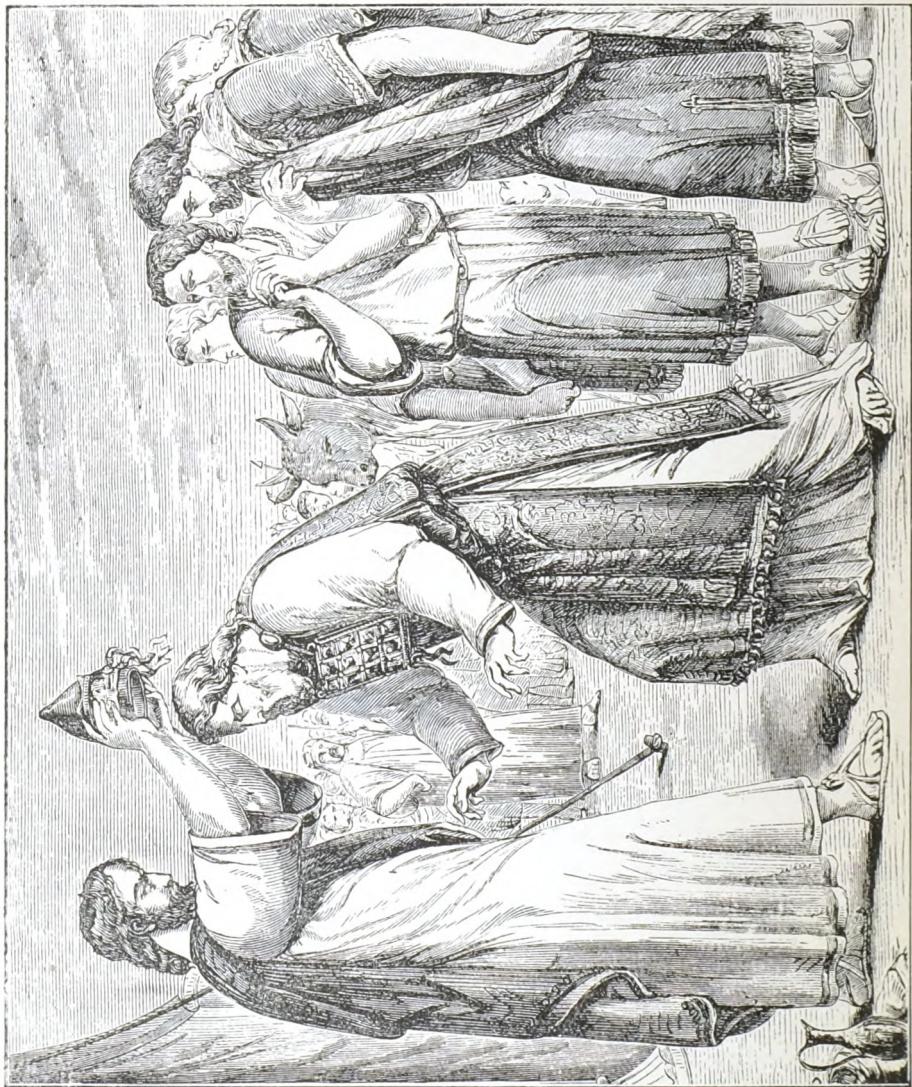
"Yes, May, I was thinking of those garments 'for glory and for beauty,' and I was going to ask you whether you had noticed that the ephod, to which the breastplate with its four rows of precious stones was attached, and as the breastplate itself, were made of the same material and of the same colours—gold, red, blue, crimson, and white—as the beautiful veil which hung before the most holy place in the tabernacle."

"I did not know that, Aunt Edith, but the other day, when we had been reading about the New Jerusalem—it is in nearly the last chapter of Revelation—papa said the precious stones which 'garnished' the foundations of the holy city were the same as those twelve stones which were set in the breastplate which Aaron always wore on his heart when he went in before the Lord."

"That is very interesting," said his aunt. "Can you tell me, May, what that beautiful breastplate, with its sparkling rows of gems, meant?"

"I cannot tell, Aunt Edith, but I know that every beautiful stone had the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved upon it, and that the breastplate was fastened to the ephod, so that Aaron must wear it always."

"You are quite right, May: when Aaron went in before the Lord, he carried upon his heart the names of God's people, and the light of the holy place only made those names shine the more brightly. Aaron was but a type of the Lord Jesus, who now in heaven bears ever upon His heart the names of His redeemed people. You know the names of the twelve tribes were also engraved upon the two onyx stones which clasped the ephod, and God said they were to be for a memorial



AARON'S BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS.

--‘Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial’: the shoulder is the place of strength, as the heart is the place of affection.”

“I do not understand what sort of a dress the ephod was.”

“It was made in two parts, Charley, the back and front being clasped together by these jewelled clasps, while it was fastened at the waist by the ‘curious girdle,’ embroidered with beautiful colours. The blue robe of the ephod, which was worn under it, had the border of which I am sure you remember reading—pomegranates, embroidered in blue, red, and crimson, with a golden bell between each.”

“I remember,” said May; I have always thought it must have been so pretty—‘a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate’—and the sound of the bells was heard, too, when Aaron went into the holy place and when he came out.”

“Then there was the mitre, Aunt Edith,” said Charley, with the broad gold plate, upon which ‘Holiness to the Lord’ was written; that was one of the garments ‘for glory and for beauty.’ I am glad you did not forget, when you were speaking about the dresses mentioned in the Bible, to speak of the most beautiful dress anyone ever wore.”

“There are hidden meanings and beauties in the holy garments with which God Himself clothed Aaron, which are much more wonderful than the garments themselves, with all their splendour of colour and of light. I hope, dear children, that these evenings, during which we have, as it were, just tried to take a peep from a distance—a passing glimpse here and there—at some of those manners and customs of the East, to which such constant allusion is made in the Bible, may not be quite forgotten by any of us. Remember that no detail, however trivial it may seem, is unimportant if it helps us to understand the sacred Scriptures, though God alone can teach us really to profit by the words which He has caused to be written for us, and to treasure them in our hearts, not only as His own message, but as His message to *us*.’

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