

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

From the New York Observer.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON

BY REV. HENRY M. GROUT, D. D.

August 10.—Absalom's Rebellion.
2 Samuel 15: 1-14.

GOEBY TEXT.—Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.—Ex. 20: 12.

Few things are so perilous as success. Dazed by it, many a man has forgotten his own weakness, and fallen from his own steadfastness. So it was with David. And the saddest chapter in his whole history is that which tells of his terrible fall. That was six years after his kindness to Mephibosheth. And twelve more have now been added, bringing us to the narrative of Absalom's rebellion. Of the things here brought to view several should have particular attention.

1. *The stern fidelity with which God corrects forgiven sin.*—David's repentance for his great sin, which culminated in the death of Uriah, was sincere and deep. He had also found pardon. To see how true was his repentance, and what blessedness came with the assurance that his sin was covered, read the fifty-first and thirty-second Psalms. But over, and over, we are taught that repentance and pardon do not remove all the present consequences of transgression. It is still needful that God should let the world see how he looks upon sin: needful that the sinner himself should be reminded of the same, and thoroughly humbled and wholly purified.

By the mouth of Nathan, David received the assurance of pardon: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin" (12: 13). But he was also reminded that, as he had "despised the commandment of the Lord," and "given great occasion to the enemy to blaspheme," many ills should follow him—"the sword should never depart from his house" (12: 19-14). So it proved. The last years of David were years of sorrow. And of Nathan's prediction, Absalom's rebellion was a part of the fulfillment.

We are not to imagine that we have done with sin even when it has been confessed, forsaken and forgiven. Its consequences are permitted to abide, partly as a testimony to others that God abhors it, and partly for the penitent's own chastisement and perfecting. Often, God's hand is heaviest on those who are most truly his own.

2. *The ills, to parents own children which come of parental weakness.*—How was it possible for a son of so godly a father to plot such a rebellion? David was not a wise father. He was indulgent with Amnon, whose sin he should have punished. And when Absalom avenged the sin, he neither punished Absalom nor fully forgave him. He did not conceal his special fondness for Solomon. Parental weakness may show itself in over-indulgence, undue severity, or favoritism. There was something of all these in David's course with his children. Absalom had not been well trained: he had not been wisely treated.

3. *The energy and stooping sagacity of self-assertion.*—Absalom's purpose was to make himself his father's successor. Possibly he had learned of the divine prediction that Solomon should be king (1 Chron. 22: 9). He would thwart that prediction.

Knowing how easily some others besides the rabble are taken with pomp and display, he begins with an appeal to the passion for that. He gets him chariots and horses and footmen. The horses will give him a foreign air, for David had ridden upon mules. The whole will make an impression of regal splendor. There will be a sensation when he drives out. Then knowing how numerous the restless and discontented always are, he sets himself both to enlist them and to increase their discontent. He gives them to understand that in his view they have been neglected and wronged; and more than hints that if he were king they should have attention and justice. It is possible that David had grown neglectful of his royal duties, though this is not at all certain.

In all this Absalom showed both energy and stooping sagacity. He rose early in the morning. He stood in the gate, where judges and kings were wont to sit, to hear causes. He listened with patience. He made himself agreeable and affable with all sorts of complainers. He used flattery, and got courtesy only. "These little ensnaring arts, and especially the kissing, must have been a trying experience to the haughty and elegant Absalom: but his plan required them." And he was equal to anything however costly and humiliating, which could help his scheme. Are we as energetic and condescending under the impulse of a heavenly as he was under that of an earthly ambition?

4. *Religion used as a cloak.*—Some time has been required to prepare the people for the proposed rebellion. Most likely the "forty" is an erroneous reading for four years. But Absalom has

been so successful that he would now advance another step. The time has come to take the rein of government into his own hands. Hebron had been the old capital of David's kingdom. There he could gather his forces and set up his standard. But how shall he do this without exciting suspicion? There is no better cloak in this world than religion. It speaks well for a man's integrity, for his loyalty to everything that is good. So Absalom asks to be permitted to go to Hebron to pay a vow; and David, all-unsuspicious, bids him go in peace.

5. *Sin impelling to more sin, and involving others in it.*—No sin ever is, or can be alone. What a series of base, wicked acts was required that Absalom's purpose might be effected! There was deception, falsehood, hypocrisy, at every turn and step. Then his scheme could not be accomplished without the co-operation of others. First he must steal the people's hearts. Then he must have a force of men of distinction to give dignity to his movement. He must needs have counsel also. The "two hundred men," who "went in their simplicity," might be brought over when the moment for action came, or at least retained as hostages: but no doubt Ahithophel was already a party to the plot. Had Absalom beforehand considered how many sins of his own and of others would be required for the accomplishment of a single purpose, in which he no doubt justified himself at the start? Here is one of the appalling facts respecting sin. The first necessitates a second; nay, an endless series of others. So men go from bad to worse; and find (save through wonderful grace) no point at which to turn back, or even pause. So one sinner leads many astray. Every sin seems a trifle at first; but (O, to what proportion it grows at last!

6. *The tendency of self-seeking to harden the heart.*—The last of these verses show us David, now growing to be an old man rising up to flee from his own loved son who has brought this evil upon him. Could anything be more cruel! of what hard ingratitude is the human heart capable! And such hardness is but the natural tendency and final result of any and every indulged selfish passion.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Our greatest ills are self-procured.
2. Vanity is a sign of moral weakness.
3. Do we often rise early to catch opportunities for doing good?
4. Flattery is the bad man's most effective means of corrupting others.
5. Betwixt the courteous and affable friend and the hypocrite who fawns to betray the difference is how wide.
6. To be deliberately false in one thing is to be ready, when temptation comes to be false in every other.
7. Are there no ways in which we use religion as a cloak?
8. The "simplicity" which allows itself to be blindly led does credit neither to the head or the heart.
9. Few sins are so unnatural and cruel as ingratitude to parents.

Fierce Western Wind

A DEATH DEALING STORM THAT WAS FT PROPERTY TO DESTRUCTION.

MILWAUKEE, July 24.—An unusually severe wind, rain and hail storm passed over Wisconsin on Tuesday night, making a wide track diagonally from the northwest to the southeast and passing clear over the state. The damage to the growing grain is very heavy, and the property damaged already reported will amount to \$100,000. At Jefferson, near Watertown, there was a furious tornado unroofing many buildings, and doing great damage generally.

The track of the storm was through the eastern part of the city. The following business houses were unroofed and stock damaged: Andrew Puerner & Co., merchants; Finch & Co., furniture warehouse; Muck and Co., grocery store and Stoppenboch's smoke house, and the Methodist Evangelical church and Roman Catholic church were unroofed and badly damaged. The fair ground building was totally demolished and scattered to the winds. A German by the name of Foundre was killed four miles northwest of the city by the blowing over of a barn. At Racine a new Methodist church not quite completed was demolished and many small buildings were more or less damaged. At Kewaskum a large sawmill and dam were wrecked and several barns destroyed by lightning. The giving way of the dam overflowed the town, causing much suffering and destroying the stocks of goods in several stores. A large new stone Catholic church was struck by the lightning and demolished near West Bend; loss about \$15,000.

At Whitewater the wind and rain did great damage to growing crops and shade trees. Barns were unroofed and chimneys blown down. Lightning struck one of the churches and damaged it considerably. The wind at Fond du Lac was as strong as a gale and barns and outbuildings were blown to pieces pretty generally. At Ashland a man was killed by lightning and considerable property was destroyed. At Lake Miles

two men were killed by lightning. Around Milwaukee the storm was very severe, but it had spent its fury before reaching the city. Several houses were struck by lightning, but there was no loss of life and the property destroyed is comparatively small. The greatest damage is to the crop of ripening grain. Wheat has been swept to the ground, and as the weather is hot and muggy the grain will spoil before it can fully ripen. A heavy electrical wave passed over the northwest last night, and the lightning, like the rain, fairly descending in sheets.

ST. PAUL, MINN., July 24.—A storm swept over Western, Central and Southern Dakota and Southwestern Minnesota about 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon and Valley City suffers \$100,000 worth of wrecked property, and a carpenter was killed and several other people injured, and workmen are actively engaged clearing the rubbish of the demolished building. The freight cars that were ditched at this place are on the track again. The breadth of the storm was from five to seven miles. Hail stones were as large as hen eggs, and dashed through the windows on the north side of the building. Woolsey and Carthage suffered greatly in this respect.

The Giant Wants a Divorce.

NEW YORK, July 23.—Colonel Routh Goshen, better known as Barnum's Arabian giant, has brought suit against his wife, Mary Louise Goshen, for divorce. The Colonel is eight feet high. His wife is an average size woman. She first met the Colonel when he was traveling with the Townsend show in Illinois. She was a cousin of the fat woman of the show and used to go in free and gaze admiringly at the Colonel. The Colonel was then married to Augusta White, the snake charmer of the show. Mary Louise was Miss Welsh, of Elgin, then and but fifteen years old. In 1879 she again met the Colonel in Chicago. He was still living with his snake-charmer on his New Jersey farm, but the same year he got a divorce from her on the ground of infidelity and in 1880 was married to Miss Welsh. They lived together until last fall, when the giant went West, sending two men to live on the farm near New Brunswick, N. J., and then in March began proceedings for divorce against his wife on the ground of infidelity with the strangers Mrs. Goshen is going to fight the suit and claims to have a perfect defense and at the same time proof that she ought to have a divorce from her giant.

Germans for Cleveland.

HOW A BOLT AGAINST BLAINE IN ILLINOIS IS TAKING FORM.

BELLELEVILLE, ILL., July 17.—A meeting of German Republicans was held here last night and a society formed for political purposes during the present campaign. The object of the society is to work for Cleveland and Hendricks and against Blaine and Logan. Sixty-two Republicans joined the organization last night, and it is expected that the number will be increased to two hundred at the next meeting. It is the intention to organize branches of the society all over the county and have almost the entire German Republican vote of St. Clair county cast for Cleveland and Hendricks. After the election the societies will break up and the members return to the Republican party and remain there providing the party gives them respectable candidates to vote for.

INDIANA will be all right in November. Senator VOORHEES, interviewed on an east-bound train by a Cincinnati reporter, on Tuesday last, said:

"The Democratic ticket, in my judgment, is the strongest that has been made since 1856. The ratification meetings in Indiana are spontaneous and immense, even on a few hours' notice. They are as large as those which occur usually at the close of a canvass. There is no doubt about Indiana going Democratic by a good strong majority. There is no disagreement in our State. Indiana clubs of Republicans who will not support Blaine are being formed all over the State. One was organized only yesterday in Indianapolis, in which were men who have heretofore led in Republicanism and who were conspicuous for their efficient work. I never knew better feeling in Indiana. I had a long talk with Mr. McDonald this morning. He is in fine spirits and is acting superbly. He will give the ticket an earnest, industrious and warm-hearted support. Mr. Hendrick's is also in excellent health and spirits, and entertains not a doubt of the ticket's success in Indiana and of its election."

"I am a base ball player, said the prisoner to the Judge. 'I'll tell you how it happened. 'Go on, sir.' 'I was at the bat. There were three men on bases. I asked for a low ball and reached back to strike, but it wasn't where I wanted it. Then this man—' 'Hold on, sir. Who do you allude to as this man?' 'The corpse, of course. Then this man shouted 'foul and out.' Then I brained him.' 'Who did you say he was?' 'He was the umpire.' 'Oh, I beg your pardon. You are discharged, sir. The clerk will enter the costs against the late umpire's estate.—E."

B. F. JONES, chairman of the republican national committee, was the first man in Pennsylvania to import Hungarian laborers. The New York Tribune and Philadelphia Press, the two leading organs of the republican party are so antagonistic to organized labor that they will not permit a member of the typographical union or other labor organizations to work in their establishments. These are the people who pretend to be solicitous for the welfare of labor. If labor is as intelligent as it seems to be, it will avoid that sort of friendship. "Beware of the Greeks bearing gifts."

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