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PRESS SONG.

They whirl and clash, through the sights and days,
The magical looms of thought;
And in and out, through a thousand ways,
The flashing threads are brought.
Their swift surveyors part and meet,
On throbbing wire and mighty chain,
On rail and ship, on mart and street,
With thrice three looms, and hurrying feet,
As the endless web is wrought.

They may not pause when the sun is high,
Nor rest when the light is low;
For while men live, and act, and die,
The word flies to and fro.
It leaps the sea, it spans the plain;
On throbbing wire and mighty chain,
It runs like fire from main to main,
That the world may see and know.

While all men sleep, they whirl and clash,
The terrible looms of light;
On eyes that wake shall the message flash,
From far beyond the night.
And songs in the under world begun
Shall touch our lips ere day is done;
For space is nought, and earth's at one,
Linked by the word's swift flight.

Man calls to man, and not in vain,
The cry to his ear is brought;
All love, and labor, and hope, and pain
Into each soul is wrought.
Work on, ye presses, at life's behest,
For light far spread, and for wrong repressed:
Till time is ended, ye may not rest,
Ye marvelous looms of thought!
—Marion Couthouy Smith, in Argosy.

THE DEATH OF PRINCE BRANCOVAN.

By "CARMEL STELLA." (Dr. E. Queen of Romania.)

Copyright, 1908.

It was in the year 1714. Constantinople was now nearly 60 years old; a wise prince, and much beloved by his people. Four handsome sons had been born to him, who were the pride of his house, and the consolation of his old age.

Renewing in these noble princes his own youth, Prince Brancovan and his still beautiful wife, with their daughter, Princess Roxandra, lived a simple, uneventful life in their capital city of Bucharest. The people looked upon the prince as their father, and he justified this attitude by the pains he took to make his rule a blessing to them.

There were certain individuals at the Porte willing enough to aggravate the anger of the sultan, and amongst these was a Greek doctor who had presumed to fall in love with the beautiful Princess Roxandra.

At last, having done all that he could to further ingratiate himself with Prince Brancovan, the Greek approached the question. He dwelt upon his wealth (which he had taken care to give an appearance of during his stay in the capital), his influence with the Turks, his desire to see Wallachia freed from her bondage, and, unfettered, beginning a nobler future. Then he touched upon his personal hopes. But he had hardly expressed himself before the prince interposed. Haughtily and emphatically he declared it impossible for such a request even to be considered.

He was just before Eastertide that the prisoners were forcibly dragged to Constantinople, and cast into the prison of the Seven Towers. This famous prison situated at the end of the land wall of Constantinople, where it meets the

Sea of Marmora. Many and harrowing are the tales of mystery and bloodshed associated with its ancient walls. This was the place to which Brancovan, his sons and nephew, were conducted, and in which they were imprisoned until the following August. Brancovan and Vacarescu were put to the most excruciating torture in order to compel them to confess where they had concealed their accumulated riches, for the Turks had not found as much gold as they expected, although they searched for and destroyed everything wherein they thought it might have been hidden.

Brancovan had sent part of his large fortune to Venice, but he would not reveal the fact, in spite of all the terrible tortures to which he was subjected, and which are described by one of his secretaries as being so atrocious as to make one's hair stand on end simply to read the account. At length the Turks understood that they had nothing more to gain from the prince, and bade him prepare for immediate death.

"My children, our fortunes are our lives are about to be sacrificed; we must not lose our precious lives; be brave, my beloved ones, and die for our sake, and what a death he endured! I pray you stand steadfast in your faith, flinch not at all in the face of the world. The four handsome youths stood respectfully before their father, bareheaded, and listened to his words. Each in turn kissed his hand, and he looked with dimmed eyes upon these his sons who were the pride of his life, the hope of his house, and whom he was now exhorting to die as Christians should.

"Brancovan," said the latter, "is this true which I hear of thee, that thou wouldst throw off thy allegiance, and declare the independence of thy principality? Say, is it true that thou hast even dared to coin money from thy own gold? Thou art fearless as if thou wert thy own master! What hast thou to plead in justification?"

"Deny thy faith, and I will spare thee," said the sultan.

"Do not insult me by questioning them," said the boy, and heathing down, his head was severed from his body, and rolled to his father's feet!

"I, alone, of all thy children, have caused thee trouble and vexation, through my wayward heart and my quick blood. I cannot go to sleep, the sleep of eternity without kissing thy hand, and craving thy pardon!"

"Forsake thy religion! I see that life is sweet to thee, embrace our faith, be free, be happy!"

he wore next to his heart, and he it out said:
"If any among ye here have compassion me, let him send this holy oil to my dear young wife. It will be consolation to her until the hour of her death."

Not a hand was raised to take the holy jewel, and, casting it on the ground, and crushing it with his foot, he exclaimed: "So be it! A relic shall not be defiled by your Pagan touch!"

Then the sultan called:
"Bring me a single child now only remaining here! Reflect before thou sufferest!"

"The Lord's will be done!" "Child!" cried the sultan. "If thou wilt embrace our faith, thou shalt live and be happy!"

"The Country Doctor of Old." Is the "old country doctor" of to-day as quaint and attractive a figure as he was 40 years ago? Probably not, though he may know more in his profession than his predecessor. The old doctor's shrewd, weather-beaten face, was "frosty but kindly." Next to the pastor he was the most important member of the village community, and within a circle of ten miles everybody knew the "old doc," and he knew everybody and everybody's horse and dog.

"This is a lawyer's story of his first trial in which a farmer accused his neighbor of stealing his ducks. The lawyer was employed by the accused to convince the court that such was not the case. The plaintiff was positive that his neighbor was guilty of the offense charged, because he had seen his ducks in the defendant's yard. 'How do you know they were your ducks?' asked the lawyer. 'I should know my ducks anywhere,' replied the farmer, giving a description of their various peculiarities whereby he could distinguish them. 'Why,' said the lawyer, 'those ducks cannot be of such rare breed. I have seen some just like them in my own yard.' 'That's not at all unlikely,' admitted the farmer, 'for they are not the only ducks I have and stolen lately.'—Detroit Free Press.

NOBLEMAN'S SON HEALED.

Sunday School Lesson in the International Series for February 8, 1908.—John 4:43-54.

(Specially Arranged from Peloubert's Notes.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—Jesus said unto him, thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house.—John 4:52.

THE SECTION includes only the lesson, with a glance over Christ's ministry through miracles of mercy.

TIME.—A. D. 28, early in January, or late in the previous December. Soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Cana, a village among the hills of Galilee; and Capernaum, a city 20 to 25 miles to the northeast, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A Good Foundation for Faith.—V. 43-45. 43. "Now after two days:" The two days mentioned in V. 40, which Jesus spent at Sychar preaching to the Samaritans. "Went into Galilee:" Continuing His journey with His disciples, which had been interrupted by the incident at Sychar. Jesus left Judea for Galilee because a deepening opposition was developing in Judea, where He was born, of whose lineage He was, and where He would naturally be at home as the Messiah. But "Jesus Himself testified," from his own experience, "that a prophet hath no honor in his own country." And therefore He went to Galilee, till by His teachings and His works there He could prove to Judea that He was indeed the prophet.

45. "The Galileans Received Him:" The reason is immediately given. "Having seen all the things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast," which the Galileans were accustomed to attend. The feast must be that referred to in 2:13-25 and Chap. 3:1-22. And many things, doubtless, were done at that time which are not recorded (2:23).

II. The Need of Faith.—V. 46. "So Jesus came again into Cana . . . where He made the water wine" (Chap. 2:1-11): "Because, having once been welcomed there as a friend or relative, and having shown forth His glory, His true character, by a miracle, He would now be likely to receive a favorable hearing and make more disciples. We may remember that here was the home of one of His disciples, Nathaniel (Bartholomew) (John 21:2). "A certain nobleman: He was some high officer, civil or military, of Herod's court. "Whose son was sick," and very low, at the point of death with a fever (V. 52).

III. Faith Using Means.—V. 47. "When he heard that Jesus was come:" He had just one hope left, and knowing that Jesus had wrought cures for others, he hoped that He might be both able and willing to help him in his trouble. "Besought Him that He would come down:" Thinking that Jesus must go and see the boy in order to cure him.

IV. Little Faith a Stepping Stone to Larger Faith.—V. 48. "Except ye see signs and wonders:" These two words mark the two chief aspects of miracles; signs, the spiritual aspect, whereby they suggest some deeper truth than meets the eye, of which they are in some sense symbols and pledges; and wonders, the external aspect, whereby their strangeness arrests attention.

"Ye:" A general statement, suggested by the circumstances. "Will not believe:" Jesus saw that His miracles had impressed the people more deeply than the teachings they were intended to convey.

V. The Earnestness of Faith.—V. 49. "Sir, come down ere my child die:" He had no strength to reply or explain; he would be hindered by no seeming rebuke. He showed that he was not waiting to see wonders, but could trust Jesus to heal his son.

VI. Faith Rewarded.—Vs. 50-54. 50. "Go thy way; thy son liveth:" Here is the reward of his faith, and the means to larger faith, as we soon see. "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken:" Here was a step higher in his faith. He not only believed in general in the power of Jesus to heal, but he believed for himself and acted upon his belief. "And he went his way:" He left Jesus, and either started immediately for home, or went somewhere for the night, and left for home the next morning, which is the more probable.

52. "At the seventh hour:" Either one o'clock, according to the Jewish reckoning, or seven o'clock, according to one Roman reckoning. "The fever left him," showing a sudden and decisive change.

53. "Himself believed and his whole house:" Household, family. He believed what? Believed on Jesus as his Saviour. Before he had believed about Him, now he believed on Him. They all became disciples. This new increase of his faith was the result of this miracle. It confirmed and enlarged his faith, so that he received the teaching and love of Christ deep in his heart.

54. "Second miracle:" Not the second miracle Jesus had wrought (V. 45), but the second in Galilee.

Practical suggestions. Let us be careful not to dishonor the prophets in our own country—the saints in our own households, the good in our own church, the talent in our own families.

He that has faith will act upon that faith, and through acting upon it the faith will be increased.

God has patience with weak and imperfect faith, as a stepping stone to higher and purer faith.

Facts are a true foundation for our faith. All that God has done for others proves that He can do the same for us.

It is right to pray for temporal blessings, but God cares more for spiritual blessings which may come to us by the way He gives or withhold the temporal.

There are different degrees and qualities even of real faith. The faith that is founded on testimony and on outward proofs may grow into that which is the soul's experience of the presence, and love, and power of the Saviour.

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