THE HEBREW CHILDREN

A STORY OF THE WAR TIME

By MARIAN SHAW

I.

About three miles out on the Zion road lived Shadrach Pease, with his wife Sabriny and his two sons, Meshach and Abednego. They were sometimes called for short Shad, Brine, Mesh and Bed, the father and two sons being often designated as "The Hebrew Children."

The people of Graybrook always felt themselves fully capable of interpreting the decrees of Providence, and seldom hesitated to declare the probable purpose of the Creator in all his works, designating this as a judgment, that as a blessing, and the other as a means of grace or discipline. But they were nonplussed as to the divine purpose in creating such a family as the "Peases," who were not wicked enough to be regarded as a judgment on the community, and certainly not good enough to be considered a blessing or a means of grace. They were, in the eyes of Graybrook's thrifty folk, simply shiftless and worthless. Shad Pease had, very early in his career, decided to take life as a joke, and the harder and more tragic it became, the bigger he thought the joke. His wife, on the contrary, continually wore the mask of Melpomene. Her lachrymal glands were ever on tap, and the sunshine of Shad's smile was always dimmed by the mist of Briny's tears.

Shad took life as a joke, and the more trifling portion of the community accepted him as a joker. Though, judged by high intellectual standards, he was neither wise nor witty, people began to laugh when the muscles of his face indicated that he was about ready to speak. Indeed it was said that every one got ready to laugh as soon as Shad Pease was seen looming up in the distance.

It was he who named his twin sons Meshach and Abednego, and laughed gleefully over the humerous combination of names in his household, as if it had been really funny. Briny wept, predicting that the names would prove a bad omen, and that her two sons would one day be called to pass through the burning fiery furnace of affliction. But Shad said she could quench any fire with her tears, and that, if she would only stand loyally by her family, they need not fear even the hottest fires of the hereafter. At this blasphemy Briny's tears flowed afresh. She wanted to name the boys Jacob and Esau, but Shad would none of it. Jacob, he said, was a "darned scoundrel," and Esau a "blamed fool."

"Oh, Shadrach, Shadrach," moaned Mrs. Pease, "where do you expect to go to when you die, if you talk so onreverent?"

"Now don't cry, Briny," said Shadrach. "I'm a dumb sight better'n Jacob, an' when he died he was gathered to his fathers, an' folded to Abraham's bosom. Ef that old swindler an' his lyin' mother could git into the kingdom, I guess the Lord ain't agoin' to be hard on me."

And again Briny wept.

How the Pease family lived was somewhat of a mystery. They were seldom known to work, though Shad could turn off a good day's work when he chose, and Briny was a famous hand at "hussin'." She had a natural instinct for the sickroom, and her knowledge of "roots and yarbs" was deemed almost supernatural. Her services to the sick, however, were usually given free of charge, so that very little financial profit accrued from her skill. Shad, too, was generous, and would divide with his neighbors the trophies of a day's hunting or fishing without any thought of remuneration.

The boys, Meshach and Abednego, grew in stature, but not in wisdom or favor. They went astray from their birth, and were always to be found in forbidden places and engaged in forbidden pleasures. Much of the mischief done in Graybrook could be traced directly to them, and nearly all that could not be so traced was laid at their door. Were there evidences of trespass in melon patch or orchard? "It's them Pease young ones!" was the usual verdict. Did poultry-yard or garden show signs of being tampered with? "It must have been the Pease twins."

"Where, oh, where are the Hebrew children?
Where, oh, where are the Hebrew children?"

their schoolmates would sing whenever they came in sight. There was something about the "Hebrew children" that seemed to inspire the youth of Graybrook with poetic frenzy, for they were nearly always greeted with doggerel rhymes.

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
Had britches the color of indigo,"

they would sing, as the Pease boys slouched along the street with their bagging blue drilling overalls held up usually by one suspender. Although this was bad rhyme and worse rhythm, neither the perpetrators nor their victims were aware of any literary defect. So it delighted the former and annoyed the latter just as much as if it had been the most finished satire.

"Abednego, Meshach and Shadrach
Hadn't a decent shirt to their back."

"Briny, Meshach, Bed and Shad—
When they're dead we'll all be glad."

"Green Pease, where's your dad?
Where's Mother Briny? Where's old Shad?"

These were samples of what the lyric muse of Graybrook could accomplish under inspiring conditions.

"The Peases," with the exception of Briny, were not supersensitive, and the slights they received made little impression. Shadrach met them with a laugh, and parried them with rude repartee, which, if not witty, usually contained some home-thrust, that effectually closed the mouths of his persecutors for the time being. The twins, as they grew in strength, used other weapons less subtle but equally effective. Whatever contempt their fellows may have felt for the Pease's social rank, they learned to have a wholesome fear of the Pease fists. Meshach and Abednego came at length to be perfectly able to fight their own battles, and, by virtue of their physical strength and ability to "lick" any boy of their own size, attained to the position of leaders among their fellows.

Then they knew the best places to fish and hunt—they knew where wild berries grew most abundantly—in fact they had learned all the secrets of field and grove, and the Graybrook youth found that it was to their advantage to cultivate the acquaintance of the Hebrew children, heathen though they were. Meshach had inherited his mother's faculty for "hussin'," though, in his case, this skill was employed in the care and cure of maimed and sick animals. He kept around the premises a regular menagerie and hospital, and scarcely a day passed that he did not bring home some wounded bird or beast, which, with his mother's assistance, he nursed back to health. It came to be an understood thing that if any pet animal in the village was suffering from indisposition, it should be handed over to the ministrations of Briny and Meshach Pease. So there were reasons for cultivating the friendship of the Pease family, in spite of the general disfavor in which they were held.

However they might suffer from the taunts and persecutions of their fellows, the Pease twins cherished no resentment, and were always ready to cease hostilities, as soon as the enemy raised the flag of truce—and this the most daring foe was not slow to do, when the conflict became serious. The village girls, knowing themselves safe from punishment, carried on against the "Peases" a more prolonged and cowardly warfare; but, with a rough sort of chivalry, the boys ignored these feminine attacks, and were ever ready to do whatever service lay in their power for the girls, who one day passed them with supercilious glances and tossing heads, and the next, if they wanted a favor, treated them with flattering condescension. There was no one who know where to find, or would take the pains to obtain, such bright flowers, such exquisite pond lilies, such big, sweet nuts as the Pease boys, and so it came to pass that they were tolerated while they were despised.

They were troubled by no questions of ethics or propriety. They led a purely animal existence, pleased or hurt by those things which appealed to their physical senses, but showing no evidence of the possession of consciences. They were no respecters of persons. The venerable Father Tirrell and pompous Squire Pickett aroused no more reverence in them than did half-witted Ichabod Pattee, or the town pauper, Elkanah Dee. Every well-trained boy in those days took off his hat and said "Sir" when meeting and addressing one of the worthly elders of the town. Squire Pickett, who had an overweening sense of his own importance, and a very big nose, one day met the Pease boys, who were about to pass him by without paying the usual homage.

"Boys," he said sternly, "where are your manners?"

"They're on your nose, Sir!" quickly responded Abednego, while both boys dodged the cane of the irate great man.

Deacon Elijah Topfield came across the twins one Sunday afternoon on the edge of Consolation pond in the suspicious attitude of angling. They had been there for hours, but without their usual luck. For some reason or other, the fish refused to bite.

"Meshach and Abednego," said the deacon solemnly, "don't you know it's wicked to catch fish on Sunday?"

"Who in thunder's a catchin' any fish?" asked Meshach, with a look of supreme disgust.

Efforts to entice the twins into Sunday school were unavailing, or, if at any time successful, no attraction was sufficient to induce them to remain. They could neither be coaxed nor frightened into attendance on any religious service. Their mother wept over them, but her "tears had been their meat day and night," ever since they were born, and failed to water the stony soil. Their father laughed at their misdemeanors and shortcommings, as he did at everything else.

Like their parents, the boys showed an utter disregard of filthy lucre. Whatever they did, they did for personal enjoyment. They would sweat and toil over tasks undertaken for pure amusement, and find the labor sweet, which, if paid for, at once degenerated into work, and became intolerably irksome. Israel Pike, an eccentric character of Graybrook, once found the boys wading delightedly in a pool of muddy water. He stood and watched them for a few moments, and then said:

"Having a good time, boys?"

"Yes, siree!" they both exclaimed.

"What'll you take to wade there three hours?"

"What'll ye give?" they asked.

"I'll give you fo'pence an hour."

"All right," said the boys, "we'll do it."

Old Israel retired to the piazza of the White Lily and watched them. An hour passed, and he saw them pause as if for consultation. After a few moments Abednego approached and said:

"Say, Mr. Pike, it's wuth more'n fo'pence."

"How'll sixpence do?" asked Israel.

"Sixpence is all right," answered Abednego, and the two returned to their task.

After another hour they again approached their employer and announced that they were tired of the contract and would "throw up the job."

"Supposing I should give you ninepence?" suggested Mr. Pike.

"Naw—we don't wanter!" they replied. "We're goin' fishin'."

"Well, let me pay you for what you have done," said the old gentleman.

"Naw—never mind! You're welcome!" they answered. "We don't keer fer no pay!" and they turned away, leaving Mr. Pike to ponder whether the incident was an example of human nature in general, or only of Pease nature in particular.

The twins went to school sometimes, but usually only on cold or stormy days when there was nothing out of doors to attract them. They were keen and bright, and managed to pick up some knowledge of reading, writing and ciphering in spite of the fact that no one ever saw them study. They were not desirable pupils, for they knew no law but their own impulses, and, when these were directed toward mischief, they could demoralize a school far quicker than the most successful disciplinarian could restore it to order. They did not seem to be vicious, but simply a lawless pair of Ishmaelites. Gladly would we record that some good, ministering angel, in the form of a wise and gentle school mistress, at last gained an influence over these undisciplined spirits and wrought a change, as in the "Evolution of Dodd." But there was no such evolution in the case of Meshach and Abednego. They seemed wholly untamable. Some teachers, indeed, did try the virtue of moral suasion, but the boys remained wholly unappreciative.

"Got kept after school to-night, didn't ye?" asked one of his schoolmates of Abednego.

"Yep," he replied, indifferently.

"Git a lickin'?"

"Naw! She couldn't lick me less'n I let 'er! 'Spect I'd a let 'er ef she'd tried. Wouldn't fight a woman!"

"What she do?"

"Aw—jest jawed an' talked."

"Wot she say?"

"Aw—I d'no'. Talked kinder sickly."

"Wot you say?"

"Nawthin' much. Axed 'er oncet ef she could take 'er teeth out like t'other schoolmarm we had last year."

"Wot she say to that?"

"Said 'twas sassy, 'n' axed me didn't I wanter grow up inter a great an' good man like George Washington. I said I guess so, 'f I o'd fight. She said 'twas wicked to fight, less'n ye fit fer yer country, 'n' I said I didn't care a durn wot I fit fer, ef I c'ud lick t'other feller."

"Wot she say then?"

"Aw—she axed me wot did I wanter be wen I got ter be a man. Wouldn't I like ter be a preacher? 'N' I said naw—I'd ruther be a pirate er a stage driver. Then she put her hand on my head 'n' axed me idn't I know she loved me—made me feel kinder squirmy—'n' I said, 'Aw, lemme 'lone!' Then she bust out a cryin', 'n' axed wouldn't I be a good boy."

"Wot you say?"

"Said I didn't know. She's a softy! Why didn't she lick me an' done with it? Say, let's go fishin' to-morrer."

The twins soon grew too big to attend the summer school, greatly to the relief of the teachers, but they continued to make life a burden to the master of the winter school, and were ringleaders in all sorts of mischief and practical jokes. They were often chastised, but took their punishment heroically, never laying up any grudge against the master. Indeed, they had a wholesome respect for any teacher who had the courage to administer a vigorous flogging. For a day or two after one such episode, Meshach was unusually quiet and studious. The teacher flattered himself that at last he had subdued the young savage, and when the boy came to his room one evening, bringing a fine geological specimen, which he had waded miles through snow drifts to procure, the young master felt still more that he had made a permanent impression upon the youth.

"You was talkin' 'bout 'jodes' t'other day," said Meshach, "an' I rick'lected that last summer I seen this queer stun up on Mount Zion, 'n' I thought mebby you'd like ter hev it."

The master thanked him cordially, invited him in, and showed him his collection of curiosities, in which Meshach seemed greatly interested. The good, earnest young pedagogue really thought that he had gained a hold upon the boy and prayed—for he was a pious young man—that this might be the beginning of better things. But, alas! The very next day Meshach was the leader of a band of lawless youths, who picked up the young master, carried him out of the schoolhouse and threw him into a snowbank. Of course he, with the other conspirators, was flogged for this misdemeanor, but the warfare went on with alternating fortunes till the end of the term.

During the warm, sunny days of spring and summer the Pease family lived out of doors, the father and the two sons spending most of their time in the woods, and the mother with her chair out under the shade of the trees, rocking and usually weeping—for there was no occasion to which Briny did not bring a tribute of tears. Sometimes she employed herself in lazily sewing or mending, occasionally leaving her seat to weed a little in the neglected garden. When the weather became cold or stormy, Shadrach would flee to the warm barroom of the Red Rose, the boys to school, and Briny, if there were lack of fuel at home or of energy to use it, would throw her shawl over her head and take refuge at a neighbor's. On such visits she would make herself useful and bustle about with a zeal and cheerfulness which she never displayed in her own home. The neighbors were wont to say that Briny was "fust rate help and reel capable" when she had a mind to work. The same was true of Shad. There was no one in the town who was more deft or skilful with his hands, but he would not work unless he felt like it, and even if he undertook a "job," would often leave it half finished, sometimes returning to complete it after weeks of neglect and often not at all.

Shadrach was not a drinking man, but he preferred the barroom of the Red Rose to the waiting-room of the White Lily, because in the former he was wont to find a more appreciative audience to listen to his jokes and whimsical discourse.

"There's too many white chokers up at the Lily," he was wont to say. "An onregenerate feller like me ain't fit comp'ny for sich as them. But I tell ye what 'tis, comrades," he continuel, "when my grist of yarns an' jokes gives out, I go over there an' set awhile at the feet of them Gamaliels, an' profit by their wit an' wisdom. Lord! The stories them Methodist ministers tell would hake a hoss laugh! An' they ain't always keerful to keep within the bounds of reverence. They say things sometimes that shock my sense of piety, an' I ain't ever squeemish. I was over there t'other night, an' there was a lot of new fellers in from the conference, an' I tell ye they raised Cain! I never hearn sech reel gencoin fun, an' ser many side-splittin' yarns in my life. Bumbye they got ter jokin' me on mine an' my boys' names. I knowed 'twas funny when I named the boys, but I never half knew what a good joke it was. They give me pints that I never thought of before. But I tell ye, ef I thought I was goin' ter git out of that assembly with nuthin' but laughter a-ringin' in my ears, I was focled. I felt like a mourner on the anxious seat when they got through with their exhortations. Oh, I tell ye, they're jest the kind of men to beat the devil. They ain't afeerd to fight him with his own wepins, an' ef they can't pray an' sing a man into the kingdom, they'll ridicule him, tell he begins to feel like a tarnation fool. Elder Buell tuk me to task 'bout my boys.

"'Why don't ye train 'em, an' bring 'em up in the fear o' the Lord?' said he. 'They're agoin' ter be the pest o' the town. Don't ye know Solomon says "Spare the rod an' spile the child"?'

"'Waal, parson,' says I, 'ef you'll show me that verse in the Bible I'll go home an' give my boys the all-firedest lickin' they ever got.'"

"At that the preachers all sot up a yell, an' said, 'Elder Buell, I think the brother's got you there!'

"The elder was awful confusel, an' had to own up that he'd quoted scruptur wrong, though he said the sentiment was the same.

"'I've no doubt,' says I, 'that that was the kind of moral suasion Solomon tried on that fool son of his—that half-witted Rheoboam. See what a consarned idiot he made of himself when he got to be king—takin' the advice of a lot of smart young fellers instead of the wise old heads. "My father chastised you with whips," says he, "but I will chastise you with scorpions. My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins." Waal, Jeroboam, who hadn't hed no such pious trainin', jest knocked the underpinnin' right out from under the consated little cuss. Now, I be'leeve in lettin' natuie have her way. My boys ain't models, I'll admit, but I've known some preachers' sons that warn't no better'n they should be.' Some of 'em looked kind of sober at that, an' changed the subject."

Shadrach was such a rover that he picked up a wonderful amount of information not only in regard to the people of Graybrook, but also concerning the dwellers in the neighboring towns. It was a fashion to express contempt for the Peases, but, nevertheless, Shad was always a welcome addition to every group gathered at street corner, store or tavern.

II.

The Pease twins had grown to manhood, but little change had come either to them or the family. Indolent, careless, happy-go-lucky, they still lived from hand to mouth, and the sons gave promise of following closely in the footsteps of their father.

Only the faintest murmur of the great world outside ever reached Graybrook, but the echoes of coming strife now resounded even through its remote hills and valleys, as the reverberations of that first gun fired upon Fort Sumter, roused all that was noble or ignoble in the hearts of the people. Both North and South found here their advocates, and a bitter war of words and vituperation was but the prelude to the clash of arms. The one topic of convesation in the homes, on the street, and in public places, was the threatened war.

In the barroom of the Red Rose there gathered nightly a motley throng, which discussed events with varied degrees of wisdom and loyalty. After the news of the firing upon Sumter had reached the town, the proprietor of the tavern, in an attempt to show his loyalty, hung a flag in front of the bar. This act met with expressions of both dissent and approval, but it was not until Eben Crowe entered, that it created any great degree of excitement. As soon as Crowe saw the flag, he stalked forward, snatched it from its place, threw it upon the floor, stamped and spat upon it, reviling the landlord meanwhile with profane and brutal lauguage. It happened that Shadrach Pease was present, but, contrary to his usual custom, he had had but little to say. He was not in his wonted jovial mood. The crowd looked aghast at Crowe's desecration of the flag. It is uncertain what they might have done, but before they had time to act, Shad Pease rose and, with a stride, reached the avowed traitor. No one had ever seen Shad look as he did then. His face was livid, his eyes flashed lightning. He was not a profane man, but a few emphatic and fiery oaths fell from his lips, as he ordered Crowe to pick up the flag and replace it. Crowe refused, and Shadrach, with another terrible oath, warned him that if he did not at once obey, and apologize for his traitorous act, it would be the worse for him. A glance into Shad's burning eyes convinced Crowe that obedience was his best course. Reluctantly he picked up the insulted flag, replaced it, and, at Shad's dictation, repeated:

'Tis the star-spangled banner—oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Shad did not stay to learn the effect of his victory. He crushed his hat down over his eyes and left the tavern. With a step of unwonted vigor he crossed the green to the White Lily, where an enrolling officer was enlisting volunteers. Without a moment's delay he walked up to the table and signified his desire to enlist. After a few preliminary questions he took the oath of service. As he went out of the door he met his two sons. The unwonted expression on the old man's face startled them, and they asked:

"What's the matter, father? What you doin' here?"

"Boys, I've enlisted!" he said.

"Jerusalem!" they both exclaimed. "That's jest what we've come fer!"

"Good fer you, boys! Go in, an' take the oath! Then we'll go home an' tell yer mother. Likely's not she'll cry, but then she's bound to cry anyway. So it's no matter. The union must be saved!"

"We'll save it!" cried the boys, as they passed in and were enrolled in the company of volunteers.

"The Hebrew children" went home together soberly discussing the prospects of the war and the nearer prospect of the encounter with mother.

Sabriny's tears had always lain near the surface and flowed at the slightest provocation. She had never met a real crisis until now, but when her husband and sons entered the house and made known their news, her emotion was too deep for tears. For a moment she looked in dismay from one to the ether, then said:

"What! All of you goin'?"

"All of us, mother! The union must be saved, an' we're goin' to help!"

Then Shadrach told of the episode in the tavern, and Sabriny's pale cheeks flushed with pride and patriotism.

"You done jest right, Shad! An' you, boys, you've did right, too! I'm glad you've enlisted, but don't think I'm goin' to stay home an' have you fightin' an' riskin' your lives. I'm a goin', too!"

"You goin'?"

"Yes, I be! Some of the poor fellers will git sick an' wounded, an' I'm a goin' to nuss 'em. I ain't good fer much at any'thin' else but I can nuss, an' I'll do that much fer my country."

Ten days later a little band of volunteers marched away from Graybrook. Conspicuous among them was the tall form and grizzled head of Shad Pease. No longer awkward and bent in his wonted slouching attitude, but erect and firm of step, he walked a man among men. The twin brothers were proudly conscious of their new uniforms, and many were heard to wonder that they had never before observed how handsome the Pease boys were. And Briny, too, was there. In her neatly fitting nurse's gown, one would hardly have recognized the unkempt, lachrymose slattern, whom the town's folks had become accustomed to regard as almost beyond the pale of social recognition or human sympathy. Her eyes were no longer dimmed with vain and meaningless tears, but shone with a new resolve, kindled by patriotic fire.

Love of country, like a coal of fire from God's altar, had awakened to sentiments of loyalty and patriotic devotion, this family which no human interest, no pride, no ambition had ever roused from lives of degrading sloth.

The soldiers marched away that night. Briny and one or two other volunteer nurses followed the next day in the stage coach. They met the troops at the nearest railway station, and, with other loyal volunteers from all over the country, were whirled away to join the Army of the Potomac.

To recount the experiences of the Pease family would be but to repeat a story familiar to all—the attack upon the federal soldiers by the mob in Baltimore, the weary journey to Washington, in which so many of the untried and new recruits fell by the way, thousands sick unto death in the overflowing hospitals, up to that fatal day when the Army of the Potomac was to meet the enemy for the first time.

With wild, joyous spirits, as to a gala-day celebration, the army took up its line of march. The air resounded with the music of fife and drum and patriotic songs, interspersed with the echoing and re-echoing cry, "On to Richmond!" Before dawn on Sunday morning column after column wound its way over green hills and through misty valleys, the soft moonlight falling on long lines of shining steel. Deep silence had succeeded to the hilarious shouts of the soldiers and the music of the bands. The morning dawned bright and clear, and the two armies stood face to face. Ere long the Sabbath quiet was broken by the thunder of artillery, the clash of steel and the roar of musketry. There was confusion, destruction and death!

Sabriny, in her capacity of field nurse, soon had all her skill called into requisition, and most nobly and heroically did she perform her trust, ministering to the wounded and dying. Meanwhile the tide of battle rolled on more fiercely. Suddenly an officer came dashing by, and shouted in tones that roused a cheer even from the lips of the dying:

"Come on, boys! The rebels are in full retreat!"

With a shout of triumph the soldiers rushed forward, but one, a grizzled old man, fell at the feet of Sabriny, pierced to the heart. It was Shadrach. His conscious eyes rested for a moment upon his wife as she knelt beside him, and his lips murmured faintly:

"I'm done for, Briny, but I ain't afeered! The Lord ain't agoin' to be hard on a man that died for his country. My life ain't ben nuthin' to brag on, but nobody can't say I didn't do my duty at the last. Tell the boys to stand by the old flag, an' never give in till the Union is saved. Good-bye, Briny. Don't stay here foolin' over me. You can't do me no good. Help these poor wounded fellers. Mebby you kin save their lives, an' give 'em a chance to git in another lick fer the country. I'd liked to a lived to see it out, but it's all right as 'tis. Good-bye!"

And thus it was that nothing in the life of Shadrach Pease "became him like the leaving of it."

Briny did not weep. This first real sorrow opened up a fountain of grief in her bleeding, aching heart that years would never close—but the fountain of her tears was forever dry.

Shouts of triumph for the victory so nearly won were soon changed to groans and cries of bitter disappointment as the tide of battle turned, and the order to retreat was heard throughout the ranks. The wildest panic ensued, and the refluent tide of fugitives could not be stopped—the boldest and bravest being borne along by the resistless human flood. Among these unwilling fugitives were Meshach and Abednego Pease. Cursing the fate that had wrested victory from their hands, they strove with their vain, youthful strength to turn back from the disgraceful retreat, and at least die with their faces to the foe. But their prayers and cursings were alike useless. There was no cessation, no halting until the refugees reached Centerville.

Following the disaster at Bull Run were other battles, whose varying fortunes have now become history. To record the experiences of the two brothers would make too long a story. They gained the reputation of being brave and even reckless soldiers, and, in consequence, were often selected for missions involving great danger. They never shirked any duty, however arduous or perilous, and often volunteered where others shrank from the ordeal. Both received promotion for gallant conduct in battle, and it was prophesied that they would yet win shoulderstraps.

The months passed on, and the cruel war still raged with unabated fury. At last came that terrible day at Antietam, the result of which sent a thrill of joy to loyal souls in the North, but a joy sadly mingled with anguish for the noble dead and wounded upon the bloody field. Here the two brothers fought side by side. Early in the engagement, as they stood close to the ramparts, a shell sent the standard-bearer to his death. Abednego sprang forward and caught the falling flag from the hand of the dying soldier, but in another moment, a well-aimed bullet had pierced his breast, and he fell mortally wounded. Meshach helped to carry him to the rear, and bent over him to hear his last farewell.

"It's all over with me, Mesh," murmured the dying boy. "You're the only one of the family left now to fight it out. You've got to fight for both of us. I saved the flag, didn't I, Mesh? Stand by it, Bub!"

"I will, Bed! But the fight isn't over yet, and I may join you in a little while."

"I hope not, Mesh. I want you to live, and if you git out of this safely I want you to make a man of yourself. Our family has never been much credit to itself or anybody else, but there's something in you, Mesh, and you must redeem the family name. If I could live, I'd try and be somebody myself, but that's all over. Waal, I'd rather die this way than any other. You needn't ever be ashamed of father or me. We both give our lives for our country, an' you an' mother are doin' your duty. Go back now to your post, Mesh. Don't waste your time over me."

The dying eyes closed, and the voice of the brave young soldier became silent. Meshach, with saddened heart, returned to his place in the fore-front of the battle, but a few hours later he, too, was carried to the rear by his comrades, his body rent by a ghastly wound.

As Briny moved with noiseless step and skilful, soothing hand from cot to cot among the long rows of sick and wounded in the hospital tent, she suddenly paused before a soldier who lay desperately wounded and apparently lifeless.

"Nurse," said the surgeon, "here is a bad case. There's no hope, I think, for this poor fellow, but we will do what we can for him."

Briny bent low to look into the face of the soldier, and, suddenly raising her head, cried with a gasp:

"Doctor, that is my boy! We must save him!"

"Your boy, Nurse? We'll save him if we can, for you have earned his life a thousand times by your ministrations to these other poor fellows."

And they did save him. After long months of convalescence, he re-entered the service, wearing the shoulderstraps of a lieutenant, and served with credit to the end of the war. The surgeon, into whose care he had first fallen, took a great interest in the brave and bright young soldier, and, discovering his decided talent for medicine and surgery, took him into his office at the close of the war, and he became in time a skilled M. D.

He remembered his brother's injunction to "make a man of himself," and to redeem the family name. This trust he fulfilled, and, in the thriving Western city where he still lives with his aged mother, the metamorphosed, serene, sweet-faced Sabriny, he is known as one of the most honored and substantial citizens of the community.

Eight Trains to Buffalo

From Chicago daily via Lake Shore & Michigan Southern railway, including two new ones just placed in service leaving Chicago 3 and 8:30 p. m., and reaching Buffalo the next morning at 6:50 and 10:30 respectively. New Pittsburg service—through sleeper from Chicago at 10:35 p. m., reaching Pittsburg 11:15 the next morning. Low rate Pan-American and tourist tickets now on sale. Send four cents in stamps for interesting printed matter. W. B. Hunter, N. W. P. A., 122 Endicott arcade, St. Paul. F. M. Byron, G. W. A., Chicago.

Cannon Valley G. A. R. Association

And old First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry at Waterville, Minn., June 18-21, 1901.

For these reunions the Chicago Great Western railway will on June 17-19, sell excursion tickets to Waterville, good to return June 22, at a fare and one-third for the round trip. For further information inquire of A. J. Aicher, city ticket agent, corner Nicollet avenue and Fifth street, Minneapolis.

The lowest rate to Pan-American exposition has been made by the Soo line, $20 for the round trip.

Sabbath-School Lesson.

FOR JUNE 23, 1901

A New Heaven and a New Earth—Rev. XXI. 1-7; 22-27.

By John R. Whitney—Copyright, 1901.

Golden Text—He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.—Rev. xxi., 7.

The scene which passed before John's rapt vision in this revelation was a panoramic view of the whole history of God's dealings with man from the creation to the full consummation of his plans in "a new heaven and a new earth." Last week we looked upon the first scene of this panorama. This week we look upon the last. Then, with John, we saw Jesus of Nazareth in his ascended glory—the Alpha and Omega, the eternal God—moving among his people, and directing all things for them. Now we see him in the "new heaven" receiving his people to himself, with the assurance that "they shall reign forever and ever" with him. (xxii., 6.) John, however, saw many things pass before him that had taken place, and that were yet to take place, in order to bring about this blessed consummation, and it will help us to understand and appreciate the final result, if we glance for a moment at these intermediate scenes as the panorama moves rapidly forward.

The vision of Jesus as "The Son of Man," in the midst of the golden candlesticks, which we considered last week, was simply preparatory; a summoning of the aged apostle to attend to what was about to be made known to him, and directing him concerning its use. Being thus summoned and instructed, he says: "After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven." (vi., 1.) As he looked through this open door, he saw the throne of God, surrounded by the heavenly host, and heard them with one voice singing: "Thou art worthy, oh Lord, to receive glory and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created." (iv., 11.) It was—"The Song of Creation"—the song which the morning stars sang together," when God "laid the foundations of the earth." (Job xxxviii., 4-7.) For then they could only adore his wisdom, and power, as seen in his creative work.

But then, as the panorama moved on, John saw another attribute of God revealed to the heavenly host. For the mystery of creation was locked up in a "book" which he "that sat upon the throne" held in his right hand, and which was "sealed with seven seals." "No man in heaven, nor on the earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." (v., 1-4.) But "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David," came forward and "took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (v., 7). By him the mystery of creation was solved, for now before the heavenly host there "stood a Lamb, as it had been slain" (v., 6), and it was seen that "The Lion of the tribe of Juda" was none other than "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Then "a new song" was heard in heaven (v., 9). It was "The Song of Redemption," for now the heavenly host could adore not only the wisdom and power, but the grace of God as well.

Then as the panorama continued to unfold itself, "seals" were broken, "trumpets" were sounded, and there were poured out "vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." Under these expressive symbols it was seen that whilst in heaven angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim united in adoring the grace of God, on earth it met with most bitter and determined opposition. The very ones for whom its graciousness was designed were at war with each other, and with him who sat upon the throne, and with all who belonged to him or desired to serve him. They were defeated in their expectations time and again, and were brought under great trials, but neither defeat nor suffering quelled rebellion.

The leaders in this opposition were designated by the expressive names of "the beast" and "the false prophet." (xvi., 13.) Their one purpose was to overthrow the authority of God and to destroy all who served him. At last, however, they were themselves overthrown, and "both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (xix., 20.)

But even this did not give peace, for "the beast", and "the false prophet" were simply the tools of Satan, the arch enemy of man, and as long as he was free there could be nothing like rest for the children of God. But as the panorama again moved forward, John saw an "angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon—that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan—and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be fulfilled. (xx., 1-3.)

Then in the glorious scene which passed before John's view, all war, and tumult, and strife fled away. A millennium of righteousness and joy was ushered in, and he "saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (xx., 4, 5.) Only the most holy, those who had been faithful witnesses for Jesus and his word even unto death, were partakers of the joy of this millennium. It was for them a grand training in righteousness.

Whether the length of this millennium is intended to be literally a thousand years, as we measure time, or whether the term is simply the expression of an indefinitely long period, or whether it is a prophetic measure, wherein every day is a year, and the whole the immense term of 365,000 years, is not clear and it is not important. On either supposition it is long enough to test whether man, if kept by God's grace and daily schooled in ways of righteousness for a sufficient length of time, can acquire in himself strength to "stand against the wiles of the devil," and maintain his integrity before God. For the time is evidently a time of spiritual satisfaction and privilege rather than one of physical enjoyment. The time when Adam walked with God and was without sin may have been a similar millennium of gracious experiences. But at the end he fell. Now, however, the test is made with redeemed man, and the holiest among the redeemed are tested.

So again the panorama moves on, and even the millennium passed beyond John's view, and a new scene came before him. Again he saw "Satan loosed out of his prison" and going out again "to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." (xx., 7, 8.) At once war and tumult everywhere prevailed. Man had no strength to resist sin, and even the "saints" were deceived again, "and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." (xx., 9.)

This, however, did not last long, for in the next scene John saw that "the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever" (xx., 10). Thus his power was destroyed.

Then John saw in his vision that the judgment was set, and all "the dead, small and great," stood before the throne of God. Two books were opened, "and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." (xx., 12). One was God's book. The other was "the lamb's book." The one was the book of creation; the other was the book of redemption. In the one, the name of every one that was born was entered; in the other, only the names of those who had been "born again." When the names were entered in God's book, then each one entered into life with all of its opportunities, experiences and promises. But it was only those who had used these opportunities, experiences and promises aright whose names were found in "the lamb's book of life." These entered into the "new heaven" to go no more out forever. All others had their portion with "the devil that deceived them"; "where the beast and the false prophet are" (xx., 10).

As this grand panorama now ceased to move forward, John's attention was concentrated upon the "new heaven" and the "new earth," into which those whose names were written in "the Lamb's Book of Life" had entered. It must have been an entrancing view. It was not the old heaven and the old earth renewed and improved, "for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (v. 1.) Nothing like this new condition had ever before been seen. Not only did those who had entered into these "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II. Peter, iii., 13), stand in a new relation to God and to each other, but they stood in a new relation to sin. It was a far better condition, therefore, than any in which unfallen Adam had ever stood, for they not only walked in fellowship with their Maker, but now there was no tempter anywhere ever to assail them.

This condition of new relationships is presented to the mind under the character of a "city"—"the holy city, New Jerusalem." The term "city," however, is not probably to be taken literally. It is only a symbol. It brings before us—as probably no other term could—an idea of a populous community, active, social, wealthy and secure in the highest and best meaning of each characteristic. In the midst of this "great multitude which no man can number" (vii., 9.) God has his dwelling place. (v. 3.) So united to him and to each other blessings of every kind abound on every side and for all.

Moreover, this "city" is described as being surrounded by "walls," resting on foundations of "precious stones" (verse 19), in which are gates of "pearl" (verse 21), opening upon streets of "pure gold." (Verse 21.) It "lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth." It measured "twelve thousand furlongs" in each direction. (Verse 16.) The mind of man fails to realize such a description in any literal sense. Although we know nothing of the unit of measure employed by the angel in this description, yet measuring the city by our own human standards, every street in it was as long as from the Atlantic coast to the banks of the Mississippi. Every influence which encircled and protected this blessed community, like walls, was based on that which was esteemed most precious—the great truths set forth by the twelve patriarchs and by the twelve apostles (verses 12 and 14); and every step taken by the inhabitants was true and holy, for they walked on streets of "pure gold." Surely it was "a wealthy place." (Psalms lxvi., 12.)

Moreover, this city of magnificent proportions, of infinite wealth, of impregnable security, and with a population which could not be numbered, was entirely independent of everything artificial and human for the guidance and comfort of its people. No temple was needed, or seen, in it to cultivate the spirit of holy worship, "for the Lord God Almighty, and the lamb, are the temple of it." (Verse 22.) The inhabitants walked at all times in such close fellowship with their maker and redeemer that every act of every day was an act of worship and of praise. Walking thus they always walked in "the light," and so "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it." (Verse 23.)

And not only were the inhabitants thus provided with light and guidance, but they were provided with water and food in abundance. For "a river of water of life, clear as crystal," proceeded "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves were for the healing of the nations." (xxii., 1, 2.)

So, walking in fellowship with God, in companionship with each other, feasting upon the "tree of life," and drinking of the "water of life," no pains racked their bodies, no sorrows cast them down, no sound of crying was heard and no tears fell from their eyes, no deaths separated them, for death and him that had the power of death had been swallowed up in victory, and there was no more sin to engulf them and wreck all of their hopes, for "there was no more sea."

This is the everlasting portion of all those whose names are written in "The Lamb's Book of Life."

Bryn Mawr, Pa.

United Society of Christian Endeavor,

Cincinnati, Ohio, July 6-10, 1901.

For this annual meeting the Chicago Great Western railway will on July 4-6 sell through excursion tickets to Cincinnati, good to return July 14, (or Aug. 31 by payment of 50 cents extra) at one fare plus $2 for the round trip. For further information inquire of A. J. Aicher, city ticket agent, corner Nicollet avenue and Fifth street, Minneapolis.

Side Trips to Banff Hot Springs.

For the benefit of the visiting Woodmen the Soo Line will run excursions to Banff, Field and Glacier in the Rocky Mountains. All expenses included for nine days. Get Itinerary and particulars at Soo Line