DOROTHY'S TREASURE.

In a far-away nursery corner,
My Dorothy, winsome and gay,
To her quaint little dolls and playthings
Is singing a tender lay.

Do you know why her heart's rejoicing,
Why her dark-brown eyes shine bright?
Shall I tell you the song she's singing,
The cause of her great delight?

In that far-away nursery corner,
Where rag dollies reign galore,
She discovered a bright new nickel
That shone on the nursery floor.

She has never possessed such a fortune,
This dear little maiden fair,
And she shows me her precious treasure
With the pride of a millionaire.

"Now dolly shall have a new bonnet,
And sweet cakes and candy I'll buy;
What a glorious time we'll have shopping,
My little rag baby and I.

"I'll get her a dear little cradle,
A coach and a pair of new shoes,
A dress and a bright silk umbrella,
And anything else she may choose."

So all the day long she keeps singing,
This innocent maiden of three,
Of the things she will buy with her nickel,
For dolly, for herself and for me.
—Philadelphia Times.

THE CARUTHERS AFFAIR

By WILL N. HARBEN

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SYNOPSIS.

Minard Hendricks, great detective, just returned from Boston, finds awaiting him an unsigned typewritten letter directing him to apartments in Palace hotel, where he will find remains of Mr. Weldon Caruthers—currently reported for past two weeks to be out of town. Detective seeems to connect letter with attempt made on his own life some time previous. Goes with friend, Dr. Lampkin, to invesigate. Upon search of Caruthers' apartments remains of cremated body and jeweled hand of victim are found in a vase. Hand bears marks of finger nails manicured to sharp points. Lampkin recalls reports of a row between Caruthers and Arthur Gielow, both suitors for hand of Dorothy Huntington, who is heiress to several millions should she marry Caruthers, unconditionally in case of Caruthers' death. Late that night Hendricks and Lampkin call at home of Miss Huntington. Dorothy shows detective typewritten letter, which was an invitation for herself and aunt to occupy with Count Bantinni, Italian nobleman, his box at horse show, as he was called out of town by pressing business. She recalls Gielow had expressed before murder intense hatred for Caruthers and believes him guilty, yet decides to help him, and with her aunt goes to his studio. Gielow has fled. His esrvant, Henri, tells of overhearing confession to Bantinni. Henri thought his master insane. Hendricks, concealed in room, hears all this.

CHAPTER VIII.

The next morning on arriving at his office after having been unavoidably detained uptown for an hour, Dr. Lampkin found a messenger-boy awaiting him.

"Are you Dr. Lampkin?" asked the boy, retaining the envelope for which the doctor had extended his hand.

"I am," answered Lampkin, impatiently. "Why do you doubt it?"

"I had orders at the office to deliver the message only to Dr. Lampkin," replied the boy. "They told me it was very urgent, but I had to wait here. I was afraid I'd miss you if I went up to your house."

"Quite right," said the doctor, and he opened the letter, which bore the little yellow seal, peculiar to the important communications sometimes sent him by Hendricks.

"Come without a moment's delay—let nothing hinder you—to my house," ran the message. "Bring instruments to probe for bullet. Come in at the rear. My mother will be on the lookout to admit you. Don't attract attention. Explanation when I see you. Hendricks."

"No answer," said Lampkin to the boy. He quickly got the required instruments together and put on his hat and overcoat.

"No telling what has happened, and I'm behind time," he grumbled inwardly. "For aught I know Hendricks may have shot the wrong man and be in a frightful muddle."

Fifteen minutes later the doctor was entering the side gate behind Hendricks' house, after having successfully dodged unobserved into an alley leading from the main thoroughfare. He was wending his way through a collection of ash-receivers, garbage-barrels, and bundles of waste-paper, when he saw Mrs. Hendricks' white head appear at the kitchen door.

"Oh, I'm so glad you got here at last!" she exclaimed. "I have been almost crazy with impatience. He wouldn't listen to anyone else being called in, and I am afraid he is seriously hurt."

"What has happened?" inquired Lampkin, excited in spite of his professional calmness by her manner.

"Oh, everything!" exclaimed the agitated woman as she hurried him through the dining-room, sitting-room and library to the stairs in the front hall. "For the love of God, Dr. Lampkin—you are his best friend—do urge him to give up this perilous existence. The worry of it is slowly killing me. You see, I was with him when he so narrowly escaped from that awful bomb, and now this is the second attempt on his life, and I know they will succeed sooner or later, if they have not actually killed him now."

"How was he hurt?" gasped Lampkin, as he sprang after her up the stairs.

She made no reply. The next moment she reached the door of the detective's room, and opened it.

Hendricks, white as a ghost, and with dark marks under the eyes, sat in a big extension chair, in his dressing-gown, a rug over his legs and feet.

"Don't let my mother frighten you, old man," he said, with a smile, which he gave with evident pain. "You know how women are about a thimbleful of blood."

"What on earth has happened?" asked Lampkin.

"That secret enemy of mine is on the warpath again," explained the detective, affecting a light tone. "I am waiting for you to ascertain the extent of the damage he has wrought."

"You surely haven't been going without medical attention all this time, simply because you sent for me?" asked the doctor. "Great goodness!"

"I begged and begged him on my knees," wailed Mrs. Hendricks, "but he wouldn't listen to me, and insisted on bandaging the wound himself."

"I did not want it to get out," explained Hendricks. "Right now I wouldn't have it known that I was attacked for anything. You see I knew you could be trusted."

Lampkin's face stiffened with displeasure.

"Let me make an examination," he said, in a tone that told plainly that he did not intend to lose any more time.

"Here it is, in the left side," said Hendricks. "It can't be bad, for I stood up just now to look out of the window. I can't locate the blasted lead, though."

"I should think not," grunted Lampkin, as he removed the bandage.

After a moment he exclaimed:

"Thank heaven, you are all right! Nothing fatal, if you'll take good care of yourself. The ball went in at the side, glanced on one of your ribs and lodged against the breastbone. I can remove it in a moment."

Five minutes later the operation had been successfully performed and Hendricks, freshly bandaged, was reclining easily in his chair.

"Now, you get some sleep and remain quiet," said the doctor, mixing some medicine at the window.

"Rubbish!" muttered the detective. "Do you mean that I am to stay penned up here all day to-day?"

"And all week—this week," imitated Lampkin.

Hendricks' face darkened.

"But I simply can't," he grumbled. "I never had more to do in my life, and if I halt now my assailant will have gained by his cowardly attack. No, no, old friend, you must not stop me now that I have something fresh to start from. I have tasted blood, and like a bloodhound I must go on, on. I tell you I have the vilest scoundrel to deal with that ever breathed, and it is to be a fight to the death between us."

"It might kill you to leave your room inside of a week," was the doctor's firm reply. "If you go out and die from it, your enemy will have gained his point."

The words told on the detective. His face fell and Lampkin noticed his lower lip twitching. There was a hint of moisture in the big gray eyes. He turned to his mother, who sat near the grate, her face in her hands.

"Leave us alone, mother," he said. "I want to tell Lampkin how it happened. As for staying in, I'll take his advice. He knows his business, and I know nothing else will content you."

"Oh, I'm so glad," cried the old lady, and she came to him and parted his hair on the brow and kissed him.

CHAPTER IX.

When the door had closed behind her, Hendricks gave a deep sigh and smiled faintly.

"She doesn't know what an awfully narrow escape I had," he began. "When I retired last night I was so overcome with fatigue that I hardly could take time to undress. I actually fell asleep while sitting on the side of the bed to take off my boots. I almost tumbled to the floor, and that roused me sufficiently to complete the operation.

"The first intimation of danger came to me in a dream. I thought I was in the basement of a burning building, confined in a room, the walls of which were solid masonry and the doors of iron. I seemed to be choking and gasping for breath. It was no dream; it was reality as far as the stifling sensation was concerned, for on waking I found my arms pinioned, a weight on my breast and a towel saturated with chloroform held tightly over my nostrils.

"My Lord! it was awful. Every vein in me seemed on fire. I felt as if I had been pumped full of ignited gas. I tried to scream, but my human nightmare prevented that, or the slightest movement on my part.

"All at once the thought struck into my benumbed consciousness that I was in the clutch of my secret foe, and with that came a sort of repugnant desperation that had strength. I threw out my right hand, and catching the towel wrenched it from my nose, and then sucked down into me a whiff of God's pure air. It seemed to act on me like releasing a gigantic spring, for I hurled him from me as you would a stinging lizard. I heard him strike the middle of the floor and grunt as the breath went out of him. Then I felt hastily under my pillow, and missing my revolver, and hearing a click from where he crouched, I knew that he had nabbed it. I was on my feet in a moment, and you can bet I did some tall dodging in the darkness, for I knew I was his target. I saw him moving as I moved, trying to get an aim at me, and all the time I was edging, sometimes erect, again on all fours, toward the corner where I knew that old sword stood—a relic of the Revolution.

"Before he pulled the trigger I had hold of it. He heard it rattle and blazed away. His bullet struck the brass scabbard, glanced off and crashed into that mirror there. The flash helped me locate him, and jerking my weapon from its rusty sheath, I dashed at him, hoping to cut him down before he got another shot. My first furious thrust with such a formidable weapon astonished him, and he backed, cocking the gun as he did so. I gave him a stab right at the breast. It would have run a two-inch plank through, but it had no more effect on him than if I had struck the iron sides of an American man-of-war. He had on a bullet-proof suit of clothes. I heard him laugh derisively, and then he fired again. I felt the twinge in my side just as my mother screamed below, and then I was almost overpowered by the thought that she would rush to my rescue and get killed along with me. I dashed at him, cut at the hand holding the revolver and was rewarded by hearing the weapon strike the floor at his side. I saw him stoop for it, and plunged my sword's point at his back. It rebounded as if it had struck cork. The next lick was dealt at his hand as it groped toward the pistol. I knocked his arm out and he fell sprawling on the floor. The mistake I made then was in trying to get possession of the revolver, for when I reached for it, he bounded to his feet, and, hissing like a cat, sprang out at the open window through which he had come. I saw his head and shoulders disappear below the sill just as I secured the gun. I ran to the window and saw him crawling down the slanting roof of the conservatory. Remembering his armor, I took aim at the back of his neck, but I was too shaky to shoot well, and missed. Before my unnerved fingers could cock the revolver again he was out of sight, and I heard the gate in the rear close with a slam.

"I started in pursuit down the front stairs, but when I reached the first landing I met my mother and keeled over in a dead faint. The drug and the wound were too much for me. I came to in a moment and prevented her from notifying the police or the neighbors of the accident. Then it was four o'clock. I tried to get a message to you, but failed on the first attempt. That's the whole account of my adventures."

"You have certainly had a tough time of it," declared Dr. Lampkin. "At whose door do you lay the attack?"

"It is the work of the villain who set the bomb for me, and I am now pretty sure he is involved in the Palace Hotel affair."

"What, Gielow?"

Hendricks mused a moment, then he said:

"This attempt and the other, showing such positive enmity to me personally, make the whole business the biggest mystery of my experience. Besides, there is another clew which tends to lead me away from the idea of implicating the artist."

"What is that?"

Hendricks gazed at the open fire as if debating how to express himself clearly.

"You remember," he began, "that the letter Miss Huntington showed us purporting to be Caruthers' at Philadelphia was forged, of course, since Caruthers was dead when it was written."

"I remember," said Lampkin, with a sudden start.

"You also recall that I spoke to her of certain idiomatic expressions in it, showing that it was written by a foreigner."

"Yes, quite well."

Hendricks smiled and stroked his wounded side.

"Gielow didn't write that letter. Now, what foreigner have we reason to suspect of having had a hand in this matter?"

"Bantinni," exclaimed the doctor, rising excitedly. "My Lord, why did I not think of that before? And he is a suitor for the hand of the heiress, besides."

The detective smiled. He was at one of his old games of trying the effect of conflicting evidence on his friend.

"You have forgotten one other thing—and there you are," he grinned. "What about Gielow's confession?"

Dr. Lampkin's face fell. He was silent for several minutes.

"You are incorrigible!" he broke out suddenly. "I don't make sport of you when you come nosing around in my profession. I sit down and give you the benefit of all there is in it."

The detective smiled apologetically.

"You are at liberty to retaliate at any time," he returned. "Besides, if I let you on to the climaxes of my cases before I reached them you'd lose interest, and I'd not have the pleasure of your companionship."

Dr. Lampkin took his hat to leave.

"I must get back to the office," he said, good-naturedly. "I'll drop in this afternoon. Remember, you are to stay in this room a week at the very shortest."

CHAPTER X.

Despite his strong will and determination not to yield to weakness, Hendricks was compelled to remain in his room longer than he expected. But his mind was not idle. Every time Dr. Lampkin called he found him engaged in some investigation pertaining to the murder of Caruthers.

"You might as well go out and be done with it," remarked Lampkin one day. "Don't you know you'll never get strong again as long as you keep your brain on the race-track?"

Hendricks looked down sheepishly.

"I don't think you ought to begrudge a fellow the little he can accomplish in a room the size of this when Sergt. Denham and his aides are turning the earth upside down."

Lampkin walked to a window impatiently.

"Who is that red-headed man in the drawing-room?" he asked, sharply.

"Oh!" exclaimed the detective. "You saw him, then? I told Kitty to hide him behind a screen till you had come and gone."

"She obeyed your orders all right," returned the doctor, smiling, "but I presume she didn't know who I was, for she hustled me behind the screen also and said: 'Sor, will you plaise to sit there quiet-like till the doctor comes and goes away. Master has orders not to see anybody.'

"I sat still until the girl had gone out, then I rose to come up here quietly, but the red-headed man got up, too. 'I came first, if you please,' said he. 'I'm a busy man, and I've waited as long on that doctor as I'm a-going to.'

"'But I'm the doctor,' said I, and he fainted."

Hendricks laughed heartily, holding his hand over his wounded side.

"Who is the fellow?" demanded Lampkin.

"He is a prominent employe in a crematory near New York."

"What do you want to see him about?"

Hendricks drew himself up a little higher in his chair.

"Ring that bell there twice," he said. "It is the signal agreed on between me and Kitty. She will show him up, and you can be present at the interview."

Lampkin rang as directed, and a moment later the red-headed individual with beard of the same color entered rubbing his short fat hands. Lampkin could not keep from mentally comparing him to an undertaker.

Mr. Simpkins glanced at the doctor half inquiringly and then his eyes fell on the patient.

"They told me at the office that you had written that you were interested in our line," he said, introductively. "A great many, sir, a great many are giving cremation a thought in this progressive age. You have a mighty good color, sir, but of course you and your physician knows how you are. Many of us bear external signs of a long life before us while at the same time the germs of death are ravaging within. You have acted with commendable wisdom in taking this up while you have your mind about you and the ability to express your choice about the matter. We have an artistic selection of urns, the designs of the most famous sculptors in Europe. That's a thing that tastes differ about. Have you ever witnessed a cremation? No? I wish you had before you was—was taken down. There is hardly a man who comes out to our place and witnesses a cremation that is not a convert to it and opposed to the old order of things. Have you, doctor, seen a cremation?"

Dr. Lampkin had not, and it was with some difficulty that he kept a straight face, for Hendricks was making a laughable grimace behind the lecturer's back.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE VANES OF NANTUCKET.

One of the Sights of the New England Town Is the Quaint Little Figures.

Almost the first sight that catches the eye as we leave the wharf is the group of government weather signals and vanes on the roof of the historic custom-house; for Nantucket is one of the most important signal stations along the east coast.

Going up into the town, we soon find that the most popular vane is that called by the children the "sailor-man;" and he is indeed an attractive little fellow. He is always dressed in white trousers and blue monkey jacket, and he wears on the back of his little block head a brilliant black hat. It isn't a regular tarpaulin, you know, but it is something like the hats the girls wear and name "sailors;" and that may be the reason that he wears it, for a true sailor is a very chivalrous sort of person. This little man has broad-bladed oars securely fastened in his chubby hands, and, perched aloft on a pole, he swings gaily about on a pivot with the breeze, while his oars revolve as the wind chooses. Sometimes he seems to be making friendly signals, sometimes signs of distress, and often he appears to be violently whirling Indian clubs, as if he were taking his exercise on his own main truck.

This sailor vane is in such demand by summer visitors that making him has become a fairly paying business. One islander sold 500 in one year. And this Nantucket product, like the real sailor himself, travels to all parts of the world. Whether he works as surely and vigorously in a land breeze, we are not able to say. Perhaps he is even more frisky, as true sailor men are said to be when they go ashore.

Next in favor to the rather flat-faced sailor is a Roman soldier, who is armed with a broadsword in one hand and protected by a shield in the other. He also wears a helmet, and he is usually all of one color—a sort of golden brown, because he is only shellacked.

He doesn't caper quite so merrily as the sailor, and he looks rather more dignified as, indeed, he should; for in the old whaling days, at least, there was no time on shipboard for daily drills or dress parade. Jack Tar had to be on deck when he was needed, and how he got there, or how he looked when he did get there, nobody knew or cared.—Mary E. Starbuck, in St. Nicholas.

As to Shelling.

"Dis wah am a bigger thing den dey thought," said the first jockey as he settled himself on an upturned pail before the door of one of the Highland park stables.

"G'wan," said the second, lighting the cigar end for the fourth time. "'Tain't 'mountin' t' nouffin'."

"Dem Spaniards ain't had no chance yit," went on the first. "Yo' jes' gi' 'em a chance."

"You doan know w'at yo' talkin' 'bout; deys had all de chance in de wurl'."

"No, dey ain't. Yo' jes' wait 'bout a week an' den one o' dem big boats o' dern gits up 'roun' Bosting."

"What dey do up dar?"

"Dey'll shell dat town in five minutes."

"Huh? Shell Bosting? Listen t' dat. Shell Bosting. W'y, yo' black rascal, dem Spaniards couldn't shell peas."—Detroit Free Press.

Already Drilled.

Mrs. Peque—There seems to be a preference for unmarried men for the army. I don't see why that should be the case.

Henry Peque—Neither do I. Married men might not amount to much for aggressive fighting on their own part, but they would be just the fellows to stand without complaining any number of sieges or constant harassing from the enemy.—N. Y. World.

Dim as Yet.

"Have you any expectations, Jack?"

"I can tell you better, Julia, after I have had a confidential talk with your father."—Chicago Record.

MINNESOTA NEWS.

Agricultural Experiments.

President John S. Pillsbury, of the state university board of regents, has prepared his annual report on the agricultural experiment station. The work that is being carried on at the various sub-stations is described in detail. The farm at Grand Rapids now comprises 95 acres. What was at one time a heavy wooded plat has now been so improved as to allow the use of machinery. In a muskeg swamp open draining work has been in progress, with experiments in what kinds of vegetables will best grow on it.

At the Coteau farm in Lyon county the study of soil moisture, soil fertility, production of forage crops and forestry production has been carried on for some time. The forestry plantation, started in 1894, is reported as being in excellent condition.

The Federal government appropriates $15,000 annually for the work in this state, but the total expense amounts to over $30,000.

Lind's Majority.

The secretary of state has unofficial returns from all the county auditors in the state. Those yet to come in will not alter the figures materially. They show that Lind has a plurality of 20,396 over Eustis, and a majority of 11,746 over all.

Other candidates on the republican state ticket have pluralities as follows: Lyndon A. Smith, lieutenant governor, 25,663; Albert Berg, secretary of state, 38,848; R. C. Dunn, state auditor, 44,664; A. T. Koerner, state treasurer, 43,664; W. B. Douglas, attorney general, 40,833; D. F. Reese, clerk of supreme court, 40,619. For justices of the supreme court, Lovely polled 128,897 votes, Brown, 107,854, Lewis 100,667, Canty 98,715, Mitchell 89,675, Buck. 78,115. Koerner leades in number of votes, having received 140,751. Bob Dunn comes next with 138,980. Duglas and Reese come close after Dunn. the former having 137,550. and the latter 137,877. Lyndon A Smith received only 130,207 votes,

Conscience Stricken.

Harry Root, aged 18 years, walked into the Central station at Minneapolis and announced that he was a burglar and wished to give himself up. Questioned by Captain Coskran, he confessed that he and a companion had gone through a jewelry store at 310 Nicollet avenue, securing six opera glasses, some cuff buttons, watch chains, and pins. He had been a former employe at the store, and in that capacity had managed to get a wax impression of the lock, with which he had a key made to order and thus effected entrance. He had afterwards pawned the plunder. He was without employment and could not agree with his step-mother, for which reason he left home. Urged on by hunger, he had committed the crime.

May Stiffen Cash Wheat.

The mills at the head of the lakes have been given an all-rail rate to the seaboard of 20½ cents. This is just one-half cent more than the the lake and rail rate now. The mills therefore are not very much concerned over when navigation closes. It means, too, that they are in the market for wheat all through December. They have bought much wheat to arive, at one cent over the December option, and flour business has been done on the basis of the spot wheat premium of 3¼ to 4 cents over December, so they are practically 3½ cents ahead on all they have purchased. The result is likely to be a stiffening in the price of cash wheat

State Funds.

The state had $872,000 in the treasury at the close of the month of November, of which $103,000 is in the general fund, $383,000 in the permanent school and university funds, and the rest in special funds. The treasurer has a right to go into the pocket where the state keeps its "roll" to meet a temporary deficit in the change pocket, which is the revenue fund, and such an overdraft would have been made if the state prison had not turned in $125,000 the other day. Money for the October settlements will be coming in now, so that there will be no shortage when the legislature meets.

School Books Stolen.

Thieves broke into the Meyers school house, district No. 9, Dodge county, stole all the library books and scattered them through the streets of Skyberg. The district had purchased about $40 worth of new text books, and it is presumed the thieves intended to take those, and when they found out their mistake were so mad they threw the old books away.

Value of Property in St. Paul.

City Comptroller McCardy has prepared a table showing the valuation of the real and personal property in St. Paul and on which the tax estimate for next year will be based.

The table prepared in assessment districts shows the valuation of personal property in the city to be $15,489,467. the valuation of real property to be $78,523,015, a total of $94,012,482.

Mrs. H. T. Brand, of Money Creek, came near meeting with a fatal accident. Her little daughter let a lamp fall from the table, igniting Mrs. Brand's clothing.

Capt. Joseph Hale's cherished memory will be perpetuated at Fort Snelling by the placing of a bronze tablet, reciting his heroic record and numerous virtues, in the front wall of the administration building.

A stranger attempted to swindle the firm of Evenson Bros., at St. Peter, out of $59.40. He presented a wheat ticket on the Van Duzen elevator and signed by A. F. Evenson. The ticket was regularly made out and called for 110 bushels of No. 1 wheat at 54 cents per bushel.

At the annual meeting of the St. Paul Curling club, Lambert Defiel was elected president.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson in International Series for December 18, 1898—The Captivity of Judah—Jeremiah 52:1-11.

[Arranged from Peloubet's Select Notes.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart.—Jer. 29:13.

THE SECTION includes the story of the fall of Jerusalem; 2 Kings 24:8-25:30; 2 Chron. 36:9-21; Jer. 39:1-10; 52:1-30.

TIME.—Jerusalem was destroyed B. C. 586 (or 587). The struggle against the Babylonians continued about 20 years (605-586).

PLACE.—1. Jerusalem, a city of 20,000 inhabitants, according to Thenius. 2. Riblah, 200 miles north of Jerusalem, at the base of Lebanon, at the junction where the great road from the east parts, one southwestward to Tyre, along the coast, the other southward to Palestine and Egypt.

LESSON COMMENT.

I. The First Captivity. The Beginning of the End. Jehoiakim's Reign.—This took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (605-4 B. C.) by Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army (Jer. 25:1, 18; 2 Kings 24:1; Dan. 1:1). It was at this time that Daniel and his friends were carried captive to Babylon (Dan. 1:1-6), and from this date is to be counted the 70 years of captivity foretold by Jeremiah (25:9-12; 29:10). The captivity began at different points and had various endings.

II. The Period of Rest.—For seven or eight years, during the remainder of Jehoiakim's reign of 11 years (2 Kings 24:7). Jehoiakim was a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar during this time. It was an opportunity for repentance; the Lord was slow to anger and abundant in mercies, desiring that the people be saved.

III. The Second Captivity.—Jehoiachin's reign (B. C. 597). Jehoiachin was the son of Jehoiakim, and began to reign when 18 years old. He reigned only three months. He seems to have rebelled against Babylon, for Nebuchadnezzar again came with his army and besieged Jerusalem, captured the city and sent a great amount of treasures from the palace and the temple to Babylon, with 10,000 of the more important of the people (2 Kings 24:10-16). Among these were the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1, 2), and the great-grandfather of Mordecai, Queen Esther's cousin (Esther 2:5, 6), and King Jehoiakim himself, who lay in prison at Babylon for 37 years before he was released.

IV. Another Period of Rest. Zedekiah's Reign.—Vs. 1-3. Nine years. Zedekiah was the uncle of Jehoiachin and half brother of Jehoiakim. Zedekiah was a man not so much bad at heart as weak in will.

3. "For through the anger of the Lord it," the evil courses of Zedekiah, "came to pass:" The sin was so deep seated and the sinner so determined on his sin that there was nothing to do but to let it work itself out and bring its own ruin and punishment. That, rather, and "Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon:" Sin is always weakness and blindness. Thus Zedekiah's sins led him to blindly and foolishly rebel.

V. The Third Captivity. The Great Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem.—The siege lasted a year and a half (Vs. 4-7). 4. "In the ninth year * * * tenth month:" Last of December, B. C. 588. "Nebuchadrezzar:" This is correct spelling of Nebuchadnezzar. "And all his army:" A great host (Kings). "Pitched against it:" Surrounded it with their armies to prevent all provisions from entering and to starve it to death.

6. "Fourth month:" June-July, B. C. 586. "The famine was sore:" For the horrors of this siege see Lamentations. Mothers were at last driven to murder and eat their children.

The City Taken.—7. "The city was broken up:" Broken into. A breach was made in the walls at midnight, according to Josephus. "The gate (on the north) between the two walls" of Mounts Moriah and Zion, down the Tyropean valley. This path came out in "the king's garden," which was laid out near Siloam in the broad space formed by the junction of the Hinnom and Kidron valleys, at the southeast corner of the city. "Now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:" This is mentioned so as to explain how escape was possible. The attack of the Chaldeans was of necessity from the north, where the city was least defended, while the steep sides of the south, east and southwest were left comparatively free. The Jewish people fled southward by the way of the plain, toward the mouth of the Jordan and the head of the Dead sea. The temple, the palace, the houses of the nobles, were deliberately set on fire.

VI. The Fate of King Zedekiah.—Vs. 8-11. 8. "The Chaldeans * * * overtook Zedekiah," and all his soldiers and friends deserted him.

9. "To Riblah:" See "Place." "Gave judgment upon him;" i. e., brought him to trial as a common criminal, not as a king, because he had repudiated his most solemn oath of allegiance and been a secret traitor to the king who had placed him on the throne (2 Kings 24:20; 2 Chron. 36:13).

10. "Slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes:" The punishment of Zedekiah was doubly cruel: first, his being made to witness the execution of his own sons, and then his being deprived of sight, so that the last scenes impressed upon him would be the death agonies of his children.

11. "Put out the eyes of Zedekiah:" This blinding of captives was a common Assyrian practice.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The great lesson to be learned from this destruction of Jerusalem is God's persistent and constant effort to prevent it.

God uses even bad men as instruments for disciplining His people. Nebuchadnezzar is said to be God's tool. His ax for cutting down the tree of Judah, His rod for punishing and disciplining His people.

We learn a good lesson from the forced repentance of some of the nobles. It proved useless, because it was not from the heart.

DEFECTIVE PAGE