

A. L. O. E.

THE

CHILDREN'S

TABERNACLE

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The Children's Tabernacle

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The Children's Tabernacle Or Hand-Work and Heart-Work

PREFACE

WHILE I was engaged in writing the following brief work, again and again the question arose in my mind, "Can I make subjects so deep and difficult really interesting and intelligible to the young? The importance of reading Old Testament types in the light thrown on them by the Gospel cannot, indeed, be overrated, especially in these perilous times; but can a child be taught thus to read them?"

The attempt thus to teach is made in the following pages; and I would earnestly request parents and teachers not merely to place the little volume in the hands of children as a prettily-illustrated story-book, but to read it with them, prepared to answer questions and to solve difficulties. Sunday books should supplement, not take the place of, oral instruction. A writer may give earnest thought and labor to the endeavor to make religious subjects interesting to the young; but what influence has the silent page compared with that of a father expressing his own settled convictions, or that of a mother who has the power to speak at once to the head and the heart?

A. L. O. E.

I. Wanting Work

“YOU have no right to spoil my desk, you tiresome, mischievous boy!”

“I’ve not spoilt it, Agnes; I’ve only ornamented it by carving that little pattern all round.”

“I don’t call that carving, nor ornamenting neither!” cried Agnes, in an angry voice; “you’ve nicked it all round with your knife, you’ve spoilt my nice little desk, and I’ll” – What threat Agnes might have added remains unknown, for her sentence was broken by a violent fit of coughing, whoop after whoop – a fit partly brought on by her passion.

“What is all this, my children?” asked Mrs. Temple, drawn into the room called the study by the noise of the quarrel between her son and her eldest daughter.

Lucius, a boy more than twelve years of age, and therefore a great deal too old to have made so foolish a use of his knife, stood with a vexed expression on his face, looking at his poor sister, who, in the violence of her distressing cough, had to grasp the table to keep herself from falling; Amy, her kind younger sister had run to support her; while Dora and little Elsie, who had both the same complaint, though in a milder form than their sister, coughed with her in chorus.

Mrs. Temple’s care was first directed to helping her poor sick daughter. Agnes, as well as her three sisters, had caught the whooping-cough from their brother Lucius, who had brought it from school. It was several minutes before the room was quiet enough for conversation; but when Agnes, flushed and trembling, with her eyes red and tearful from coughing, had sunk on an arm-chair relieved for a time, Mrs. Temple was able to turn her attention to what had been the cause of dispute. A rosewood desk lay on the table, and round the upper edge of this desk Lucius had carved a little pattern with the large sharp knife which he held in his hand.

“I am sure, mamma, that I did not mean to do mischief,” said Lucius, “nor to vex Agnes neither. I thought that a carved desk would be prettier than a plain one, and so” —

“You might have tried the carving on your own desk,” said Agnes, faintly. The tears were rolling down her cheeks, and she dared not raise her voice lest she should bring on the whooping again.

“So I might, blockhead that I am; I never thought of that!” exclaimed Lucius. “But if you like we will exchange desks now, and then all will be right. Mine is a bigger desk than yours, and has not *many* ink-stains upon it.”

The proposal set Dora, Amy, and Elsie laughing, and a smile rose even to the lips of Agnes. She saw that Lucius was anxious to make up for his folly; but the big school-desk would have been a poor exchange for her own, which was neat and had red velvet lining; while hers, being scarcely larger than a work-box, would have been of little service to Lucius at school.

“O no! I’ll keep my own desk; the carving does not look so very bad, after all,” murmured Agnes, who had an affectionate heart, though by no means a perfect temper.

“I took no end of pains with it,” said Lucius, “and my knife is so sharp that” —

“I would rather that you did not try its edge on my table,” cried his mother, barely in time to save her mahogany from being “ornamented” as well as the desk.

“Stupid that I am! I was not thinking of what I was about!” exclaimed Lucius, shutting up the knife with a sharp click; “but the truth is I’m so horribly sick of having nothing to do that I must set about something. I don’t like reading, I’ve enough and too much of that at school; you won’t let me go out, lest the damp should bring back my coughing and whooping – I’ve had enough and too much of that also; I’ve only the girls to play with, for none of my own friends must come near the house because of this tiresome infection; and I shall be taking to cutting my own fingers off some day for want of something better to do!”

“It’s a case of idleness being the mother of mischief,” cried the bright-eyed Dora, who was busy embroidering with many-colored silks an apron for little Elsie’s doll.

“Idleness is indeed very often the mother of mischief,” observed Mrs. Temple. “I am afraid that my young people often prove the truth of the proverb.”

“Perhaps it was partly idleness that made the children of Israel do so very very wrong when they were wandering about in the desert,” observed Amy, glancing up from a book on the subject which she had been reading.

“Ah! they were shut up in a wilderness month after month, year after year,” cried Lucius, “after they had come forth from Egypt with their flocks and herds and all kinds of spoil. They had little to do, I suppose, and may have grown just as tired of the sameness of their lives as I have of the dulness of mine.”

“I have often thought,” observed Mrs. Temple, who had seated herself at the table and taken up her knitting – “I have often thought how tenderly the Lord dealt with his people in providing for them pleasant, interesting occupation when He bade them make the Tabernacle, and condescended to give them minute directions how it should be made. There were the various employments of carving, ornamenting, working in metal, to engage the attention of the men; while the women had spinning, weaving, sewing, and embroidering, with the delightful assurance that the offering of their gold and silver, their time and their toil, was made to the Lord and accepted by Him.”

“I never before thought of the making of the Tabernacle being a *pleasure* to the Israelites,” observed Agnes. “I always wondered at so many chapters in the Bible being filled with descriptions of curtains, silver loops, and gold ornaments, which are of no interest at all to us now.”

“My child, it is our ignorance which makes us think any part of the Bible of no interest,” observed Mrs. Temple. “If you remember the readiness with which, as we know, the Israelites brought their precious things for the Tabernacle, and if you can realize the eager pleasure with which, after the long idleness which had ended in grievous sin, men and women set to work, you will feel that the order to make a beautiful place for worship must have been the opening of a spring of new delight to the children of Israel. They had the Lord’s own pattern to work from, so there was no room for disputes about form or style; and it was a pattern admirably suited to give pleasant employment to numbers of people, and to women as well as to men. Fancy how listless languor must have been suddenly changed to animation; the murmurs of discontented idlers to the hum of cheerful workers; and how vanity and foolish gossip amongst the girls must have been checked while they traced out their rich patterns and plied their needles; and instead of decking their own persons, gave their gold and jewels freely to God!”

“I wish that we’d a Tabernacle to make here,” exclaimed Lucius, whose restless fingers again opened his dangerous plaything.

Mrs. Temple raised her hand to her brow: a thought had just occurred to her mind. “We might possibly manage to make a model of the Tabernacle,” she said, after a moment’s reflection.

“Ah, yes! I’d do all the carving part – all the hard part,” cried Lucius, eagerly.

“Do, do let us make a model!” exclaimed his sisters.

“It would be a long work – a difficult work; I am not sure whether we could succeed in accomplishing it,” said Mrs. Temple. “And after all our labor, if we did manage to make a fair model, to what use could we put it? We had better consider all these matters before we begin what must be a tedious and might prove an unprofitable work.”

“Ah, a model would be of great use, mamma!” cried Dora. “At Christmas-time, when this tiresome infection is over, and we go to our aunt at Chester, we could show it to all her friends.”

“And to her school children – her Ragged-school children!” interrupted Lucius with animation. “We’ve let them see our magic-lantern for three Christmases running, and if the children are not tired of the slides of lions, bears, and peacocks, I’m sure that I am; besides, I smashed half the slides by

accident last winter. A model of the Tabernacle would be something quite new to please the ragged scholars, and Aunt Theodora would draw so many good lessons from it.”

“And could we not do with the model what we did with the magic-lantern,” suggested Dora, “make of it a little exhibition, letting aunt’s friends come and see it for sixpenny tickets, and so collect a little money to help on the Ragged-school?”

“That would be so nice!” cried Amy.

“That would be famous!” exclaimed little blue-eyed Elsie, clapping her hands.

“Let’s set to work this minute!” said Lucius, and he rapped the table with his knife.

Dora threw the doll’s apron into her work-box, eager to have some employment more worthy of the clever fingers of a young lady of more than eleven years of age.

Mrs. Temple smiled at the impetuosity of her children. “I must repeat, let us consider first,” she observed. “Possibly not one amongst you has any idea of the amount of labor and patience required to complete a model of the Tabernacle which was made by the children of Israel.”

“Of course our Tabernacle would be much smaller than the real one was,” remarked Dora.

“Supposing that we made it on the scale of one inch to two cubits, I wonder what its length would be?” said Mrs. Temple. “Just bring me the Bible. Lucius, I will turn over to the description of the Tabernacle, which we will find in the Book of Exodus.”

“I do not know what a cubit is,” said Elsie, while her brother ran for the Bible.

“Don’t you remember what mamma told us when we were reading about the size of the Ark?” said Agnes. “A cubit is the length of a man’s arm from the elbow to the end of his middle-finger, just about half of one of our yards.”

“Eighteen inches, or, as some think twenty,” observed Mrs. Temple, as she opened the Bible which Lucius had just placed on the table before her.

“Let’s count a cubit as exactly half a yard, mamma,” said Lucius, “and then one inch’s length in the model would go for a yard’s length in the real Tabernacle. If we reckon thus, how long would our model need to be?”

“The outer court of the Tabernacle was one hundred cubits long by fifty broad,” replied Mrs. Temple; “that, in such a model as we propose making, would be a length of four feet and two inches, by a breadth of two feet and one inch.”

“Just large enough to stand comfortably on this side table!” cried Lucius. “There will be room enough on this table, and I’ll clear it of the books, work-box, and flower-jar in a twinkling.”

“Stop a minute, my boy!” laughed his mother, as Lucius appeared to be on the point of sweeping everything off, including the green cloth cover; “we have not even decided on whether this model should be made at all; and if we do begin one, months may pass before we shall need that table on which to set it up.”

“O, do, do let us make a model!” again the young Temples cried out.

“I’m ready to undertake every bit of the wood-work,” added Lucius, impatient to use his sharp knife on better work than that of spoiling a desk.

“First hear what you will have to undertake,” said his more cautious and practical mother. “The mere outer court has sixty pillars.”

“Sixty pillars!” re-echoed the five.

“Besides four more pillars for the Tabernacle itself,” continued the lady, “and forty-eight boards of wood, to be covered all over with gold.”

“How large would each board have to be?” asked Lucius, more gravely.

“Each five inches long, and three quarters of an inch broad,” answered his mother.

“And quite thin, I suppose,” said the young carpenter, looking thoughtfully at the blade of his knife which was to accomplish such a long, difficult piece of work.

“We could get gold-leaf for the gilding, mamma,” suggested the intelligent Dora, “and pasteboard instead of wood; pasteboard would look quite as neat, and need not to be cut up into boards.”

“Oh, it’s not the gilding, nor the cutting up the planks neither, whether they be made of pasteboard or wood, that puzzles me!” cried her brother; “but think of sixty-four pillars! How on earth could I cut out so many slender little rods with my knife!”

“Thick wire might be used for the pillars just as well as pasteboard for the planks,” said Agnes; “when covered with gold-leaf they would look just the same as if” – The sentence was interrupted by another fit of coughing; it was clear that poor Agnes was at present little fitted to join in the conversation.

II. The Tabernacle

“THERE is a picture of the Tabernacle in your Bible, mamma; that will help us in arranging what is to be done; and you will decide on which of us should do each portion of the work,” said Dora.

Mrs. Temple turned over the leaves till she came to the picture.

“Here you see a long open court,” she observed, “enclosed by pillars supporting curtains of fine linen, fastened to them by loops of silver. I shall supply the linen for these curtains, and I think that my gentle Amy, who sews so nicely, may make them. This work will require only neatness and patience, and my little dove has both.”

“Ah, mamma! but the silver loops – how could I make them?” suggested Amy, who had very little self-confidence.

“I have a reel of silver thread up-stairs in my box,” said her mother; “you will make the tiny loops for the curtains of that.”

“And I will manage the sixty-four pillars!” cried Lucius; “it was no bad notion to make them of wire. But they must be fixed into something hard, to keep them upright in their places.”

“I was thinking of that,” said his mother; “we shall need a wooden frame, rather more than four feet by two, to support the model; and into this frame holes must be drilled to receive the sixty-four wires.”

“I must borrow the carpenter’s tools,” observed Lucius; “I can’t do all that with my knife. I see that I have a long, difficult job before me.”

“Do you give it up?” cried little Elsie, looking up archly into the face of her brother.

“Not I!” said the schoolboy proudly. “The harder the work, the more glorious is success!”

“What are those objects in the court of the Tabernacle?” asked Amy, who had been thoughtfully examining the picture.

“That large square object with grating on the top, from which smoke is rising, is the Altar of burnt-offering,” said the lady. “Through the grating the ashes of animals that had been slain as sacrifices fell into a cavity below. The projections which you see at the four corners are called the horns of the altar, of which you read in various parts of the Bible.”

“Was it not an Altar of burnt-offering that Elijah made on Mount Carmel,” asked Dora, “when he cut the dead bullock in pieces and prayed to the Lord till fire was sent down from heaven?”

“Yes,” answered her mother, “but that altar was not like the one in the picture. Elijah built his up quickly; it was merely formed of twelve stones. The altar made by the Israelites in the desert was framed of wood, and covered with brass. It was nearly eight feet square, and was reached, not by steps, but by a sloping bank of earth.”

“And what is that very large vase farther on in the picture?” asked Amy.

“That is meant for the Brazen Laver, to hold water for the priests to wash in. This laver was made of brass which the women of Israel offered. Do any of my girls remember what articles had been made before of that brass?”

The party were silent for a few seconds, and then Amy said, with a blush on her cheek, “The mirrors of the women, mamma.” The little girl was inclined to be vain of her looks, and her mother, who had noticed how much of her Amy’s time was foolishly spent before a glass, had drawn her attention, some days before that of which I write, to a fact which has been thought worthy of mention in the Bible. The women of Israel had the self-denial to give up the brazen mirrors – which were to them what glass mirrors, are to us – to form a laver for the use of the priests when engaged in the service of God.

Mrs. Temple smiled pleasantly to see that the example of the women in the desert had not been forgotten by her child.

“Is not that kind of large tent which is standing in the court, the Tabernacle itself?” inquired Dora.

“It is the Tabernacle,” was the reply.

“Why is all that smoke coming out of it?” asked little Elsie.

“That smoke in the picture represents the pillar of cloud which guided the Israelites in their wanderings,” said Mrs. Temple. “For it is written in the book of Exodus (xl. 38), *‘The cloud of the Lord was upon the Tabernacle by day, and fire was upon it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.’*”

“What a very holy place that Tabernacle must have been!” said Amy, in a low tone of voice.

“There was not only the pillar of cloud as a visible sign of God’s presence resting upon it,” observed Mrs. Temple, “but when Moses had finished making the Tabernacle, a miraculous light, called by the Jews, ‘Shekinah,’ and, in the Bible, *‘the glory of the Lord,’* filled the most holy place.”

“I wish that it were so with holy places now!” exclaimed Agnes. “If a cloud always rested on the roofs of our churches, and a glorious light shone inside, people would not be so careless about religion as they are now.”

“I fear that no outward sign of God’s presence would long prevent carelessness and sin,” replied Mrs. Temple.

“What, mamma, not even a shining glory in church!” cried Amy.

“Remember, my child, all the wonders and terrors of Mount Sinai – the thunders and lightnings, the smoke that rose like the smoke of a furnace, the trembling of the earth, and the sound of the trumpet exceeding loud! The Israelites quaked with fear; they felt how awful is the presence of God; they implored that the Lord might only address them through Moses – ‘But let not God speak with us lest we die!’ cried the terrified people. And yet, in sight of that very Mount Sinai, in sight of the thick cloud resting above it, those Israelites openly broke God’s commandments, and fell into grievous sin! Oh, my beloved children, the only thing to save us from sinning greatly against God is for our hearts to be the tabernacle in which He vouchsafes to dwell, and to have his Holy Spirit shining as the bright light within! Can any one of you repeat that most beautiful verse from Isaiah (lvii. 15), which shows us that the Lord deigns to dwell with the lowly in heart?”

Of all Mrs. Temple’s family, Agnes had the best memory; though she had neither the quick intelligence of her twin-sister Dora, nor so much of the love of her Heavenly Master which made Amy, though younger than herself, more advanced in religious knowledge. Dora had often admired the verse mentioned by her mother, and to the humble-minded little Amy it had brought a feeling of thankful joy; but it was Agnes who remembered it best by heart, so as to be able now to repeat it without making a single mistake. “*Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*”

III. The Curtains

“THE girls will have plenty to do in making the curtains for the Tabernacle itself,” observed Lucius, who, while his mother and sisters had been conversing, had been engaged in looking over the description in the book of Exodus. “Why, there are four distinct sets of curtains! First, the undermost, ten curtains of fine-twined linen, with blue, and purple, and scarlet, and cherubims of cunning – that must mean skilful – work upon them!”

“How splendid that must be!” exclaimed Elsie.

“Then a covering of goats’-hair curtains above these fine embroidered ones,” continued Lucius; “then a third of rams’-skins dyed red; and then, to complete the whole, a covering of badgers’-skin curtains the outermost of all.”

The four young workwomen were somewhat startled at the difficulties which their brother’s words had raised in their minds. Dora gave a voice to the thoughts of her sisters when she said, with a look of disappointment, “It will be hard to get rams’-skins dyed red, but I do not know where goats’-hair can be bought in England; and as for the badgers’-skins, I am afraid that it will be quite impossible even for mamma to find such a thing, unless it be in the British Museum.”

“So we must give up making the Tabernacle,” said Amy, with a sigh.

“Nay, nay,” cried their smiling mother, “we must not be so readily discouraged. Learned men tell us that the Hebrew word translated into ‘badgers’-skins’ in our Bible is one of uncertain meaning, which some think denotes a blue color, and which, if intended for a skin at all, is not likely to have been that of a badger. Blue merino for the outer covering, red Turkey-cloth instead of rams’-skins, and mohair curtains instead of goats’-hair, will do, I think, for our model; as well as the pasteboard, wire, and gold and silver thread, which must represent metal and wood.”

“Yes,” said Lucius, quickly, “they will do a great deal better than the real materials; for if we could manage to get rams’-skins or badgers’-skins to cut up, such curtains would be a great deal too thick and heavy for a little model like ours. Why, our Tabernacle will be only fifteen inches long by five inches in breadth.”

All the grave little faces brightened up with smiles at this way of getting over what had seemed a very great difficulty. Elsie looked especially pleased. Pressing close to her mother, and laying her little hand on Mrs. Temple’s arm in a coaxing way, she cried, “Oh, mamma, don’t you think that I could make one set of the curtains? You know that I can hem and run a seam, and don’t make *very* large stitches. Might I not try, dear mamma? I should like to help to make the Tabernacle.”

It would have been difficult to the mother to have resisted that pleading young face, even had Elsie made a less reasonable request. “I cannot see why these little fingers should not manage the red Turkey-cloth which will stand for the rams’-skins,” replied Mrs. Temple, stroking the hand of her child; “the outermost covering of all will, of course, need finer stitching, and one of the twins will take that and the mohair besides. To make both these sets of curtains will take far less time, and require less skill, than must be given to the embroidery on linen in blue, scarlet, and purple, which will adorn the inner walls and ceilings of our little model.”

“Do, do let me have the embroidery, it is just the work which I delight in,” cried Dora; and she might have added, “excel in,” for she was remarkably clever in making things requiring fancy and skill.

Agnes, her twin, flushed very red, not merely from the straining of the cough which had frequently distressed her, but from jealous emotion. Agnes had not a lowly heart, and in her heart angry feelings were rising at her sister’s asking that the finest and most ornamental portion of the work should be given to her.

“Of course mamma will not let you have the beautiful embroidery to do, Dora, and leave the plain mohair and merino to me, her *eldest* daughter!” exclaimed Agnes, laying a proud stress on the word *eldest*, though, there was but an hour’s difference between the ages of the twins.

“Why, Agnes, what nonsense that is!” cried Lucius, bluntly; “you know, as well as I do, that your clumsy fingers can’t so much as hem a silk handkerchief neatly, and how would they manage embroidery in purple, scarlet, and blue? Your bad work would spoil the whole thing.”

“Don’t you meddle; you don’t know anything about work!” exclaimed Agnes, in a loud, angry tone, which brought on another severe fit of coughing and whooping.

Mrs. Temple was grieved at the ill-temper shown by her eldest daughter, and all the more so as Agnes was in so suffering a state as to make it difficult for a mother to reprove her as she would have done had the girl been in health. The lady had to wait for some time before the cough was quieted enough for her gentle voice to be heard, though Amy had quickly brought a glass of water to help in stopping that cough. When Agnes could breathe freely again, the mother thus addressed her family circle: —

“I should be vexed indeed, my children, if what I proposed as a pleasant and profitable occupation for you all, should become a cause of strife, an occasion for foolish pride and contention. The Tabernacle was in itself a holy thing, made so by the special appointment and presence of the Lord. I would wish the making of its model to be a kind of holy employment, one never to be marred by jealousy and pride. The profits of your labor, if there be any, you mean to devote to helping the poor; therefore I hope that we may consider the work as an offering to the Lord – a very small offering, it is true, but still one which He may deign to accept, if it be made in a lowly, loving spirit; but if selfish, worldly feelings creep in, then good works themselves become evil. The Israelites were expressly forbidden to offer any creature in which there was a blemish or fault, and our offerings are certainly blemished and spoilt if we mix with them jealousy and pride.”

Agnes bit her lip and knitted her brow. She was not without both good sense and good feeling, but she had not yet obtained the mastery over her jealous temper.

“I do not see why Dora should be favored above me,” she murmured.

“Dora is not favored above you,” replied the mother, gravely. “The simple state of the case is this – different talents are given to different persons. You have a good memory, Dora a skilful hand. Were the work in question to be the repeating of a chapter by heart, Dora would never expect to be the one chosen to repeat it. Why should pride make you refuse to own that there are some things in which a younger sister may excel you?”

Agnes hesitated, and glanced at her mother. The girl’s brow was a little clouded still, and yet there were signs that her pride was giving way.

“I leave the decision to your own good sense and feeling, my love,” said Mrs. Temple. “Judge yourself whether, if your desire be to make a really beautiful model worthy of the good object to which we devote it, it would be better to place the embroidery part in Dora’s hands or your own.”

“Let Dora do it,” said Agnes, with a little effort, her eyes filling with tears, for it was hard to her, as it is to most of us, to wrestle down struggling pride.

Mrs. Temple smiled kindly upon her daughter. “One of the most precious lessons which we can learn,” said the mother, “is, in obedience to the command of our Lord, to be willing to be last of all, and servant of all. The sacrifice of our pride and self-will is more pleasing to our Maker than the most costly gifts can be. It is worthy of notice that it was not the *outer* covering of the Tabernacle, that part which would be seen from every quarter of Israel’s camp, that was most beautiful and precious. The richest curtains were those seen far less often, those that had the lowest place in the building. So our Maker cares far more for what is *within* than for what is *without*, and there is no ornament so fair in His eyes as that of a meek and quiet spirit.”

IV. Precious Things

“I DO not think that the Tabernacle was a grand building, after all,” observed Lucius, “though there is so much written about it in the Bible. Why, it was only about forty-five feet by fifteen – not so large as the chapel at the end of the town, and not for one moment to be compared to the grand cathedral which we all went to see last summer.”

“There is one thing which you perhaps overlook,” said his mother; “when the Tabernacle was raised, the Israelites were a nation of wanderers, and had no fixed habitation. Their Tabernacle was a large, magnificent tent, made to be carried about from place to place by the Levites. Every portion of it was so contrived as to be readily taken to pieces, and then put together again. This could not have been done with a building of very great size.”

“Nobody could carry about the great cathedral, or even the little chapel!” cried Elsie; “but they were never meant to be moved, they are fixed quite firm in the ground.”

“The size of the Tabernacle was indeed not great,” continued Mrs. Temple; “but, besides its being filled with a glory which is never beheld now in any building raised by man, the treasures lavished on it must have given to it a very splendid appearance. It has been calculated that the gold and silver used in making the Tabernacle must alone have amounted in value to the enormous sum of 185,000 pounds!”

Exclamations of surprise were uttered, and Dora remarked – “Why, that would be enough to pay for the building of forty large churches as handsome as the new one which we all admire so much.”

“And the new church holds ten times as many people as the Tabernacle could,” observed Agnes. “I cannot think how a large nation like the Israelites could find space to meet in such a small place, only about twice the size of this room!”

“The Tabernacle was never intended to be to the Israelites what a church is to us,” remarked Mrs. Temple. “In the warm climate of Arabia the people worshipped in the open air, under the blue canopy of the sky; no building to shelter them was required, such as is needful in England. The men of Israel brought their sacrifices to the court of the Tabernacle, where, as you already know, the Altar of burnt-offering and the Laver were placed.”

“But, mamma, what was inside the Tabernacle itself – what was so very carefully kept under those four sets of curtains?” asked Dora.

“The Tabernacle was divided into two rooms by a most magnificent curtain of rich embroidery called the ‘Veil,’” replied Mrs. Temple. “The outer room, which was double the size of the inner, was named the ‘Holy,’ or ‘Sanctuary.’ In this outer room were kept the splendid golden Candlestick with its seven branches, each supporting a lamp which burned all through the night, and the Table of Showbread, on which twelve cakes of unleavened bread were constantly kept – the supply being changed on every Sabbath.”

“Ah! I remember, it was that show-bread which was given to David when he was hungry,” said Lucius, “though it was meant to be eaten only by priests.”

“What other things were in the outer part of the Tabernacle?” asked Agnes.

“There was the Altar of Incense, my love, upon which sweet perfume was daily burned, so that the room was filled with fragrance.”

“You have told us, mamma, what was in the first part of the beautiful Tabernacle; but what was in the very innermost part, the little room beyond the Veil?” asked Amy.

“That little room, about fifteen feet square, was called the ‘Holy of Holies,’ and contained the most precious object of all – the special symbol of the presence of the Most High. That object was the Ark, with its cover of pure gold which was called the ‘Mercy-seat,’ and on which were figures

of cherubim, wrought also in gold, with wings outstretched. Over this Mercy-seat, and between the golden cherubim rested the wondrous glory which showed that God was with his people. David, doubtless, referred to this when he wrote in the eighteenth Psalm, *'Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth!'*”

“And were not precious things laid up in the Ark?” inquired Agnes. “Were not the tables of stone on which the Commandments were written put into it?”

“And the Pot of Manna, kept to remind the people how their fathers were fed in the desert?” said Dora.

“And the wonderful rod of Aaron, that budded, and blossomed, and bore fruit; was not that also in the Ark?” asked Lucius.

“All these most precious and holy things were laid up in the Ark (or as some think in front of the Ark), beneath the golden cherubim,” replied Mrs. Temple.

“Oh, I should have liked above all things to have seen them!” exclaimed little Elsie. “I should have liked to have lifted up the splendid curtain-veil, and to have gone into the Holy of holies – if the light had not been too dazzling bright – and have looked upon all those precious things! Most of all, I'd have liked to see that wonderful Rod of Aaron, if it was the very very same rod that had once been turned into a serpent.”

“Ah, my child, none of us would have dared to have lifted that Veil or to have placed a foot within the Holy of holies!” exclaimed Mrs. Temple. “No mortal was ever suffered to enter that place, most sacred of all, except the High Priest, and that but on one day of the year – the Day of Atonement. Aaron himself, the first High Priest, with trembling awe must have lifted the Veil, and approached the Mercy-seat over which the cherubims spread their wings of gold!”

Mrs. Temple spoke in so solemn a tone that the children felt that the subject was very sacred, and none of them spoke for several moments. Then Lucius observed – “There is now no place on earth into which no one dare enter, like the Holy of holies in the Tabernacle of old.”

“No, my son, because the Veil has been rent in twain, and the Lord Christ, our great High Priest, has opened a free way for all believers, even into the Holy of holies where God dwells in glory for ever!” said Mrs. Temple, with even greater reverence in her manner, and clasping her hands as she spoke.

“Mamma, I cannot understand you!” cried Amy.

“These are the deep things of God, my love, and it is very difficult to explain their meaning to children. The Tabernacle and the things within it were types, or as we may call them, pictures of heavenly mysteries, revealed to us by the Gospel. But we will not enter now upon these difficult subjects. I think that you know a little about the appearance of the Tabernacle of which you are anxious to make a model, and also of what was contained within it. To understand the meaning of that holy place, and of its contents, will require much earnest thought and attention. We may perhaps converse a little about it to-morrow, which is Sunday. You will have abundance of time, as the fear of giving infection to others obliges me to keep you from going to church.”

V. Preparation

“I WISH that to-morrow were any day but Sunday!” exclaimed Lucius. “Just when one is setting about a long work, eager to measure and to make, to cut and to clip, it is vexatious to have to stop in the middle of business, to shove away knife, ruler, pencil, pasteboard, and all, into a drawer for the next twenty-four hours!”

“Perhaps it would be better not to begin the work at all until Monday,” mildly suggested his mother.

“O no, we’ve all the Saturday afternoon, let’s set to making our model at once!” exclaimed Lucius.

“Please, please, don’t make us put off!” cried Dora and Elsie.

Mrs. Temple was a very indulgent mother, and was inclined to be all the more so as every one of her children was either suffering from whooping-cough or just recovering from its effects. Their mother felt sorry at the necessity for shutting out her family from many of their usual occupations and pleasures, and even from the privilege of going to church. The lady did not, therefore, in the least press the subject of delay, but offered, as soon as early dinner should be over, to go and search in her drawers and boxes for such materials as she might think suitable for the model of the Tabernacle, which her children were so eager to make. The dinner-bell sounded while Mrs. Temple was speaking, and the family went together to the room in which they took all their meals, and gathered round the table which was spread with a plentiful, though plain repast.

While the young Temples are engaged with their dinner, let me introduce them a little more individually to my reader. There, at the bottom of the table, is Lucius, a sunburnt, pleasant-looking schoolboy, with a mass of brown, half-curly locks brushed back from his forehead. He has quick eyes and restless hands, which are seldom perfectly still, even if they have no better occupation than that of tying and untying a morsel of string; but they are now busily plying a large knife and fork, for Lucius is a skilful carver, and the joint of mutton is placed before him, from which to help all the party.

The pale girl seated on the right of Lucius, with eyes weak and reddened by the effect of her cough, is Agnes, the elder of the twins. Her brow is furrowed, perhaps from the same cause, perhaps because she is more irritable in temper than her brother and sisters. But Agnes is a conscientious girl, one who thinks much of duty: and we may hope that “prayer and pains,” which it has been well said can do anything, will give her the mastery over faults against which she is trying to struggle.

Opposite to Agnes sits Dora, who, though her twin, is not much like her, being a good deal taller, prettier, and more animated than she. Dora is a much greater favorite with Lucius and the younger girls than the elder twin, from being gay, obliging, and clever. Agnes is perfectly aware that such is the case, and has to pray and strive against the sin of jealousy, which is too ready to creep into her heart and poison all her enjoyments.

On either side of Mrs. Temple are her two younger daughters, Amy and Elsie. The former, with soft brown eyes and long flaxen hair tied with blue ribbons, is strikingly like her mother, who has, at least so think her children, the sweetest face in the world. Amy has never been known to quarrel or utter an angry word, and is always ready to give help to any one who needs it. It is no wonder that so gentle a girl is beloved. But Amy knows herself to be by no means faultless, and is much, on her guard against the silly vanity which a mother’s watchful eye has found out to be lurking in the mind of her dear little girl.

Elsie is a merry blue-eyed child, full of life and intelligence, forward – rather too forward for her age. She has for six years held the place of baby in the home of her widowed mother, and her family are rather disposed to indulge her as if she were a baby still. She enters with animation into the

amusements of the elder children, and is by no means disposed to be seen and not heard, as Lucius often laughingly tells her that such little people should be.

The conversation during dinner was almost entirely on the subject of the model, and flowed on pleasantly enough, except when interrupted by coughing; but all the children were glad when meal-time was over, and their mother, with Amy and Elsie skipping before her, went off to hunt over her little stores for such materials as might be found useful. Lucius employed the time of their absence in exploring the lumber-room for tops of old boxes or other bits of wood that might, when fastened together, do for the ground-frame of the model, into which the gilded pillars might be fixed. Dora, with pencil and paper, busied herself in trying to make an embroidery pattern, introducing the figures of cherubim. Agnes, who was too weak for much exertion, and who took less keen interest in the work than did her sisters, lay on the sofa reading a book, until the return of Amy and Elsie, each of whom carried some little treasure in her hands.

“Look, Agnes, look at these shining reels of gold and silver thread!” exclaimed the youngest child with eager delight.

“Gold thread – ah! that’s just what I want!” cried Dora, throwing down her pencil.

“And here is mamma’s book of gold leaf; there is a little gold sheet between every one of the pages,” continued Elsie. “But oh! it is so thin, so very thin, one dare not breathe near, or the gold would all fly away!”

“I thought that gold was a very heavy metal,” observed Agnes, looking up from her book.

“But it is beaten out into such extreme fineness that a bit of gold no larger than a pea would gild all these,” said Lucius, who had just entered the room with his arms full of pieces of wood.

“See, Agnes, what we have brought for you!” cried Amy. “Here is a beautiful piece of blue merino for the outer curtains (the badgers’-skin cover, you know), and blue silk with which to sew it; and here is another piece of mohair for the goats’-skin cover, so you are supplied directly with everything that you need; is not that nice?”

Agnes did not look so much delighted as her sister expected that she would; perhaps because she was scarcely well enough to take much pleasure in sewing; perhaps because she had still a lingering feeling of mortification at not having been trusted with the embroidery part of the work.

“I hope that you have brought me the fine linen for the beautiful inner curtains, and the veil for the Holy of holies,” cried Dora.

“No, mamma cannot find any linen fine enough, unless she were to tear up her handkerchiefs, and that would be a pity,” said Amy. “But mamma has promised to buy some linen both for your curtains and for mine that are, you know, to hang all round the open court of the Tabernacle.”

“It is very tiresome to have to stop at the beginning for want of fine linen!” exclaimed Dora. “I hope that mamma will go out and buy us plenty at once.”

“Ah! Dora, you know that mamma owned this morning that she felt very tired,” said Amy, a little reproachfully; “and the shops are a good way off; it is not as if we lived in the town.”

“Besides, it is raining,” observed Elsie, who was looking out of the window.

“It is merely a little drizzle, that would not hurt a fly!” exclaimed Dora. “Mamma never minds a few tiny drops when she puts on her waterproof cloak.”

“Mamma never minds anything that has only to do with her own comfort,” observed Amy.

“So there is more need that we should mind for her,” said Agnes.

“I’m sure that I wish that I could go to the shops myself without troubling, any one!” exclaimed the impatient Dora. “If it were not for this stupid, tiresome infection, I’d get Lucius to go with me this minute, and would we not return laden with linen, pasteboard, and all sorts of things! But mamma’s fear of setting other people coughing and whooping makes her keep us shut up here in prison.”

“Mamma is quite right!” exclaimed Lucius. “I say so, though I hate more than you do being boxed up here in the house.”

“Mamma is quite right,” re-echoed poor Agnes, as soon as she recovered voice after another violent fit of coughing, which almost choked her. “I should not like to give any one else such a dreadful complaint as this.”

Mrs. Temple now entered the room, with several things in her hand. “I have found a nice bit of red Turkey cloth,” said she, “so my little Elsie will be able to set to work on her curtains at once.”

The child clapped her hands with pleasure, and then scampered off for her little Tunbridge-ware work-box.

“I hope that you have found the linen too, mamma,” cried Dora; “I am in a hurry for it, a *very great* hurry,” she added, regardless of an indignant look from Agnes, and a pleading one from Amy.

“I am sorry that I have no suitable linen,” replied the lady, “but I intend to go out and buy some.”

“Not to-day, not now, it is raining; you are tired,” cried several voices; that of Dora was, however, not heard amongst them.

“I have here some pasteboard, though not sufficient for our model, and a bottle of strong gum which will be most useful,” said the lady, placing on the table what she had brought; “but gilt paper will be needed as well as gold leaf, and of it I have none; I must procure that, and some more pasteboard for my dear boy.”

“And plenty of wire, cut into five-inch lengths for the pillars,” added Lucius.

“And linen for Amy and me,” joined in Dora.

“But please buy nothing till Monday,” said Agnes; “the work can wait quite well for a couple of days.”

“Yes, yes, do wait till Monday,” cried the other children; Dora again being the only exception.

Dora’s selfishness was marring her offering, as Agnes’s pride had blemished hers. How difficult it is even in the most innocent pleasure, even in the most holy occupation, to keep away every stain of sin! Ever since the sad time when evil entered the beautiful garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve ate of the fruit which God had forbidden them to taste, pride, selfishness, and unholiness have been natural to the human heart. Even when we most earnestly try to do what we think good works, how much we need to be on our guard lest sin creep in to spoil all!

Dora, though silent, showed so plainly by her looks her extreme impatience to be supplied at once with the materials for which she could have so easily waited that her gentle mother made up her mind to gratify the wish of her daughter. Mrs. Temple put on her waterproof cloak, and, tired as she was, went forth on a shopping expedition. It vexed the children to see that the clouds grew darker and the shower fell more heavily not long after their mother had quitted the house.

“If mamma catches cold or has pain in her face it is all Dora’s fault!” exclaimed Lucius.

“It was so selfish – so silly not to wait,” observed Agnes; “just see how the rain is pouring!”

“I love mamma as much as any of you do!” cried Dora, her heart swelling with vexation, so that she could hardly refrain from tears.

“You love yourself better, that’s all,” remarked Lucius; and his words were more true than polite.

Mrs. Temple returned home very much tired and rather wet, notwithstanding her umbrella and waterproof cloak. And Dora was, after all, disappointed of her wish to have the linen and begin her embroidery work directly. Mrs. Temple had found it difficult to carry home parcels when she had an umbrella to hold up on a windy day, and had also feared that goods might get damp if taken through driving rain. The wire, pasteboard, gold-paper, and linen were to be sent home in the evening, and the longed-for parcel did not appear until it was time for the twins to follow their younger sisters to bed.

VI. Types

“This is the day when Christ arose,
So early from the dead;
And shall I still my eyelids close
And waste my hours in bed!

“This is the day when Jesus broke
The chains of death and hell;
And shall I still wear Satan’s yoke
And love my sins so well!”

THIS well-known hymn was on Amy’s mind when she awoke on the following day, and it rose from her heart like the sweet incense burnt every morning in the Tabernacle of Israel. But Dora’s thoughts on waking, and for some time afterwards, might be summed up in the words – “Oh, I wish that this day were not Sunday! How tiresome it is, when my beautiful pattern is all ready, not to be able to try it!”

Mrs. Temple did not appear to be much the worse for her shopping in the rain. Her children knew nothing of the aching in her limbs and the pain in her face which she felt, as she bore both quietly and went about her duties as usual. Dora did not trouble herself even to ask if her mother were well. It was not that Dora did not love her kind parent, but at that time the mind of the little girl was completely taken up by her embroidery in scarlet, purple, and blue.

As the children might not go to church, Mrs. Temple read and prayed with them at home, suffering none but Lucius to help her, and letting him read but little, for fear of bringing back his cough.

All through the time of prayers, though Dora knelt like the rest of the children, and was as quiet and looked almost as attentive as any, her needlework was running in her mind. If she thought of the happy cherubim, it was not of their crying “Holy, holy, holy!” in heaven, but of the forms of their faces and wings, and how she could best imitate such with her needle.

I will not say that the other children thought about the Tabernacle only as a holy thing described in the Bible, from which religious lessons could be learnt, – little plans for sewing, measuring, or making the model would sometimes intrude, even at prayer-time; but Lucius had resolutely locked up his knife, and he and three of his sisters at least tried to give full attention to what their mother was speaking when she read and explained the Word of God.

Mrs. Temple purposely chose the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a very difficult chapter to the young, but one likely specially to interest her family at a time when the subject of the Tabernacle in the wilderness was uppermost in the minds of all. It will be noticed that Dora did not join at all in the conversation which followed the reading.

“Mamma, that chapter comes nearly at the end of the Bible, and is about our Lord and his death,” observed Lucius; “and yet it tells us about the Tabernacle, and its ark, and the high priest going into the Holy of holies. Now, what could the Tabernacle in the desert have do with our Lord and His dying, – that Tabernacle which was made nearly fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, and which was no longer of any use after Solomon’s temple was built?”

“The Tabernacle, the ark, the high priest, the sacrifices were all TYPES or figures of greater things to come,” replied Mrs. Temple. “There was a secret meaning in them all, referring to our Lord, His work, and His death, and the glorious heaven which He was to open to all believers.”

“I don’t know what a type is,” said Elsie.

“It is not clear to me either,” observed Amy.

“Unless we quite understand what a type means, we shall lose much of the lesson conveyed by the wanderings of the children of Israel, and the long account of the Tabernacle, what was in it, and what was done there, which we find in the books of Moses,” remarked Mrs. Temple.

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