



ILLUSTRATIONS BY IRWIN MYERS.

The Prodigal Village by Irving Bacheller. Synopsis.—In the village of Bingville thirteen-year-old Robert Moran, crippled son of a poor widow, is known as the Shepherd of the Birds. His world is his mother and friends, his little room, the flower garden of Judge Crooker, and every flying thing he sees from his window. The painting of pictures is his enjoyment, and little Pauline Baker, small daughter of a neighbor, the object of his boyish affection. To him, J. Patterson Bing, the first citizen of Bingville, is the ideal of a really great man. The village becomes money mad, reflecting the great world in its state of unrest. The Bing family is a leader in the change. To them the village has become "provincial." The butcher and baker and candlestick-maker all raise their prices. Even Hiram Blenkinsop, the town drunkard, works hard for a month. The Old Spirit of Bingville is summarily fired. The first citizen builds an addition to his mansion and goes in for entertaining. Pauline Baker, victim of her surroundings, elopes with a stranger and her parents are unable to trace her.

CHAPTER THREE—Continued.

Indeed it was the tin soldier, who stood on his little shelf looking out of the window, who first reminded Bob of the loneliness and discomfort of the coin. As a rule whenever the conscience of the boy was touched Mr. Bloggs had something to say. It was late in February and every one was complaining of the cold. Even the oldest inhabitants of Bingville could not recall so severe a winter. Many families were short of fuel. The homes of the working folk were insufficiently heated. Money in the bank had given them a sense of security. They could not believe that its magic power would fail to bring them what they needed. So they had been careless of their allowance of wood and coal. There were days when they had none and could get none at the yard. Some men with hundreds of dollars in the bank went out into the country at night and stole rails off the farmers' fences. The homes of these unfortunate people were ravaged by influenza and many died.

Prices at the stores mounted higher. Most of the gardens had been lying idle. The farmers had found it hard to get help. Some of the latter, indeed, had decided that they could make more by teaming at Millerton than by toiling in the fields, and with less effort. They left the boys and the women to do what they could with the crops. Naturally the latter were small. So the local sources of supply had little to offer and the demand upon the stores steadily increased. Certain of the merchants had been, in a way, spoiled by prosperity. They were rather indifferent to complaints and demands. Many of the storekeepers, irritated, doubtless, by overwork, had lost their former politeness. There were days when supplies failed to arrive. The railroad service had been bad enough in times of peace. Now, it was worse than ever.

Those who had plenty of money found it difficult to get a sufficient quantity of good food, Bingville being rather cut off from other centers of life by distance and a poor railroad. Some drove sixty miles to Hazelmead to do marketing for themselves and their neighbors. Mr. and Mrs. J. Patterson Bing, however, in their luxurious apartment at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York, knew little of these conditions until Mr. Bing came up late in March for a talk with the mill superintendent. Many of the sick and poor suffered extreme privation. Father O'Neil and the Reverend Oris Singleton of the Congregational church went among the people, ministering to the sick, of whom there were many, and giving counsel to men and women who were unaccustomed to prosperity and ill-qualified wisely to enjoy it. One day, Father O'Neil saw the Willow Moran coming into town with a great bundle of fagots on her back. "This looks a little like the old country," he remarked. She stopped and swung her fagots to the ground and announced: "It do that an' may God help us! It's hard times, Father. In spite of all the money, it's hard times. It looks like there wasn't enough to go 'round—the ships be takin' so many things to the old country."

"How is my beloved Shepherd?" the good Father asked. "Mother o' God! The house is that cold, he's been layin' abed for a week an' Judge Crooker has been away on the circuit." "Too bad!" said the priest. "I've been so busy with the sick and the dying and the dead I have hardly had time to think of you." Against her protest he picked up the fagots and carried them on his own back to her kitchen. He found the Shepherd in a sweater sitting up in bed and knitting socks. "How is my dear boy?" the good Father asked.

"Very sad," said the Shepherd. "I want to do something to help and my legs are useless." "Courage!" Mr. Bloggs seemed to shout from his shelf at the window-side and just then he assumed a most valiant and determined look as he added: "Forward! march!" Father O'Neil did what he could to help in that moment of peril by saying: "Cheer up, boy. I'm going out to Dan Mullin's this afternoon and I'll make him bring you a big load of wood. I'll have you at your work tomorrow. The spring will be coming soon and your flock will be back in the garden."

It was not easy to bring a smile to the face of the little Shepherd those days. A number of his friends had died and others were sick and he was helpless. Moreover, his mother had told him of the disappearance of Pauline and that her parents feared she was in great trouble. This had worried him, and the more because his mother had declared that the girl was probably worse than dead. He could not quite understand it and his happy spirit was clouded. The good Father cheered him with merry jests. Near the end of their talk the boy said: "There's one thing in this room that makes me unhappy. It's that gold piece in the drawer. It does nothing but lie there and shiver and talk to me. Seems as if it complained of the cold. It says that it wants to move around and get warm. Every time I hear of some poor person that needs food or fuel, it calls out to me there in the little drawer and says, 'How cold I am! How cold I am!' My mother wishes me to keep it for some time of trouble that may come to us, but I can't. It makes me unhappy. Please take it away and let it do what it can to keep the poor people warm."

"Well done, boys!" Mr. Bloggs seemed to say with a look of joy as if he now perceived that the enemy was in full retreat. "There's no worse company, these days, than a hundred coin," said the priest. "I won't let it plague you any more." Father O'Neil took the coin from the drawer. It fell from his fingers with a merry laugh as it bounded on the floor and whirled toward the doorway like one overjoyed and eager to be off. "God bless you, my boy! May it buy for you the dearest wish of your heart." "Ha! ha!" laughed the little tin soldier, for he knew the dearest wish of the boy far better than the priest knew it. Mr. Singleton called soon after Father O'Neil had gone away. "The top of the morning to you!" he shouted, as he came into Bob's room. "It's all right top and bottom," Bob answered cheerfully. "Is there anything I can do for you?" the minister went on. "I'm a regular Santa Claus this morning. I've got a thousand dollars that Mr. Bing sent me. It's for any one that needs help."

"We'll be all right as soon as our load of wood comes. It will be here tomorrow morning," said the Shepherd. "I'll come and cut and split it with you," the minister proposed. "The eloquence of the ax is better than that of the tongue these days. Meanwhile I'm going to bring you a little jag in my wheelbarrow. How about beefsteak and bacon and eggs and all that?"

"I guess we've got enough to eat, thank you." This was not quite true, for Bob, thinking of the sick, whose people could not go to market, was inclined to hide his own hunger. "Ho, ho!" exclaimed Mr. Bloggs, for he knew very well that the boy was hiding his hunger. "Do you call that a lie?" the Shepherd asked as soon as the minister had gone. "A little one! But in my opinion it don't count," said Mr. Bloggs. "You were thinking of those who need food more than you and that turns it square around. I call it a golden lie—I do."

The minister had scarcely turned the corner of the street, when he met Hiram Blenkinsop, who was shivering along without an overcoat, the dog Christmas at his heels. Mr. Singleton stopped him. "Why, man! Haven't you an overcoat?" he asked. "No, sir! It's hangin' on a peg in a pawnshop over in Hazelmead. It ain't doin' the peg any good nor me neither!" "Well, sir, you come with me," said the minister. "It's about dinner time, anyway, and I guess you need lining as well as covering."

The drunkard looked into the face of the minister. "Say it ag'in," he muttered. "I wouldn't wonder if a little food would make you feel better," Mr. Singleton added. "A little, did you say?" Blenkinsop asked. "Make it a lot—as much as you can accommodate." "And you mean that ye want me to go an' eat in yer house?" "Yes, at my table—why not?" "It wouldn't be respectable. I don't want to be too particular, but a tramp must draw the line somewhere."

"I'll be on my best behavior. Come on," said the minister. The two men hastened up the street followed by the dejected little yellow dog, Christmas. Mrs. Singleton and her daughter were out with a committee of the children's helpers and the minister was dining alone that day and, as usual, at one o'clock, that being the hour for dinner in the village of Bingville. "Tell me about yourself," said the minister as they sat down at the table. "Myself—did you say?" Hiram Blenkinsop asked as one of his feet crept under his chair to conceal its disreputable appearance, while his dog had partly hidden himself under a serving table where he seemed to be shivering with apprehension as he peered out, with raised hackles, at the stag's head over the mantel. "Yes."

"I ain't got any self, sir; it's all gone," said Blenkinsop, as he took a swallow of water. "A man without any self is a curious creature," the minister remarked. "I'm as empty as a woodpecker's hole in the winter time. The bird has flown. I belong to this 'ere dog. He's a poor dog. I'm all he's got. If he had to pay a license on me I'd have to be killed. He's kind to me. He's the only friend I've got."

Hiram Blenkinsop riveted his attention upon an old warming-pan that hung by the fireplace. He hardly looked at the face of the minister. "How did you come to lose your self?" the latter asked. "Married a bad woman and took to drink. A man's self can stand cold an' hunger an' shipwreck an' loss o' friends an' money an' any quantity o' bad luck, take it as it comes, but a bad woman breaks the works in him an' stops his clock dead. Leastways, it done that to me!" "She is like an arrow in his liver," the minister quoted. "Mr. Blenkinsop, where do you stay nights?"

"I've a shake-down in the little loft over the ol' blacksmith shop on Water street. There are cracks in the gable, an' the snow an' the wind blows in, an' the place is dark an' smells o' coal gas an' horses' feet, but Christmas an' I snug up together an' manage to live through the winter. In hot weather we sleep under a tree in the ol' graveyard an' study astronomy. Sometimes I wish I was there for good."

"Wouldn't you like a bed in a comfortable house?" "No. I couldn't take the dog there an' I'd have to git up like other folks." "Would you think that a hardship?" "Well, ye see, sir, if ye're layin' down ye ain't hungry. Then, too, I likes to dilly-dally in bed." "What may that mean?" the minister asked. "I likes to lay an' think an' build air castles."

"What kind of castles?" "Well, sir, I'm thinkin' often o' a time when I'll have a grand suit o' clothes, and a shiny silk tie on my head, an' a roll o' bills in my pocket, big enough to choke a dog, an' I'll be goin' back to the town where I was brought up an' I'll hire a team an' take my ol' mother out for a ride. An' when we pass by, people will be sayin': 'That's Hiram Blenkinsop! Don't you remember him? Born on the top floor o' the ol' sash mill on the island. He's a multi-millionaire an' a great man. He gives a thousand to the poor every day. Sure, he does!'"

Hiram Blenkinsop meets his Old Self.

(TO BE CONTINUED.) Too Experienced. Actress—All the world's a stage. Widower—Er—yes, but a widower doesn't often like to take an encore, thanks!—London Answers.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. F. H. FLETCHER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago) (©, 1921 Western Newspaper Union.)

LESSON FOR MAY 1 BIBLE TEACHINGS ABOUT EDUCATION

LESSON TEXT—Deut. 6:4-9, Prov. 3:13-18, Luke 2:52. GOLDEN TEXT—Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.—Prov. 4:7.

REFERENCE MATERIAL—Prov. 1:7-9; 4:1-12; Col. 2:3; Jas. 1:5; II Pet. 1:5. PRIMARY TOPIC—The Boy Jesus With the Teachers. JUNIOR TOPIC—Pleasing God in School. INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Value of an Education. YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Making Education Christian.

I. The Excellency of Wisdom (Prov. 3:13-18). Let no man confuse this "wisdom" with the so-called wisdom resulting from an education in the arts, sciences and philosophy taught in the modern colleges and universities. The way to have this in its true sense is to get it from the Bible, God's revealed Word (Psa. 119:98-100). Wisdom personified means Christ (Prov. 8). All real wisdom leads to Christ, who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification (I Cor. 1:30). Wisdom is desirable because:

1. Of its inherent qualities (vv. 13-15). (1) "Better than the merchandise of silver and the gain of gold" (v. 14). Men set great value upon these, but they are corruptible and shall soon pass away. (2) "More precious than rubies" (v. 15). Though among the most valuable among the precious stones, the ruby is of secondary value when compared with the wisdom of God. (3) Of immeasurable value (v. 15). The best things that the human heart can desire are not worthy to compare in value unto wisdom.

2. It ministers to our earthly welfare (vv. 16-18). (1) "Length of days is in her right hand" (v. 16). Godliness tends to long life. (2) "In her left hand riches and honor" (v. 16). "Riches and honor" may not always be according to the world's standard. (3) "Her ways are ways of pleasantness" (v. 17). The notion that the life of the Christian is hard and that pleasure does not enter into his experience is all wrong. The way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13:15). Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come (I Tim. 4:8). (4) "All her paths are peace" (v. 17). There is no peace to the wicked. The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt (Isa. 57:20, 21). (5) "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" (v. 18). "Those who eat of the tree of life, Christ, have eternal life" (Gen. 3:22; ch. John 6:33). (6) "Happy is everyone that retaineth her" (v. 18). The only true happiness that can be had is in laying hold on wisdom in God's Word.

II. Israel's Responsibility With Reference to the Statutes of the Lord (Deut. 6:4-9). 1. Central truths to be taught (vv. 4, 5). (1) Unity of God. "The Lord our God is one Lord." This was a testimony against the polytheism of that day. He is God alone, therefore to worship another is sin. (2) Man's supreme obligation (v. 5). God should be loved with all the heart, soul, and might, because He is God alone. 2. How these truths are to be kept alive (vv. 6-9). The place for God's Word is in the heart. In order that it may be in the heart (1) "teach diligently to thy children" (v. 7). The most important part of a child's education is that given in the Word of God. (2) Talk of them in the home (v. 7). How blessed is that home where God's Word is the topic of conversation. (3) Talk of them when walking with our children and friends (v. 7). (4) Talk of them when retiring for the night (v. 7). The last thing upon which the mind should rest before going to sleep should be God and His truth. (5) Talk of them when rising in the morning (v. 7). How fitting that God should speak to us the first thing when we awake. (6) Bind them upon thine hand (v. 8). This was literally done by the Jews. (7) Write them upon the posts of the house and on the gates (v. 8).

III. The Growth of Jesus (Luke 2:52). 1. Bodily stature. Being really human, His bodily size and strength increased. 2. Increased in wisdom. His mental equipment enlarged as any normal human being. His fountain of knowledge increased as He came in contact with men and the world. 3. In favor with God and man. His innate perfection and beauty more and more expressed itself as His human nature expanded.

The Detractor's Work. The detractor may, and often does, pull down others, but by so doing he never, as he seems to suppose, elevates himself to their position—the most he can do is maliciously tear from them the blessings which he cannot enjoy himself.—Selected.

Eternity. Eternity stands always fronting God; a stern colossal image, with blind eyes, and grand dim lips, that murmur evermore, "God—God—God!" —E. B. Browning.

MEETING OF EAST AND WEST

Peculiar Circumstances Under Which American Physician Treated Inmate of Persian Harem.

One day a great-aunt of the shah sent a note to the dispensary, asking me to visit her daughter, who was ill, writes Mary W. Griscom, in Asia Magazine. Her messenger conducted my Armenian nurse, who acted as interpreter, and me through the garden, with its fruit trees and decorative shrubs and marble pool, into the women's quarter. A servant ceremoniously arranged two green velvet armchairs in the exact center of the room for the mother and me.

Soon all the women of the household gathered around us, for a visit from a foreign woman doctor was a most entertaining diversion in the monotonous domestic routine. The patient entered dramatically at the proper moment and sank into a luxurious pile of brocaded cushions beside the kurst (table), which was covered with white velvet stenciled in black. A samovar of hot water was carried in, and two servants brought a silver basin and poured out the water from a slender silver urn for me to wash my hands. Then the patient lay down on the kurst that I might examine her, and all her attendants crowded around her and excitedly and vociferously urged her to be brave and not to worry, until such a pandemonium was raised that I could not hear the interpreter or my own voice.

When they quieted down and I found it possible to proceed with the examination I continued it. I was offered the silver basin again, and served with tea and sweet cakes, while I discussed the case. I decided that an operation was necessary. A few days later an operating table was brought into the house. In a large reception room, the floor of which was covered with the most beautiful rugs I had ever seen, the operation was performed. The doctor who had arranged for me to visit the Persian lady was asked whether I would rather have a fee or a carpet, and it was decided that I would prefer a carpet. A few days later when I called on the patient, she told me that she had sent her agent to the bazaar to buy me a carpet, and he had returned with word that there was no carpet in all the bazaar honorable enough for the lady doctor. So she invited me to select from her palace any rug that pleased me. My protestations were futile. I had to wander through the great rooms, followed by a procession composed of the ladies of the household, the attendants and servants, and find an honorable carpet. I examined them all and selected a lovely Kurdistan rug with an old-rose background and green border. This was promptly rolled up by the servant and carried to the patient, who said that I must have been accustomed to fine carpets all my life, for I had chosen the rarest rug in her possession. I was much embarrassed and tried to refuse the too princely gift, but she insisted that I must have it—and I carried on to America my most exquisite memory of Persia.

Oh, What a Tangled Web. I was visiting in the country one summer, and did not bring a wrap. One night it was quite cold, and a friend of mine came to take me for a drive. I was anxious to make a good impression. He insisted that I wear a coat. I said I did not need one. He was so persistent that finally I told him a friend had borrowed my coat. Then he insisted that we go straight after it. So off we started for the girl's home. I ran up the stairs to her room, resolved that if her coat was not in her room I would stay there rather than come down without it. It was there, however, and I took it and ran downstairs. We didn't get out of the yard soon enough for me, for I was afraid some of the family would see us, and there would be an explanation due.—Chicago Tribune.

Using Waste Gas. Much of our natural gas in this country is wasted because the wells are too far from industrial centers or their output too small. This is particularly the case in Louisiana, Texas, Wyoming and parts of California. The United States bureau of mines has been studying the possibilities of utilizing this waste gas for the production of chloroform and other chemicals of value, such as carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloride. The conclusions drawn are highly favorable. Use of the gas for these products would be restricted to "dry" gases, which are of no value for yielding gasoline. For the latter purpose "wet" gases from wells in isolated places are profitably available.

Solar Eclipse. Apropos of the annual eclipse of April 8, 1921, Doctor Crommelin writes in Nature that the occurrence of a central solar eclipse within the limits of the British Isles is a rare event. There has been no British total solar eclipse since 1724, and the next one will occur in 1927, if we disregard that of January 24, 1925, in which the track of totality merely grazes the Western Hebrides and the eclipse occurs with a very low sun. The last annular eclipse before that of the present year was in 1858 and there will not be another until 2093.—Scientific American.

Considerate. "You are pinched for speeding." "But, constable, I am running away to be married."

"Then I won't pile any more trouble on you."

A Feeling of Security

You naturally feel secure when you know that the medicine you are about to take is absolutely pure and contains no harmful or habit producing drugs.

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Naturally Indignant. "You told her you couldn't live without her?" "Of course."

"And she was not impressed?" "Not a bit. Would you say a young woman was impressed when she received the most solemn declaration a man could make to her by merely opening her mouth and putting another bon-bon in it?"—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Every department of housekeeping needs Red Cross Ball Blue. Equally good for kitchen towels, table linen, sheets and pillowcases, etc.

Not Easy to Get. Wife—"What shall I get mother for her birthday?" Hub—"Get her to go home, if you can."

WIFE TAKES HUSBANDS ADVICE

And Is Made Well Again by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Springfield, Mass.—"The doctor told my husband that I had to have an operation, otherwise I would be a sickly woman and could not have any more children on account of my weakened condition. I refused to have the operation. My husband asked me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to see if it would not help me. For the first

four months I could do but little work, had to lie down most of the time, was nervous and could eat hardly anything, but my husband was always reminding me to take the Vegetable Compound, which I did. Of my eight children this last one was the easiest birth of all and I am thankful for your Vegetable Compound. I recommend it to my friends when I hear them complaining about their ill health."—Mrs. M. NATALE, 72 Fremont St., Springfield, Mass. Sickly, ailing women make unhappy homes, and after reading Mrs. Natale's letter one can imagine how this home was transformed by her restoration to health. Every woman who suffers from such ailments should give Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a fair trial. It is surely worth while.

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"Eatonic is wonderful," says C. W. Burton. "I had been a sufferer from stomach trouble for 20 years and now I am well." Eatonic gets right after the cause of stomach troubles by taking up and carrying out the acidity and gases and, of course, when the cause is removed, the sufferer gets well. If you have sourness, belching, indigestion, food repeating or any other stomach trouble, take Eatonic tablets after each meal and find relief. Big box costs only a trifle with your druggist's guarantee.

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Life is a burden when the body is racked with pain. Everything worries and the victim becomes despondent and downhearted. To bring back the sunshine take

GOLD MEDAL HAARLEM OIL CAPSULES

The National Remedy of Holland for over 200 years it is an enemy of all pains resulting from kidney, liver and uric acid troubles. All druggists, three sizes. Look for the name Gold Medal on every box and accept no imitation.

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