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All things move in cycles



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W. N. U., LINCOLN, NO. 40-1922.

ERSKINE DALE—PIONEER

By JOHN FOX, Jr.

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OFF FOR VIRGINIA

SYNOPSIS.—To the Kentucky wilderness outpost commanded by Jerome Sanders, in the time immediately preceding the Revolution, comes a white boy fleeing from a tribe of Shawnees by whom he had been captured and adopted as a son of the chief Kahtoo. He is given shelter and attracts the favorable attention of Dave Yandell, a leader among the settlers. The boy warns of the coming of a Shawnee war party. The fort is attacked, and only saved by the timely appearance of a party of Virginians. The leader of these is fatally wounded, but in his dying moments recognizes the fugitive youth as his son. At Red Oaks, plantation on the James river, Virginia, Colonel Dale's home, the boy appears with a message for the colonel, who after reading it introduces the bearer to his daughter Barbara as her cousin Erskine Dale. Erskine meets two other cousins, Harry Dale and Hugh Willoughby. Yandell visits Red Oaks. At the county fair at Williamsburg Erskine meets a youth, Dane Grey, and there at once arises a bitter antagonism between them. Grey, in liquor, insults Erskine, and the latter, for the moment all Indian, draws his knife. Yandell disarms him. Ashamed, Erskine leaves Red Oaks that night to return to the wilderness. Yandell, with Harry and Hugh, who have been permitted to visit the Sanders fort, overtake him. At the plantation the boy had left a note in which he gave the property, which is his as the son of Colonel Dale's older brother, to Barbara. The party is met by three Shawnees, who bring news to Erskine (whose Indian name is White Arrow) that his foster father, Kahtoo, is dying and desires him to come to the tribe and become its chief. After a brief visit to the fort Erskine goes to the tribe. He finds there a white woman and her half-bred daughter, Early Morn, and saves the woman from death. He tells Kahtoo he is with the Americans against the British. An enemy, Crooked Lightning, overhears him. Kahtoo sends Erskine to a council where British envoys meet Indian chiefs. Dane Grey is there, and the bitter feeling is intensified. Crooked Lightning denounces Erskine as a traitor and friend of the Americans. The youth escapes death by flight. Reaching his tribe, Erskine finds his enemies have the upper hand. He is held as a prisoner, waiting only for the arrival of Crooked Lightning, to be burned at the stake.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

"She will not burn. Some fur traders have been here. The white chief McGee sent me a wampum belt and a talk. His messenger brought much fire-water and he gave me that"—he pointed to a silver-mounted rifle—"and I promised that she should live. But I cannot help you." Erskine thought quickly. He laid his rifle down, stepped slowly outside, and stretched his arms with a yawn. Then still leisurely he moved toward his horse as though to take care of it. But the braves were too keen and watchful and they were not fooled by the fact that he had left his rifle behind. Before he was close enough to leap for Firefly's back, three bucks darted from behind a lodge and threw themselves upon him. In a moment he was face down on the ground, his hands were tied behind his back, and when turned over he looked up into the grinning face of Black Wolf, who with the help of another brave dragged him to a lodge and roughly threw him within, and left him alone. On the way he saw his foster-mother's eyes flashing helplessly, saw the girl Early Morn indignantly telling her mother what was going on, and the white woman's face was wet with tears. He turned over so that he could look through the tent-flaps. Two bucks were driving a stake in the center of the space around which the lodges were ringed. Two more were bringing fagots of wood and it was plain what was going to become of him. His foster-mother, who was fiercely haranguing one of the chiefs, turned angrily into Kahtoo's lodge and he could see the white woman rocking her body and wringing her hands. Then the old chief appeared and lifted his hands.

"Crooked Lightning will be very angry. The prisoner is his—not yours. It is for him to say what the punishment shall be—not for you. Wait for him! Hold a council and if you decide against him, though he is my son—he shall die." For a moment the preparations ceased and all turned to the prophet, who had appeared before his lodge.

"Kahtoo is right," he said. "The Great Spirit will not approve if White Arrow die except by the will of the council—and Crooked Lightning will be angry." There was a chorus of protesting grunts, but the preparations ceased. The boy could feel the malevolence in the prophet's tone and he knew that the impostor wanted to curry further favor with Crooked Lightning and not rob him of the joy of watching his victim's torture. So the braves went back to their fire-water, and soon the boy's foster mother brought him something to eat, but she could say nothing, for Black Wolf had appointed himself sentinel and sat, rifle in hand, at the door of the lodge.

Night came on. The drinking be-

came more furious and once Erskine saw a pale-brown arm thrust from behind the lodge and place a jug at the feet of Black Wolf, who grunted and drank deep. One by one the braves went to drunken sleep about the fire. The fire died down and by the last flickering flame the lad saw Black Wolf's chin sinking sleepily to his chest. There was the slightest rustle behind the tent. He felt something groping for his hands and feet, felt the point of a knife graze the skin of his wrist and ankles—felt the things loosen and drop apart. Noiselessly, inch by inch, he crept to the wall of the tent, which was carefully lifted for him. Outside he rose and waited. Like a shadow the girl Early Morn stole before him and like a shadow he followed. In a few minutes they were by the river-bank, away from the town. The moon rose, and from the shadow of a beech the white woman stepped forth with his rifle and powder-horn and bullet-pouch and some food. She pointed to his horse a little farther down. He looked long and silently into the Indian girl's eyes and took the white woman's shaking hand. Once he looked back. The Indian girl was stoic as stone. A bar of moonlight showed the white woman's face wet with tears.

Again Dave Yandell from a watch-tower saw a topknot rise above a patch of cane, now leafless and winter-bitten—saw a hand lifted high above it with a palm of peace toward him. And again an Indian youth emerged, this time leading a black horse with a drooping head. Both came painfully on, staggering, it seemed, from wounds or weakness, and Dave sprang from



"I Told Kahtoo I Would Fight with the Americans Against the British and Indians; and With You Against Him!"

the tower and rushed with others to the gate. He knew the horse and there was dread in his heart. Perhaps the approaching Indian had slain the boy, had stolen the horse, and was innocently coming there for food.

"Don't you know me, Dave?" he asked, weakly.

"My God! It's White Arrow!"

CHAPTER X

Straightway the lad sensed a curious change in the attitude of the garrison. The old warmth was absent. The atmosphere was charged with suspicion, hostility. Old Jerome was surly, his old playmates were distant. Only Dave, Mother Sanders and Lydia were unchanged. The predominant note was curiosity, and they started to ply him with questions, but Dave took him to a cabin, and Mother Sanders brought him something to eat.

"Had a purty hard time," stated Dave. The boy nodded.

"I had only three bullets. Firefly went lame and I had to load him. I couldn't eat cane and Firefly couldn't eat pheasant. I got one from a hawk," he explained. "What's the matter out there?"

"Nothin'," said Dave, gruffly, and he made the boy go to sleep. His story came when all were around the fire at supper, and was listened to with eagerness. Again the boy felt the hostility and it made him resentful and haughty and his story brief and terse. Most fluid and sensitive natures have a chameleon quality, no matter what stratum of adamant be beneath. The boy was dressed like an Indian, he looked like one, and he had brought back, it seemed, the bearing of an Indian—his wildness and stolidity. He spoke like a chief in a council, and even in English his phrasing and metaphors belonged to the red man. No wonder they believed the stories they had heard of him—but there was shame in many faces and little doubt in any save one before he finished.

He had gone to see his foster-mother and his foster-father—old chief

Kahtoo, the Shawnee—because he had given his word. Kahtoo thought he was dying and wanted him to be chief when the Great Spirit called. Kahtoo had once saved his life, had been kind, and made him a son. That he could not forget. An evil prophet had come to the tribe and through his enemies, Crooked Lightning and Black Wolf, had gained much influence. They were to burn a captive white woman as a sacrifice. He had stayed to save her, to argue with old Kahtoo, and carry the wampum and a talk to a big council with the British. He had made his talk and—escaped. He had gone back to his tribe, had been tried, and was to be burned at the stake. Again he had escaped with the help of the white woman and her daughter. The tribes had joined the British, and even then were planning an early attack on this very fort and all others.

The interest was tense and every face was startled at this calm statement of their immediate danger. Old Jerome burst out:

"Why did you have to escape from the council—and from the Shawnees?"

"At the council I told the Indians that they should be friends, not enemies, of the Americans, and Crooked Lightning called me a traitor. He had overheard my talk with Kahtoo."

"What was that?" asked Dave, quickly.

"I told Kahtoo I would fight with the Americans against the British and Indians; and with you against him!" And he turned away and went back to the cabin.

"What'd I tell ye!" cried Dave indignantly, and he followed the boy, who had gone to his bunk, and put one big hand on his shoulder.

"They thought you'd turned Injun agin," he said, "but it's all right now."

"I know," said the lad, and with a muffled sound that was half the grunt of an Indian and half the sob of a white man turned his face away.

Again Dave reached for the lad's shoulder.

"Don't blame 'em too much. I'll tell you now. Some fur traders came by here, and one of 'em said you was goin' to marry an Injun girl named Early Morn; that you was goin' to stay with 'em and fight with 'em alongside the British. Of course I knowed better, but—"

"Why," interrupted Erskine, "they must have been the same traders who came to the Shawnee town and brought whisky."

"That's what the feller said and why folks here believed him."

"Who was he?" demanded Erskine.

"You know him—Dane Grey."

All tried to make amends straightway for the injustice they had done him, but the boy's heart remained sore that their trust was so little. Then, when they gathered all settlers within the fort and made all preparations and no Indians came, many seemed again to get distrustful and the lad was not happy. The winter was long and hard. A blizzard had driven the game west and south and the garrison was hard put to it for food. Every day that the hunters went forth the boy was among them and he did far more than his share in the killing of game. But when winter was breaking, more news came in of the war. The flag that had been fashioned of a soldier's white shirt, an old blue army coat, and a red petticoat was now the Stars and Stripes of the American cause. Burgoyne had not cut off New England, that "head of the rebellion," from the other colonies.

On the contrary, the Americans had beaten him at Saratoga and marched his army off under those same Stars and Stripes, and for the first time Erskine heard of gallant Lafayette—how he had run to Washington with the portentous news from his king—that beautiful, passionate France would stretch forth her helping hand. And Erskine learned what that news meant to Washington's "naked and starving" soldiers dying on the frozen hillsides of Valley Forge. Then George Rogers Clark had passed the fort on his way to Williamsburg to get money and men for his great venture in the Northwest, and Erskine got a ready permission to accompany him as soldier and guide. After Clark was gone the lad got restless; and one morning, when the first breath of spring came, he mounted his horse, in spite of arguments and protestations, and set forth for Virginia on the wilderness trail.

He was going to join Clark, he said, but more than Clark and the war were drawing him to the outer world. What it was he hardly knew, for he was not yet much given to searching his heart or mind. He did know, however, that some strange force had long been working within him that was steadily growing stronger, was surging now like a flame and swinging him between strange moods of depression and exultation. Perhaps it was but the spirit of spring in his heart, but with his mind's eye he was ever seeing at the end of his journey the face of his little cousin Barbara Dale.

Idleness is the gate of all harms. An idle man is like a house that hath no walls; the devils may enter on every side.—Chaucer.

Life's Ills. Think of the ills from which you are exempt, and it will aid you to bear patiently those which now you may suffer.—Cecil.

To Learn to Pray. He that will learn to pray, let him go to sea.—Herbert.

"You took me by surprise and you have changed—but I don't know how much."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.) Copyright, 1922, Western Newspaper Union.

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 15

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

LESSON TEXT—Luke 3:1-22. GOLDEN TEXT—Isaiah 40, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Matt. 3:2. REFERENCE MATERIAL—Matt. 11:2-19; Phil. 2:5-11. PRIMARY TOPIC—What John Said About Jesus. JUNIOR TOPIC—John Preaching and Baptizing. INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—A Fearless Reformer. YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Repentance: What It Is and What It Does.

I. The Degeneracy of the Times (vv. 1, 2).

The Jews had sunk to a very low level of civil, moral and religious life. Luke carefully enumerates the civil and religious rulers in order to show the profligacy of the times, and therefore the need of a messenger to call the people back to God and virtue. Herod, the son of the great, was a murderer. Annas and Caiaphas were corrupt ecclesiastical rulers.

II. The Nature of John's Ministry (vv. 3-6).

In the wilderness he underwent a discipline which fitted him for his task. Out of the wilderness he flashed forth preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (v. 3). This ministry is declared to be a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. The message was described as one calling upon the nation to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. This preparation was presented under the figure of a monarch of the East about to make a journey. A servant was sent before to prepare the highway. Valleys needed to be filled, mountains and hills needed to be lowered, crooked places needed to be made straight and rough places needed to be made smooth. Today before the nations will receive Christ the valleys need to be filled with righteous deeds, the exceeding high mountains of sin and iniquity need to be brought low, the crooked dealings of the business world must be straightened out, and the rough ways of nations and individuals must be smoothed out. Men must repent of their sins before they can receive Christ.

III. The Content of John's Message (vv. 7-18).

1. Denunciation of Sin (vv. 7, 8). He called them "a generation of vipers." This shows that he charged them with deceitfulness and wickedness. Knowing the subtle hypocrisy of these Jews, he demanded evidence of their sincerity—the genuineness of their repentance was to be demonstrated by their works.

2. Announcement of Judgment (v. 9). He declared that the axe was laid at the root of the tree and that the tree not bringing forth fruit was to be hewn down and cast into the fire. John made it very plain that for their sins they would be called into judgment. Paul's preaching of a judgment to come made Felix tremble (Acts 24:25).

3. Instructions to the Inquirers (vv. 10-14). (1) The people (vv. 10, 11). Each man was to turn from his besetting sin and show love and kindness to his fellow men. Clothing and food were to be given those who had need. They were to turn from a life of selfishness and greed and do unto others as they would be done by. (2) Publicans (vv. 12, 13). These tax-gatherers who were guilty of greed and oppression were not asked to give up their occupation, but to exact only that which was appointed by law. (3) The soldiers (v. 14). These were likely the policemen of that day—at least men on military duty. He told them to extort money from no man, to accuse none falsely, and to be content with their wages. To all these classes he made it clear that they should henceforth perform their duty from a motive of love instead of selfishness and greed.

4. Testimony to Jesus (vv. 15-18). The people were nursing in their hearts as to whether John was indeed the Messiah. When John perceived this he with fine humility declared that his mission was so lowly in comparison with Christ's that he would be unworthy to perform the menial act of a slave in loosing the latchet of His shoes. John baptized with water, but Christ, he declared, would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

IV. John's Imprisonment (vv. 19, 20).

Because of his reproof of Herod for his wicked lewdness and other sins John went to the dungeon. The preacher of righteousness must become a martyr. God's faithful prophets are usually despised by the world, even cast into prison, burned, or beheaded.

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Life's Ills. Think of the ills from which you are exempt, and it will aid you to bear patiently those which now you may suffer.—Cecil.

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