

Folk We Touch In Passing

By Julia Chandler Marz
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THE HEART OF A BOY

The Boy lay through the long night with wide-open eyes save when some member of his family passed through his small room, whereupon he closed them in pretense of sleep, but when the gray dawn sifted silently through his unshaded window he could no longer endure the stillness he had kept. Slipping swiftly into his clothes, he crept through the kitchen door, stole through the enshrouding fog of the soft spring morning to the front of the house and stood gazing silently across the village road to the house on the other side which the mist veiled from his sight. He wondered vaguely if the white roses still hung their drooping heads against the panel of the front door or if they had been taken in with the rest which kept watch beside Little Girl as she lay among the white satin folds of her lovely casket, her lips smiling bravely in answer to an Angel's call.

They had told The Boy the day before that he might go in and his mother had taken his hand in hers to give him courage, when he gently disengaged it and sped away to the woods, following the trail along which he had held back the flapping branches for against the front door. Instinctively he knew the time had come. Hearing his mother's call, the heart of The Boy contracted strangely. His pain-stricken eyes swept the room in which he seemed alone. With pulsing heart he left his place at the window. Climbing the narrow steps which led to the attic he threw himself on a pile of old carpets and when Little Girl was being borne away from the house across the road no one missed The Boy save, perhaps, his mother, who if she gave the matter a thought, concluded he had gone ahead.



At the Foot of the Hill the Boy Stood Gazing.

Little Girl ever since he could remember, and the hour had been twilight when he returned. He had made sure that no one was near Little Girl when he slipped into the room where she lay smiling and left the arbutus he had brought clasped in her stiff little fingers. In his hunt for the trailing bush of scented color he had stepped on some of the anguish that ate into his heart. It had seemed to him of late that Little Girl was at his side, pointing out the hillside where the loveliest flowers hid beneath the pine needles. When he tucked the loveliest of his fragrant blossoms under the stiff little fingers the boy's eyes lingered on the quiet face with its tender lips smiling and seeing her own eyes closed on tipto, kissed the once rosebud mouth and fled again into the woods they both had loved and traversed.

There was the table set with her bits of china just as she had left it, and in a broken chair sat her bathed doll. The Boy stumbled to his feet, clasped the make-believe child of his play hours with Little Girl in his strong young arms and when the evening shadows fell they found him still sitting on the edge of the rug swaying back and forth to the rhythm of his sobs. In the night, when he had been in bed many hours, the Boy awakened with a sense of calamity. At first he was conscious only that the rain was pattering gently against his window, a circumstance which usually filled him with a peculiar sense of peace. Then, suddenly, he remembered. Springing out of bed he ran to his window. The dawn of another new day was near, and it had but just begun to rain. Hastily The Boy slipped into his clothes and quietly stole from the house.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of Sunday School Course, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

LESSON FOR AUGUST 8

THE KINGDOM TORN ASUNDER.

LESSON TEXT—1 Kings 12:6-16. GOLDEN TEXT—Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. 16:18.

Solomon's kingdom though outwardly magnificent contained within it those germs of oppression, formal religious observances and the lax example of an indulgent monarch which speedily led to its disruption after his death. Forty years Solomon reigned, but the latter end of his life was none too peaceful. "He loved many strange women" and "his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God" (11:1, 4). Rezon was his "adversary" (11:25) and Jeroboam whom he at first sought to conciliate (11:26-28) was finally driven from the land (v. 40). Chapter eleven contains the prophecy of which this lesson is the fulfillment. "And Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his stead" (11:43).

I. The Convention at Shechem, vv. 1-5. This place has an important history beginning in the days of Abraham and Jacob. It was a city of the Levites and the place where Joshua gave his final charge (Josh. 24:1, 25). Abimelech destroyed it though it was soon rebuilt. Here Israel gathered to confirm Solomon's son upon the throne. Jerusalem and Judea readily accepted Rehoboam as king, but the ten tribes hesitated and, according to one translation there was a year's delay during which time Jeroboam was sent for and certain reforms were formulated (v. 2). Their charges were entirely selfish and made no reference to the rights of Jehovah nor offered any protest against the increasing idolatry. Before allegiance was sworn Jeroboam as spokesman presented these reforms (v. 4) and Rehoboam wisely asked for time to consider the request (v. 5).

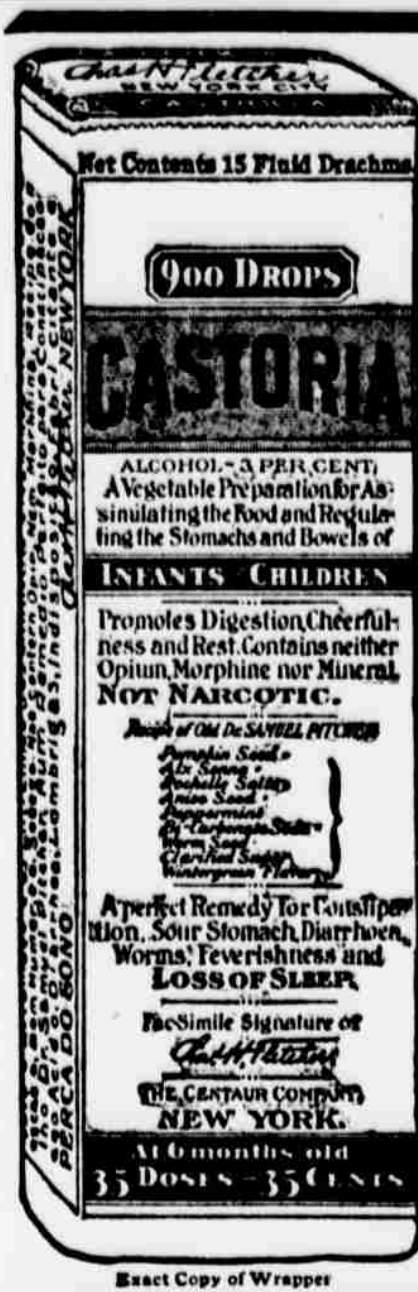
II. Good Counsel Neglected, vv. 6-12. Rehoboam came of bad stock (ch. 14:21), yet his first step was a wise one. His name means "Enlarger of the people," but he sadly belied the same. Too long had he lived in the atmosphere of luxury and idleness. The northern tribes suffered greatly through taxation and shared none of the prosperity of Jerusalem. Solomon's "yoke," like that of every earthly monarch, had been heavy (Matt. 11:29, 30). The counsel of the old men was good (v. 7), it was kingly, manly.

Jesus tells us that the greatest must be the servant of all and sets us the example himself (Matt. 20:28). Rehoboam next consulted those of his own circle who "were grown up with him," men of like position and passions, youths as inexperienced as himself who had no sympathy but were wild, conceited, overheating, selfish. Rehoboam asked "advice" (v. 8) of the old men, but in neither case is there any suggestion that God was consulted (James 1:5). These young men collected in "fasting and burdening" courses which brought Rehoboam to grief. "Oppression always results in rebellion," a fact that those who govern or employ others should ponder well. Rehoboam's choice of counselors and his consequent course of action was the height of foolishness (Prov. 23:20).

III. Bad Counsel Continued, vv. 12-14. Jeroboam's subsequent career confirms his belief that he more than all others encouraged and fostered the division of the kingdom. But he and the proud, foolish princes were both only "trying out the word" of Jehovah (v. 15; Ps. 76:10). This does not, however, lessen his guilt by folly (Acts 2:23). Not content with declaring his acceptance of the "evil" counsel he spoke "roughly" (v. 13) and this verse suggests to us that "the old men's counsel" was known to the people, thereby aggravating his offense. "Whom God wishes to destroy he first makes mad." Rough words wound or madden and "by illing soft words you may lead an elephant by a hair." Not content to refuse Rehoboam's demands added burdens (v. 14).

IV. Conclusion. God turned away the kingdom from Solomon's house because Solomon had turned away from God (ch. 11:9-11, 31, 33). A true prophet foretold what would happen, the "cause was from" the Lord that he might perform his saying" (v. 15, cf. 11:31, 32). God is constantly and literally fulfilling prophecy. Those which have been so fully and so minutely fulfilled are a warrant that in due time all will likewise "come to pass." Rehoboam is a lesson to the young men of today.

Rehoboam is also a lesson for present day fathers. Finally Rehoboam is a lesson to all who are set in authority. To close our ears to the cry of the needy; to forget our obligations to God and to men (Matt. 25); and to fail to see God's purposes, prophecies and plans, inevitably courts disaster. The coming king of kings whose fulfillment of prophecy did come, and will come again, has a yoke for his subjects which is easy. His shear (v. 10) and hands were used in loving ministries and the only chastisement (v. 11) he ever permits is that which proves us to be "sons," not slaves (Heb. 12:6-11).



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NOT A MATTER OF FIGURES

Number of Churches or Synagogues Seem to Be of Relatively Little Moment.

"Is it progress to go to church or not to go to church?" asks Dr. Ernest C. Richardson of Princeton university. Thereupon he answers the question in this wise: "What is almost the last word that can be spoken on universal progress at the present stage of affairs was once spoken by that most gracious and polished author of the most scholarly 'Life of Our Lord,' Dr. Samuel J. Andrews, apropos of this very matter.

"An enthusiastic apostle of Christian endeavor in a quiet library reading room was holding forth in noisy conversation on the wonderful progress of the church in these later times. "Why, just think of it," he cried, "there are twelve hundred churches (if it was twelve hundred) in the city of Philadelphia alone today; twelve hundred churches, just think of it!"

"Doctor Andrews looked up from his book at the strenuous declaimer and remarked quietly, 'And there were eight hundred synagogues (if it was eight hundred) in Jerusalem at the time when Jesus Christ was crucified.'

Rocky Roads of China. We all know the description of the snakes in Ireland: "There are none," and much the same might be said about the roads in China.

There are so-called roads, certainly, upon which the people move about, but I have seldom met one that was any better than the surrounding country, and very, very often on this journey I met roads where it was ease and luxury to move off them on to the neighboring plowed field. The recipe for a road there in the North seems to be: "Take a piece of the country that is really too bad to plow or to use for any agricultural purpose, whatever, that a mountain torrent, in fact, has given up as too much for the water, upset a stone wall over it, a stone wall with good large stones in it, take care they never for a moment lie evenly, and you have your road.—Wide World Magazine.

Payson's Human Nature. Is it true that poverty improves a man's perspective?

"I doubt it."

"Then, how about riches?"

"The result is the same. When a man's poor he can't appreciate the simple life because he has to live it, and when he's rich he can't appreciate the simple life because his doctor recommends it."

Not in the Money. "Does your husband play cards for money?"

"No," replied young Mrs. Torkins, thoughtfully; "I don't think Charley plays for money. But all the people who play with him do."

Professor's Break. Professor (to student)—What are you laughing at? Not at me?

Student—Oh, no, sir.

Professor—Then what else is there in the room to laugh at?

Women are acting as street cleaners in Cardiff, Wales.

Girls are employed as messengers in the British war office.

Well Named. They were talking about a promising young man who had failed to make good as a traveling salesman.

The first man said to the other man:

"It was queer about the boy. He seemed to be a regular whirlwind. His first trip was a rattling success, but all he brought back from his second trip was a bunch of foolish excuses."

"What was it you called him—a whirlwind?"

"Yes."

"I see. All 'whirl' at the beginning, and all 'wind' at the finish."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Way Out. "Sometimes I think," remarked the timid young man in the parlor scene, "that if I—er—had money I would—er—get married."

"Well," suggested the dear girl who was occupying the other end of the sofa, "why don't you try and—er—borrow some?"

At a wedding men laugh and women weep—probably because they are not the victims.

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