

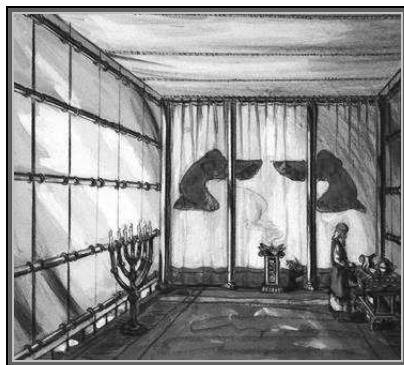
The Children's Tabernacle

“Or Hand-Work and Heart-Work”

[Illustrated]

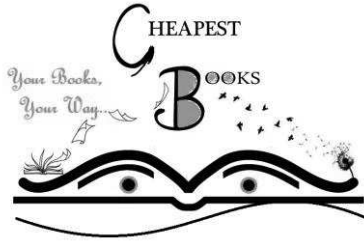
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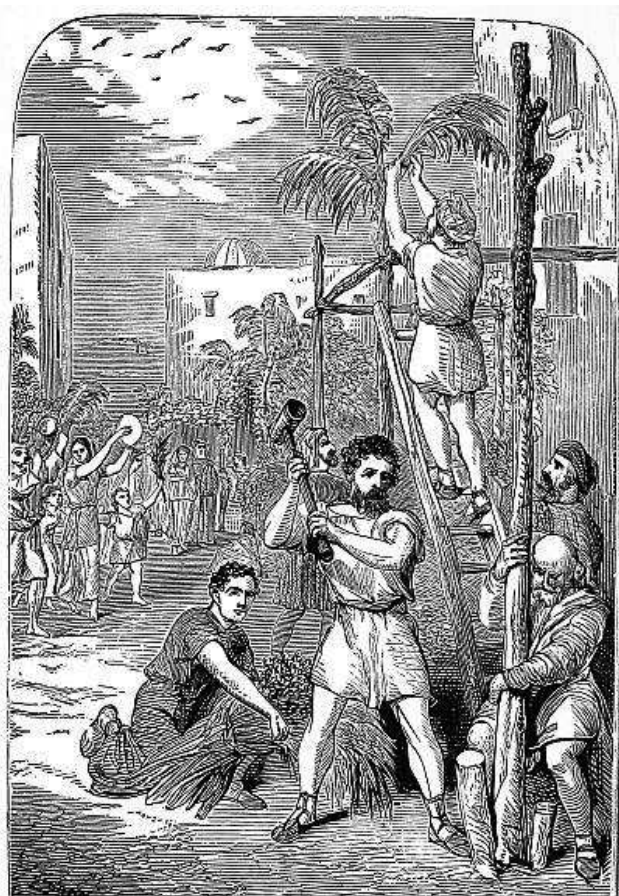
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**THE CHILDREN'S TABERNACLE
OR
HAND-WORK AND HEART-WORK.**

NEW-YORK, 1875



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.





I. Wanting Work.



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

“I’ve not spoiled 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, look-

ing 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."

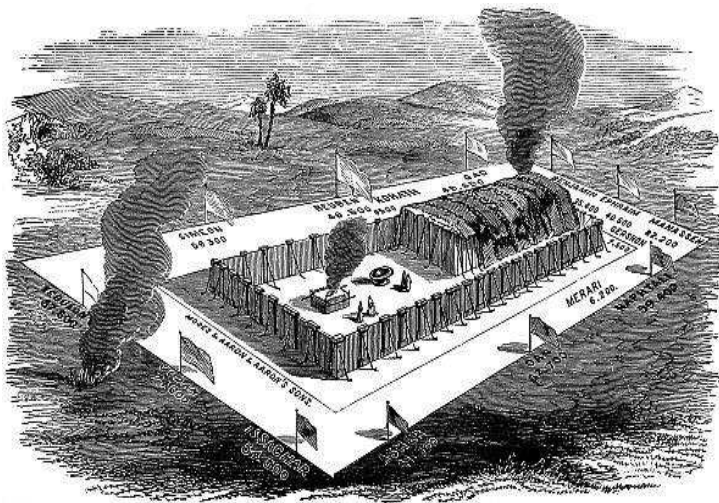
"I have often thought," observed Mrs. Temple, who had seated herself at the table and taken up her knitting—"I have often thought how tenderly the Lord dealt with his people in providing for them pleasant, interesting occupation when He bade them make the Tabernacle, and condescended to give them minute 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!”



THE TABERNACLE AS PITCHED IN THE WILDERNESS.

“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