Sunday School Lesson

September 18. Lesson XII—The Reports of the Spies—Numbers 13: 1-3, 25-33. Golden Text—The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?—Psalm 27: 1.

ANALYSIS.

I. THE SPIES DESPATCHED, vs. 1-3.

II. CONFLICTING REPORTS, vs. 25-29, 31-33.

III. THE MINORITY REPORT, vs. 30.

I. THE SPIES DESPATCHED, vs. 1-3.

Israel had been for some time in the wilderness of Paran. Meanwhile they had consumed the all too slight produce which the wilderness yielded them. Their flocks and herds had cropped bare the scanty verdure of the oasis where they were encamped. The flesh-pots of Egypt lay behind them, and the land "flowing with milk and honey" before them. Their position was becoming intolerable. God himself, they believed, was in the necessity which was driving them on. They cast their lean and hungry eyes longingly on the fertile land of Canaan. This was the land of promise, sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and also to Moses, Gen. 12: 7; Exod. 13: 11. Before it could be appropriated it must be reconnoitred. Some knowledge must be gained of the character of its population, the quality of its soil, and the type of towns to be found in it, vs. 18-20. In ancient as in modern times it has been the practice to obtain secret information by means of spies as a preliminary to warlike movements. Twelve spies were sent—one from each tribe. This was a wise measure. It would preclude tribal jealousies; nor could any tribe at a later date claim that they had been induced to invade Canaan under false pretences. In sending out the spies, Israel was observing an enduring necessity of life. Man is not content to live in ignorance of the world about him. "Our spirits yearn," said Faust, "for revelation." The practice of sending out spies has been transmuted into the nobler pursuits of science, art, literature and, above all, religion. All of these represent valiant attempts to determine the nature of reality in life and the world.

II. CONFLICTING REPORTS, vs. 25-29, 31-33.

When the spies returned they spoke excitedly and confusedly of all that they had seen. The one group (vs. 27-29) tried to give a balanced account in which justice would be done to both the advantages and disadvantages of proceeding against Canaan. They acknowledged that it was rich and fertile. "It was a land 'flowing with milk and honey' "—both of which were articles of food greatly prized among a nomadic or an agricultural people. As a guarantee of the truth of what they said, they exhibited the prodigious cluster of grapes which they had carried off from the district about Hebron, v. 23. Over against these more favorable features, however, they asserted that the land was already inhabited by a strong population. The Canaanites dwelt in walled cities which it would be difficult for the sons of the desert to capture. In this they acknowledged the superiority of the material civilization of the Canaanites in contrast to their own more rudimentary civilization of the desert. For the Canaanites had long dwelt in a land which had been crossfertilized by the great civilizations of Babylon and of Egypt. They declared also (v. 29) that the population of the land was mixed rather than uniform. There were deposits of population from the great Hittite Empire of Asia Minor and from the Amorite kingdom of north Syria while the Amalekites, a fierce tribe of nomads, roamed at will in the barren steppe land to the south of Canaan. Another group (vs. 31-33) were out and out pessimists. Their report was wholly unfavorable. They lost sight of the glorious objective and fastened their attention only on the dangers, and the probabilities of failure. They laid stress on the unsuitable nature of the country which "eateth up" its inhabitants,—meaning either that its climate was trying, or that it did not produce enough to support its people. It was the gigantic stature of the people, however, which most impressed them. They compared the Anakites to the giants, or Nephilim, which, according to Gen. 6: 4, were a race of demi-gods. "These men are trying to find the strongest possible language for expressing the terribleness of the gigantic Anakites; and this they effect by saying that the Anakites are veritable demigods." Now this evil report would readily find an open ear among people who were already suffering; it tended to depress their spirits and to dissuade them from the project of advancing into Canaan. The trouble with pessimism is that it diminishes our vitality.

III. THE MINORITY REPORT, vs. 30.

Another trouble with pessimism is that it does not take all the facts into account. It leaves out the greatest Fact of all, which is God himself. Fortunately there was among the spies one, Caleb, who saw not only the drawbacks and the dangers, but also the gracious God who, with sovereign power, was presiding over the destiny of Israel. The others were in one way or another materialists; but Caleb saw the Invisible, and seeing him he had the assurance of victory. "We are well able to overcome it."

Says Blood Spots in Eggs Normal and Unharmful

Fears of housewives that blood spots in eggs indicate a lack of freshness or that such eggs are not fit for food are not warranted in most instances, according to Professor C. S. Platt, poultry husbandman at the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, who says blood spots may be found in strictly fresh eggs and in eggs that are normal in all other respects.

The cause of a blood spot is the rupture of a small membrane in the sac which envelopes the yolk before its release into the fowl's oviduct, where albumen and shell are added to make the complete egg. Often only a small blood vessel is ruptured and the blood spot is hardly discernible. At other times sufficient blood may accumulate on the yolk to cause a decided discoloration of both yolk and white of the egg.

"When the blood becomes diffused throughout the white," Professor Platt explains, "the egg should not be considered as edible. When there is only a small speck of blood on the yolk, however, there is no reason for discarding the egg. After the egg is broken the blood spot can be removed with a fork or spoon and the egg used for any desired purpose.

"The presence of this small amount of blood in the egg is not in any way indicative of diseased birds, as practically every bird produces a few eggs containing some blood at some time during her life. Under most conditions blood spots can be detected by candling, which is the general practice on many farms where eggs are sold at retail. Even with the best of care there is a possibility of some eggs being mixed when candled, particularly if the yolks are dark or the eggs are brown shelled, and buyers of eggs should not be too critical if occasionally eggs are found with small blood spots."

"Your cook sits on your front piazza every evening."

"Well, we like the back porch just as well, and of course we never say anything to hurt cook's feelings in the hot weather."

TICKETS, PLEASE

The country station-master did not wear a uniform, and one day when a train came in he stood at the platform gate to take the passengers' tickets.

A pretty girl came up to him, and when he held out his hand for her ticket she seized it, gave it a tight squeeze, and followed by giving him a hearty kiss.

The station-master was surprised, but managed to say: "That's all very well, miss, but I want your ticket."

"Oh," replied the girl, with a blush, "aren't you Uncle John?"

Lion—"Was the banquet a success last night?" Eagle—"I'll say it was. Two of the speakers swallowed fish bones and couldn't say a word."

Lost in the Jungle

A Graphic Description of an Aviator's Experience, by G. W. T. Garrood, in The Listener, London.

It happened in 1916. I was with the R. C. F. and had been sent to Mombassa. Part of our duties there were to turn our then enemy, the Germans, out of Tanganyika territory. One day I was ordered to fly from our field at Tulo, just south of the Uluguru Mountains, to bomb a place called Logi Logi. Logi Logi was about 45 miles due south. One of our infantry columns had reached the Rufiji River, on which the place was situated, but were farther up. However, with the excessive optimism of youth, I decided to do without the help which our own men could afford in an emargency, and flew due south, over country which was totally uninhabited in parts and as thick as the African jungle can be.

I was about three miles from Logi Logi when my engine began to cough and sputter. I eased the throttle, and then tried jerking to clear it, but I knew it was ignition trouble, and in a few seconds my propeller stopped and my precious 855 feet of altitude was 600. I selected a "nice green oval stretch of grass" to set the plane down upon, released my bombs, and pancaked the bus (that is, made a slow landing without running far). To my great consternation I found that the grass was six feet high, and the machine turned on her nose. It was a bog, and the water nearly covered the top of the landing wheels. My first impression was of the eerie silence, which sent a shiver through my spine. I remained perched up in my cockpit for a minute, I suppose, before a bird screeched and broke the silence. Then I reached for my revolver, ammunition, sun helmet, water bottle, some quinine and a tin of sardines and a packet of chocolate which were in a small emergency kit. I realized that I probably had a long walk of about forty miles. So off came the compass, and I let myself down into the water.

Due north was the course decided upon, chiefly to avoid running into the enemy lines. It as 4.45 p.m., so I decided to make for the nearest lot of trees before sundown, at least, and probably to do a couple of hours' hiking. Unfortunately I had had an attack of malaria three days previously and was not in cross-country form. We were right in the rainy season, so the traveling was particularly difficult.

My compass proved very valuable, as the growth was high and dense. I soon came across fresh elephant spoors, and then came face to face with an ugly black animal about four feet high and with vicious-looking tusks. Wisdom cautioned making for the nearest tree, but the animal must have been nervous, too, for it crashed off into the undergrowth. When the silence died away there was another of those eerie silences.

Dark came on, and although my tree was not a very comfortable one, I had to stay there. About seven o'clock a terrific thunder storm came on, and in less than a minute I was drenched. When the storm abated the mosquitoes came out. I was wearing shorts, so my knees were left to every hungry mosquito, and they were all hungry. About nine a lion roared close by. I tried to doze off when the roaring ceased, but suddenly a twig snapped beneath my tree. The moon was coming up, but all I could see was two green lights. The two lights circled round and round my tree. I couldn't fire my revolver because the rain had soaked everything I had. The circling of the bright lights kept up for ten minutes, but it seemed more like ten hours. At last I began to shudder; my nerves seemed almost at the snapping point. Suddenly something seemed to give way inside me; I yelled at the top of my voice. At once the leopard slunk away in the undergrowth, the eyes disappeared.

I as ashamed of my fearful exhibition of fear, and tried to sing. That helped, and for hours it seemed I sang everything I could think of, even hymns which ended with a long-drawn Amen. It did seem incongruous to be singing "All Things Bright and Beautiful" while wet through, with jungle animals prowling all about, and the incessant sound of frogs and mosquitoes.

About 3 a.m. I began to get very hungry, but I managed to withstand the temptation to touch my scanty stores.

As soon as it was light enough I left my tree and pushed off, keeping to my compass course. My khaki drill shirt and srorts and puttees were wet and clammy. I crossed two streams, which I had to swim, and by 8.30 a.m. I was confronted by a substantial river running east and west. I could not throw my clothes across, so I put the revolver and food in my tunic pocket, fastened it round my neck, so that the revolver would not have a chance to get wet, and tied my boots to the back of my belt. I had only gone a short distance when I caught sight of the ugly nose of a crocodile quite close to me. In the excitement and the extra energy used at the sight of him the tunic came undone and down went the precious revolver, my compass, and the bit of food. But I reached the shore all right, only to be confronted by a huge hippo. That meant another swift sally into a handy tree.

My plight was now bad. The undergrowth was almost heartbreaking to penetrate, and I had no means of directing my progress. At the end of the first hour I was not more than a hundred yards from the river. The bush scratched my face, arms and legs unmercifully. Then it began to rain, and it lasted for a couple of hours—real tropical downpour. My stomach began to rumble, but there was nothing to satisfy it with, my head ached as though I was in for a return of the fever. I struck a game path which ended in a bad bog, which was an awful trial. Once or twice I heard the drone of an airplane overhead, but my signaling was all in vain.

Beyond the bog the country was less densely overgrown, but there was a cruelly sharp, short thorn bush which tore my legs and arms, and caused terrific pain. Added to that were myriads of long, thin flies which also managed to draw considerable blood. I was drinking now from streams and any old pool, but the food question was becoming serious.

After crossing my seventh stream for the day I sat down to get dried a bit, and spread out my shirt and shorts in the sun. Then along came another huge hippo and forced me to another tree. When I came down again it was almost dark, and I could find no trace of my clothes. I remembered some quinine which I had put into my helmet a few days previous, and took a little of that to help the fever. But it made me violently sick, and I soon developed that "fed-up-fever" feeling. That night I didn't mind the lions and leopards so much, because I felt almost dazed.

Next morning I managed to start out again. I soon came across a buffalo and then a family of giraffes. They moved off quietly, probably because I was a sorry enough sight to send anything away, clad as I was in only my boots and scant undergarments. I trudged on, once almost stepping on a venomous snake, but I had become too tired to care much what happened. With the third night a terrible depression came over me, and I began to feel that I would not get through to the Uluguru Mountains, which were now my sole compass.

The next morning a pair of vultures followed my weak and stumbling way. This frightened me badly at first, but I selected a young bough of a tree as a cudgel, and determined not to give in. About 2 o'clock on the fourth day I came to another bog, and saw odd-looking stakes in the water, rather like a fence. Then, to my great joy, I saw two natives, just as I had tried to ease my hunger with a bit of raw fish. The fish made me sick, but the natives were the means of getting me back to safety eventually.

In Germany—In Festival Time

The great Spree Forest festival in Germany, calls forth native costumes of the district. Here we see a revival of an old-timer, that is, the bicycle.

"He's got the foot and mouth disease."

"Never heard of it, what's it like?"

"Whenever he opens his mouth he puts his foot in it."

Cow Swallows $777 And Hides in Herd

Lonoke, Ark.—Wade Holloway's savings of $777 went into a cow—literally—and he is baffled regarding methods for recovery because there is no way of telling which of the twenty-three of his herd involves such value.

A purse containing money the dairyman had saved for months slipped from his pocket in his milking barn yesterday. He went back to look for it, but found only the chewed billfold and a dime.

A veterinarian was summoned. He operated on two cows at $10 a cow but found no money, and Holloway called off that mode of search because of the expense.

"I've half a mind to get married." "That's all you need."

Reading a la Carte

In an attractive London restaurant the sign that first meets the eye uestions the guest: "Are you lunching alone?" Next, "If so, why not take a book?" The sign hangs beside the desk where the friendly proprietor sits.

Above the notice is a shelf on which a dozen books in attractively colored cellophane cover are ararranged. Although the number is small the selection is sufficiently varied to suit many tastes. Included are essays, short stories, verse plays and novels. The service is free to the restaurant's patrons. Nor does the bookseller a few doors down, from whom the books are procured, charge the restaurant for their use. A label in the front of the book simply tells the reader the name and address of the bookseller who has donated the volume.

The gesture by both the restaurant proprietor and bookseller is generous, and happily not unrewarded. A book lover who is captured by the scintillating prose or lilting poetry of one of the season's latest books cannot easily give it up because a mere meal is ended. Even when he must hurry through hsi meals, he finds himself at dinner time automatically turning in at the restaurant which not only serves delicious food, but where waits his favorite book which he laid aside regretfully yesterday.

Some customers, indeed, are likely to patronize the restaurant-library until an interesting book is finished. Or, if that is impossible, they may resolve to buy the book—from the bookseller who so far-sightedly loaned it in the first place.

Thus, with the slogan, "Read While You Eat," a service as wide in its appeal as lending libraries may be initiated. And benefiting by it will be author, publisher, bookseller, restaurant owner, and, most of all, the average man who would like to read more but never seems to have sufficient time.—The Christian Science Monitor.

Paper Written 40 Years Ago Ante-Dates Modern Day

Toronto.—To be told 40 years after that the paper which he had written long ago contained the most modern ideas on colloidal chemistry was the experience of Dr. John Uri Lloyd, String-town-on-the-Pike, Ky., who is visiting Toronto in connection with the Canadian-American Pharmaceutical Association.

More than 40 years ago, Dr. Lloyd compiled a paper which he read to his colleagues at a meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association. When they stated they were unable to understand what he was trying to explain, Dr. Lloyd filed his paper away. Two outstanding German physicians saw the document recently, and declared his theory antedated the most recent discoveries.

Another interesting visitor at the convention is F. Gladstone Hines, president of the Pharmaceutical Association of Great Britain, who has been a candidate for the British Parliament and is a well-known tennis player.

"I have often wondered about the pharmacy business," said Premier George S. Henry, of Ontario, in welcoming the convention delegates. "As a boy I used to go to the drug store as a place where one got something to take when one wasn't very well."

The Dock Dreamer

Down at the docks on his lonesome beat,
With broken shoes on his shuffling feet;
Watching the tugs as they come and go,
With a grizzled grin and his eyes aglow;
For he's dreaming of soft sapphire seas,
Far tropic isles and ocean breeze—
And longing again for a lost lagoon,
Or a fiddle's rasp in an old saloon;
But his watch is over, his days are done,
As he sits alone in the noon-tide sun,
Seeing 'em still where his fancy strays
Those gallant ships of his sailing days.

—By Harvey McKenzie in N.Y. Sun.

MUTT AND JEFF— By BUD FISHER

He Might as Well Get Used to it.