

(This is broken down into "pictures" which can be posed by members. Or the material can be used in research for a lecture on Ruth.)

-1-

First Ruth: The story of Ruth the Gleaner, the scriptural account of which is interesting to old and young alike, opens up to us the most complete account of the ways and customs of ancient society, 300 years before the coming of Christ, that we possess, but when enlightened by the traditions of Masonry, as given in the Eastern Star lectures, is still more interesting.

~~THE~~ Elmilick, a rich, influential Jew, of the tribe of Judah, whom tradition also says was a Mason, was the husband of Naomi, who with their 2 sons, Chilion and Mahlon, lived in Bethlehem. In consequence of a famine which devastated the land, he removed his family to Moab, where the sons married Moabitish women, Ruth and Orpha. Ruth was born of wealthy parents and was reared amid all the comforts that the luxury of wealth in the eastern clime could surround her. She dressed in the scarlet and purple which denoted high position and great riches. She was of an idolatrous race and strictly observed the ceremonials that her religious teachings enjoined.

At one of these religious functions, Mahlon, then a stranger in Moab, first observed Ruth in a passing procession/ - as if by mysterious agency their eyes met, and tradition says: "The instant gaze foretold the union of 2 races which was finally to create the House of David, the beloved of God", Ruth's devotion to Mahlon, her husband, overcame her idolatrous worship and she became converted to the Hebrew religion, for she loved him with all the earnestness of genuine affection, and with all the strength of a character so tender, yet so strong as Ruth's, was capable.

After a few years of happy wedded life, Mahlon died, as did also Chilion and Elmilick. Upon his death bed he charged Ruth, for her soul's sake, not to forsake her adopted religion, to leave the idolatrous country, and go to the city of Bethlehem where dwelt the people of God. Immediately after his death she obeyed his pious injunctions. Her journey with the aged Naomi, her labors in the barley fields, the kindness of Boaz and subsequent marriage, are familiar to all members of the Star through the lecture of that point.



(Incidents that could be used for a little pageant; or as additional notes to use in Story of Ruth.)

- - Of all biblical romances, the book of Ruth contains the most beautiful and touching incidents. These are told in poetry, prose and art.

1. We see Ruth with other Moabite women observing the feast of Eleusis, or "The Mysteries". Upon the 4th day of this feast, the procession of the Basket took place. An immense basket, elegantly designed and decorated, was laid upon an open chariot, and slowly drawn by oxen, was followed by a number of women, all of whom carried mysterious baskets, filled with that which they took great pains to conceal. As Mahlon stood under an arch, observing this ceremony of the idolaters, his attention became riveted upon Ruth, who, in her anxiety to conceal the contents of her basket, paused a moment behind the others to arrange the elegant embroidered silk covering over her mysteries; her eyes, of liquid black, touched by diamond glints, were raised as if by some mysterious agency, and caught the gaze of Mahlon, and the union of these two races was virtually consummated.

2. The scene is laid in the market place of Moab; a Jewish rabbi is exhorting the populace. Ruth and Mahlon in passing are attracted by the scene and become interested observers. Ruth lured by the eloquence and fervor of the Rabbi's appeal for the religion of her husband is deeply touched, and kneeling at the Rabbi's feet embraces the Jewish faith, and receives his blessing.

3. We see a woman aged and sorrowful. This is Naomi, who, on account of the loss of her husband and sons, is determined to return to Bethlehem, her native land. In the distance is seen Orpha, one of her daughters-in-law whom she has persuaded to remain with her kindred and friends, and not follow her in poverty to a strange country. Kneeling before her is the other daughter-in-law, Ruth, whom she is trying to persuade to follow her sister on her homeward way. Ruth has her arms around Naomi, and her dark sorrowful eyes are lit up with tender devotion, as she refuses to leave her in her time of need. In the following beautiful and touching words she answers "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for where thou goest, I will go and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, I will die and there will I be buried. The Lord do so unto me and



and more also if aught but death part me from thee." Naomi could not persuade her and together they departed on their long and weary journey to Bethlehem.

4. Ruth is comforted for the loss of her husband by her kindness to the aged Naomi, who is deprived of both husband and sons. She also honors her husband's memory by taking care of his mother. We honor the dear departed, more by deeds of loving kindness to those bound to them by the tenderest ties than by draping ourselves in mournful black, a deepening the gloom of those left behind. It is in the 20th century we are learning this by honoring the living we honor the dead.

5. We see Ruth gleaning in the fields of a rich man, named Boaz. At a distance is Boaz making inquiries about her. When he heard her history, her devotion to Naomi and their destitute circumstances, he commanded the reapers to drop handfuls of barley that she might gather a greater supply. According to the ancient Mosaic Law, Boaz followed the custom of not gathering the gleanings, nor wholly gleaning the corners of the fields, but leaving them for the poor and strangers. In this he practised charity, one of the greatest principles of his faith. He was so touched by Ruth's devotion that he was especially gracious to her. To this action of Boaz we can so aptly apply the following quotation: "Be noble, and the nobleness in others, sleeping, but never dead, shall rise in majesty to meet thine own."

6. This union of Ruth and Boaz was indeed an ideal one. It was not brought about by wealth or beauty, but by the most tender and honorable love. Wealth does not buy happiness and beauty soon fades. Boaz possessed the wealth which all of us can have, a noble soul, a heart touched by others' adversity, and willingness to share with them the blessings with which he was blessed. Ruth's beauty was not her great attraction. Her modest demeanor, her unselfish love and loyalty to Naomi, was her greatest charm. The homeliest person can possess a beautiful soul, that inward beauty revealed by their noble actions toward their fellowmen.

6. We see Boaz addressing Ruth in kind and encouraging words, and inviting her to partake of the noonday meal, which he provided for the reapers. In proud humility she showed that she had not taken from the sheaves, but only the customary portion left to poor, and strangers. She returned in the evening to Naomi and there learned that Boaz



was related to her mother-in-law. Naomi had the joy of seeing Ruth's devotion toward her rewarded by witnessing her happy marriage to Boaz.

8. In the happy home of Ruth and Boaz the center of attraction is little ~~Ø~~ Obed in his cradle, the son of Ruth and Boaz. Naomi, no longer sorrowful, is smiling at her little grandson. Boaz, with tender pride, looks at his wife, lovelier to him than ever in her young motherhood. From this baby was descended King David, the sweetest singer of Israel.