

THE SUNBEAM

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HALT IN THE DESERT.

IN crossing the desert the shadow of a rock or of a few trees is hailed gladly as a resting-place and shelter from the hot beating sun. We see in our picture a caravan halting in such a place. The tired animals as well as the men find the shade pleasant and hasten to it. In our Christian pilgrimage a talk with Jesus and the grace which comes in consequence is like one of these cool spots in the desert; it is where the soul gets rest and refreshment. To one who goes to Jesus for help in daily life, he is indeed like "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

SUGAR-CANE.

SUGAR-CANE! almost everyone likes sugar in one shape or another; to children, especially, the sweet product of the juice of this tall and graceful plant is always welcome. We are told that the people of the United States consume more sugar than any other of the principal countries in the world, and that it is used here at the rate of forty pounds to each individual every year, which appears to be a very liberal allowance of sweets.



HALT IN THE DESERT.

The sugar-cane is a native of the East Indies, and was first brought into the southern countries of Europe by the Crusaders; but it has never been much

cultivated there, except in Spain, and on the Island of Sicily. It is extensively grown in China, in India, and in the West India Islands.

The thick, jointed stems of the sugar cane reach a height of from eight to twelve feet; the leaves are ribbon-shaped, and from four to five feet long, in some varieties covering the stem almost entirely. The stalks are filled for about two-thirds of their length with a soft, sweet, juicy pulp, from which, when pressed in the sugar-mill, a clear, transparent liquid flows, from which, by boiling, filtering, crystallizing, and other processes, the sugar with which we are all familiar is made.

The sugar-cane is usually grown from cuttings, for which the upper joint of the stalks are used. The plants grow rapidly in a rich, moist soil, and are ready for cutting in about ten months from the time of planting. When fully ripe, they are cut a little above the ground, and tied in bundles to be conveyed to the sugar-mill. Fresh stems

spring from the root, so that the plantation does not require to be re-planted for several years; but the first crop of cane is always the best.