

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## OUR GRACIOUS QUEEN.

BY THE EDITOR.

METHODISTS are everywhere characterized by their conspicuous devotion to the person and crown of their rightful ruler. Without reserve they recognize their duty to fear God and honour the king: This they did in troublous times, when their loyalty was sorely tried by civil and religious disabilities, by petty persecutions and groundless aspersions. This they do with an added zest and a more enthusiastic devotion when all disabilities are removed, and when the Sovereign is one whose private virtues and personal attributes, no less than her official destiny, are calculated to call forth the truest fealty of soul. And never was Sovereign more deserving to be loved, never had ruler stronger claim upon the loyal sympathies of her people than our revered and honoured widowed Queen. Of all the tributes to her character, none, we think, is nobler than that paid by the Laureate, well-nigh forty years ago, to which the passing years have only added emphasis and truth:

Revered, beloved,—O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old. . . .

May you rule us long,  
And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day!  
May children of our children say,  
"She wrought her people lasting good ;

"Her court was pure; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace; her land repose;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen."

But not the splendours of royal state, not the victories of arms, not even the conspicuous virtues of her life, are the chief claim upon our loving sympathies; but rather the sorrows through which her woman's heart has passed. To these royalty affords no shield, the castle wall no bulwark. As the Roman moralist long since said, "Death knocks alike at royal palace and peasant's hovel."

With the meanest of her subjects the mistress of an empire is exposed to the shafts of bereavement and sorrow. This touch of nature makes us all akin. The undying devotion to the memory of the husband of her youth has touched the nation's heart as nothing else could have done.

And worthy was he to be loved. In a position of supreme delicacy and difficulty, how wisely he walked; what a protecting presence; what a sympathizing friend to his Royal consort; what a godly example to his household, to the nation, to the world! Let Tennyson again record his virtues:

We see him as he moved,  
How modest, kindly, all accomplished, wise,  
Not swaying to this faction nor to that:  
Not making his high place the lawless perch  
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
For pleasure: but thro' all this tract of years  
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,  
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
In that serene light which beats upon a throne

And blackens every blot; for where is he,  
Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
A lovelier life, a more unshain'd, than his?  
Or how should England dreaming of his sons  
Hope more for these than some inheritance  
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be;  
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Which shone so close beside thee, that ye  
made  
One light together, but has passed and left  
The crown a lonely splendour.

The Queen has ever shown herself the friend of peace, and by her earnest remonstrance against war has not unfrequently won the beatitude of the peace maker.

goes forth with loving sympathy, her private purse is opened in generous aid. These are truer claims to a nation's love than the maternal splendour of a Semiramis or a Zenobia. And that love has not been withheld. Upon no human being have ever been converged so many prayers, so many blessings and benedictions. Throughout the vast Empire that with its forty colonies engirdles the world, wherever prayer is wont to be made, go up petitions for England's Queen. In Australian mining camps, in far Canadian lumber shanties, in the remotest hamlets, and in the fishing villages that line almost every sea, the patriotic devotion of a loyal people find utterance in the words, "God save the Queen!"

It is eminently fitting that the nation should rejoice and bring its thank offering unto God for the blessings so bounteously vouchsafed. For our gracious sovereign we can offer no more fitting prayer than that voiced by the sweetest singer of her reign

May all love,  
The love of all thy sons encompass thee,  
The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,  
The love of all thy people comfort thee,  
Till God's love set thee at his side at last.

## UP IN THE COLD REGIONS.

LET us imagine that we have been snowed up for several weeks inside a Kamtchatkan hut, without having seen any light but that from a wood-fire and a small lamp. Round the fire all the family are gathered. The men put in order their implements for fishing and hunting, and the women sew together the skins that are worn for garments.

The dogs lie burrowing in the snow outside, and every six or eight hours they set up a great howling, like wolves. When the family meal is over they will come in and get their share of the remains, and then they will go out and burrow in the snow again.

All this goes on pretty well for a time, but by and by both dogs and men get tired of the snow, and very glad are they when it ceases, and the moon and the stars once more appear. As soon as the dogs see the face of the moon they howl incessantly.

Then the men clear a pathway, and the prisoners inside go out and get a breath of fresh, pure air.

At length it is time to go on a hunting journey, and the sledge has to be got ready. As many as six pairs of dogs are sometimes put to one sledge; but the reins are fastened to the collar of the leader only. The master gets in, will wrapped up in skins, and away they go, merrily and steadily, until they reach the sea-coast, where the master and the dogs delight in dodging around after the seal, and the prowling bears.

The return journey is more wearisome to the dogs, for now they have a load of skins and blubber and seal and bear-fish flesh. But they have been well fed, and are in good condition, and the journey is soon made in safety.—Useful Animals.



QUEEN VICTORIA.

Can we wonder that his untimely death left the world forever poorer to the sorrowing Queen; that the pageantry of State became irksome, that her heart pined for solitude and communion with the loved and lost, that for well-nigh a score of years she wore unrelieved her widow's sombre weeds? Well might the Laureate say:

Break not, O woman's heart, but still endure;  
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
Remembering all the beauty of that star

Her personal and womanly sympathies are another conspicuous characteristic. Her autograph letters to the bereaved widows of President Lincoln and President Garfield smote chords of feeling that vibrated in the remotest hamlets of two continents. Nor are her sympathies restricted to the great. They extend alike to the humblest of her subjects. To the stricken wives of shipwrecked mariners or fishermen, of death-doomed miners and pitmen, to the sick children in the hospitals, and in homes of want, her heart