

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

VOL. XIV.]

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 24 1891.

[No. 8.]

Master and Workman.

BY EGBERT L. BANGS.

I HEARD the sound of sturdy blows;
They came from the forest, where the trees
Year after year have waved in the breeze,
And woodmen there, with axes in hand,
Had chosen the fairest in the land—
The pine that on the hillside grows.

Both oak and pine full quickly fell,
For a stately ship they would help to build;
And many a hand to labour skilled
Should toil thereon till the task be done.
None knew the pattern save only one,
And he his secret doth not tell.

Each day when rose the morning sun,
The sound of axe and saw was heard;
But no one spoke of the pattern a word.
Each workman plied the tool of his art,
With ready hand and willing heart,
Till, lo! the mighty ship was done.

They set the waiting beauty free,
And all the workmen whose hands had wrought
In wood or iron as the master's thought
Rejoiced with him as they looked with pride
On the white-robed ship—the ocean's bride;
God keep her safe upon the sea.

God keep us all and gracious be,
As we work out the pattern of life,
Where wrong grapples right in endless strife.
When our hearts and hands have nobly wrought
In beautiful lives the Master's thought,
Then set our waiting spirits free.

KING CHARLES' TOWER.

OUR young friends who have been students of English history can at once tell about this quaint-looking old tower we see in the picture. But those who are not "read up" must be told that it is a structure of great historic interest, built into the walls of the old town of Chester, England, many hundred years ago.

Tourists always have this place down on their lists of visits, for its old Roman walls and gates are said to be the only perfect specimens of this order of ancient fortifications in England. Its walls are nearly two miles in circuit and once enclosed the city for its protection, but long ago the city has outgrown its original limits. It has become Old Chester inside the walls and New Chester outside. The old city is divided by four broad streets, which take their names from the four principal gates, i. e., East-gate, Northgate, Bridgegate and Water-gate, and contains a venerable cathedral, ancient churches and houses of quaint and curious architecture.

But we were only to speak of the old tower of our picture, leaving our young readers to look up the history of Chester at their leisure. The tower takes its name from the fact that from its heights and through the narrow loop-holes in its mighty walls, King Charles I. watched his soldiers and his subjects under Cromwell, fighting a fierce battle on Rowton Moor, in 1645, in which the king's forces were defeated.

It now has become a miniature museum, being but eight feet square, and is filled with all sorts of odd relics, some of them connected with the unfortunate monarch.

What do you think the man and the two little children are talking about? He may be asking about the old tower of which they may know something. But it is more than likely they are little waifs, telling a tale of poverty and want at home, and begging of the visitor a few pennies.

Go where we will and we meet those who are poor and in need, and oftenest among the attractive scenes and associations of the old world. And so it was and so it will be from age to age.

The king and his soldiers die off; the

crown falls from royal brows; kingdoms wax old and perish, the old walls crumble to pieces, and the old tower grows gray and mossy with age.

But there is one King who lives forever and his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Are you, dear reader, a child of this King? Then you may not care for the fading glories of earthly things, for you are heir to a kingdom that will never pass away.

"He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."—E. D. G.

when they are sitting in a field of flowers.

Most species of the East Indian sloth, which feeds upon trees, have an orange-coloured spot on their backs which renders them very conspicuous when they are seen out of their ordinary environment, but when they are clinging to the trees the colour of their hair resembles withered moss, while the orange spot on their backs so closely imitates the scar made by the breaking off of a branch that even hunters are deceived by it.

the skin, and the strange shape of the head and horns, like broken branches, so tend to its concealment that even the keen-eyed natives have been known to mistake trees for giraffes, or giraffes for trees.

As to zebras, Prof. Henry Drummond says in his book on "Tropical Africa," after describing how the black and white stripes seem to take away the sense of a solid body altogether, the two colours blending into an inconspicuous gray, while at close quarters the effect is as of bars of light seen through the branches of shrubs:

"I have found myself in the forest gazing at what I supposed to be a solitary zebra, its presence betrayed by some motion due to my approach, and suddenly realized that I was surrounded by an entire herd, which were all invisible until they moved."

A recent writer in *Nature*, after quoting this passage from Drummond, together with a statement of Francis Galton that in clear moonlight a zebra may be invisible, although so near that its breathing can be heard, carries the idea of protection furnished by the zebra's stripes a step further by suggesting that they conceal it from the eyes of its enemies while it sleeps.

"DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEBODY, QUICK."

NOT long ago I read a story about a little girl who had a parrot. Among the funny things which this parrot could say was the line that stands at the head of this story. She had heard Madge, her little mistress, say it over and over as she learned it in a piece to recite at school. Madge did not know about this, and one morning she woke up very cross. She crawled slowly out of bed, and began sulkily to put on her shoes and stockings. She pulled so hard at the button-hook that the very first button popped off. Pretty soon off went another. This made poor cross Madge so angry that she pulled off the shoe, flung it across the room, and screamed out:

"Everything is so hateful. Oh! what shall I do?"

Polly who was on her stand by the window, was very much excited by all this noise, and screamed back, "Bad girl! Do something for somebody, quick!"

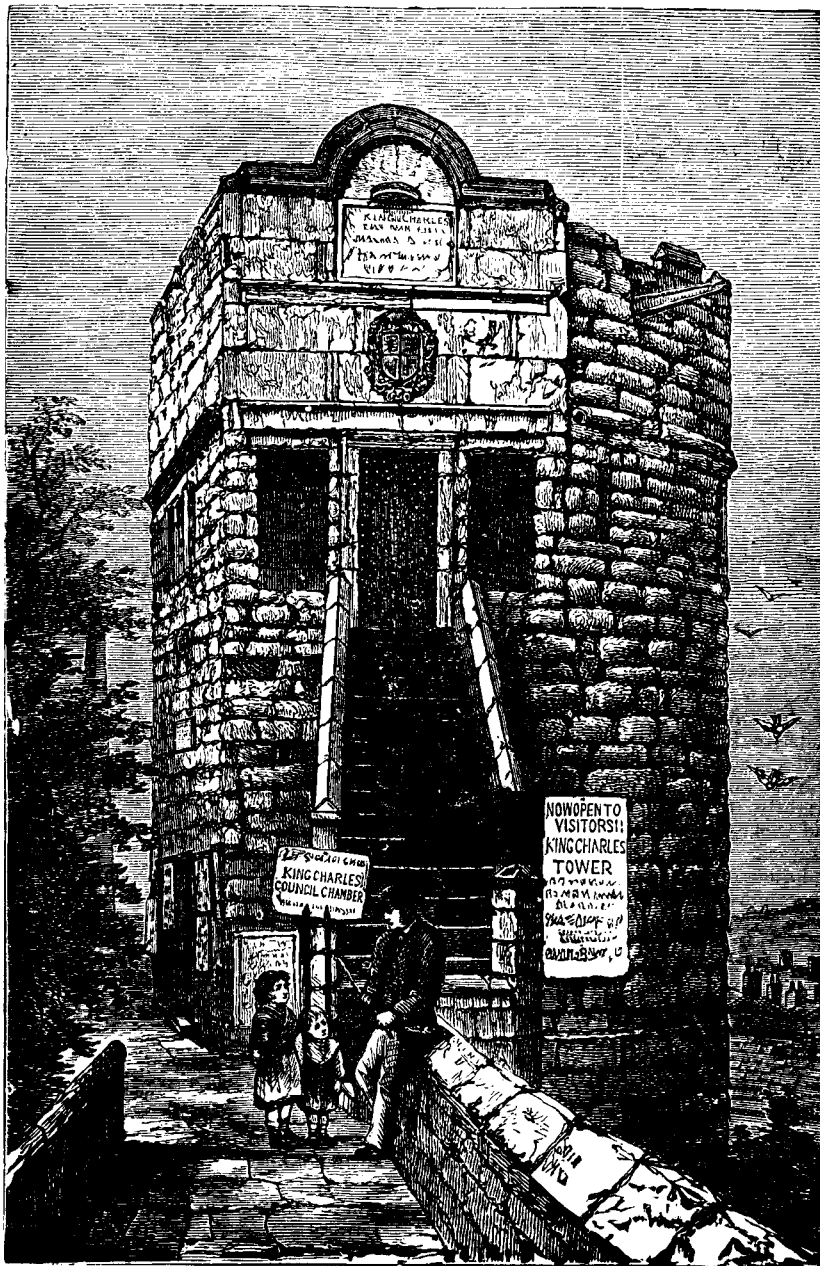
This made Madge laugh: but it made her think, too. She made up her mind that all that day she would try to do something for somebody, and see if that would not keep her from feeling cross. I think it did. Suppose you try Polly's cure for crossness.

GIRLS IN CHINA.

GIRLS in China are believed to have no souls, and to kill them is not murder, and, therefore, not to be punished. When parents are too poor to support the girl-children, they are disposed of in the following way:

"At regular times an officer goes through a village, and collects from poor parents all the girl children they cannot care for, when they are about eight days old. He has two large baskets, hung on a bamboo pole and slung over his shoulder. Six little girl-babies are placed in each basket, and he carries them to some neighbouring village, and exposes them for sale. Mothers, who want to raise wives for their sons, buy such as they may select. The others are taken to government asylums, of which there are many all through the country. If there is room enough they are all taken in; if not, they are drowned."

Will not the little girls who read about this, save their pennies to send the Gospel to China? Jesus died for the fathers and mothers and children in China as well as us.



KING CHARLES' TOWER.

PROTECTED BY COLOURS.

ANIMALS WHOSE VARYING HUES BEWILDER THE EYE.

ONE of the most interesting things that the naturalist finds to study is the effect of various colours and forms in rendering animals invisible or inconspicuous. This means of concealment is useful mainly in enabling the animals possessing it to remain hidden from the searching eyes of its enemies. Some of the accounts given by travellers and naturalists of the eclipsing effect of certain colour combinations seem hardly creditable. Among the most gorgeous of the inhabitants of the air are the sun-birds of Africa, and yet Mrs. Barker, the traveller, assures us that even the keen eye of a hawk will fail to detect these birds

The colour and stripes of the tiger sometimes render it invisible in bright sunshine amid the dried yellow grass of a jungle. Maj. Walford, an English hunter, says:

"Once while following up a wounded tiger I failed for at least a minute to see him under a tree in grass at a distance of about twenty yards—jungle open—but the natives saw him, and I eventually made him out well enough to shoot him; but even then I could not see at what part of him I was aiming."

But perhaps the most wonderful effect of colour and contrast in concealing large animals is in the case of the zebra and the giraffe. Alfred Russell Wallace says of the giraffe that the large, blotch-like spots on