

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## A HARD BATTLE.

"A box? A box for Reeve and Marcia!" exclaimed papa, as he opened the mail from the North. "And all the way from Chicago, too. From Aunt Emma, I do believe."

When the box was opened, there, in a nest of soft, white cotton, lay two large eggs, ornamented in beautiful colours. And, wonderful to tell, these eggs had covers which, when lifted up, showed them to be full of sugar-plums. But these lovely boxes were very frail, and in their long, rough journey, one of the covers was badly crushed.

"Sister can have that. I'll have the good one," said the little boy.

He was looked at with surprise, for he had always seemed a generous little fellow.

"My dear," asked mamma, "would you do so selfish—so unmanly a thing as that? Go away, and think about it."

"I don't wish to think about it! I don't wish to think about it!" he replied, excitedly. "I want the good one."

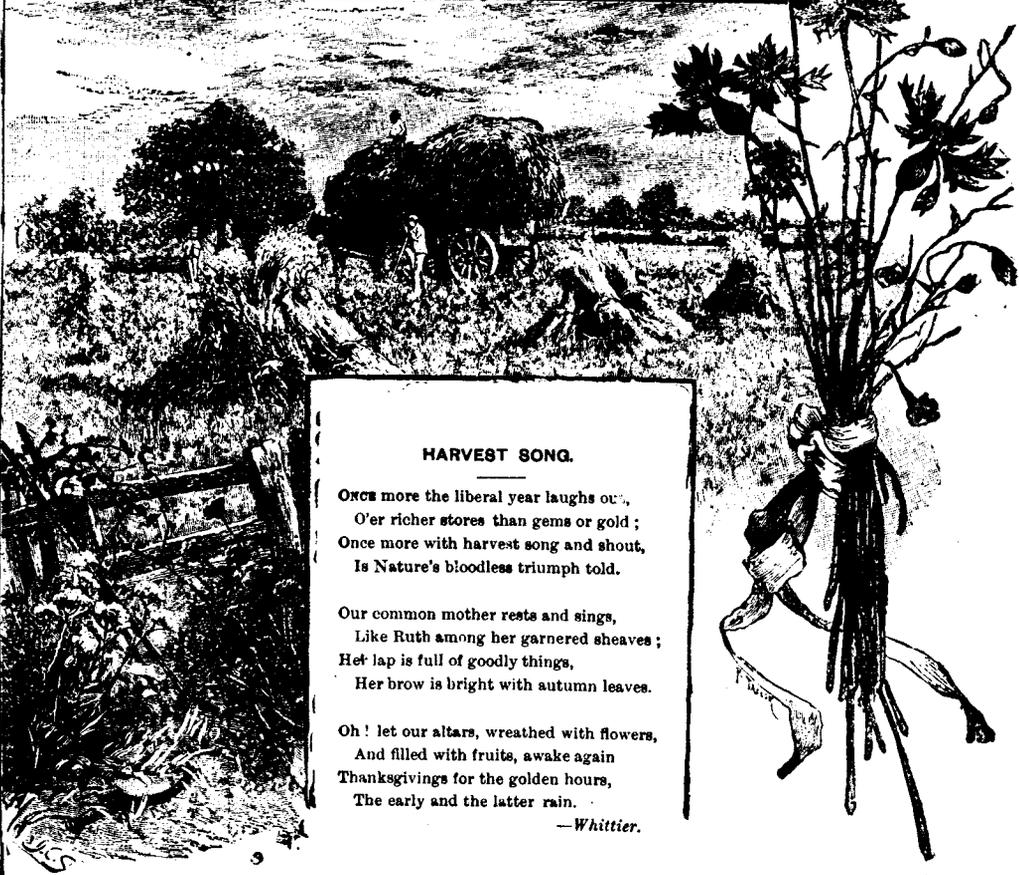
After that no more was said. He began to walk about the room. His face was flushed, and he looked very unhappy. If he chanced to come near papa, papa did not seem to see him, he was so busy reading the newspaper.

After walking awhile, he went to the other side of the room, where mamma was bathing and dressing his little sister. He was very fond of his mamma. When she was sometimes obliged to punish him, as soon as it was over he would say:

"Wipe my tears! Kiss me!"

So now, when his dear mamma did not seem to see that she had a little boy any more, he was cut to the heart.

At last he went into grandma's room. Now, he and grandma were great friends. Many happy hours did he spend in her lap, hearing stories;



### HARVEST SONG.

Once more the liberal year laughs out,  
O'er richer stores than gems or gold;  
Once more with harvest song and shout,  
Is Nature's bloodless triumph told.

Our common mother rests and sings,  
Like Ruth among her garnered sheaves;  
Her lap is full of goodly things,  
Her brow is bright with autumn leaves.

Oh! let our altars, wreathed with flowers,  
And filled with fruits, awake again  
Thanksgivings for the golden hours,  
The early and the latter rain.

—Whittier.

and she called him her "blessed boy!" But now, alas! she was so busy with her knitting, that she took no notice of him whatever! This was dreadful!

He climbed up into a chair, and sat down. An evil spirit seemed to whisper, "Don't give up;" and so he began again his miserable walk. For nearly one hour did this little boy fight his terrible battle with selfishness, until at last he could stand it no longer. He came to mamma and said, in a pleasant voice:

"I will take the broken one; sister can have the

perfect one." Then, when papa and mamma had kissed him, and he had rushed into grandma's loving arms, what a load of unhappiness was lifted from his heart!  
—*Little Men and Women.*

## FREEZING THE FARM UP.

PEOPLE who shiver with cold do not always understand the importance and value of the frost. God who "scattereth the hoar frost like ashes," and before whose cold "who can stand?" (Psalm cxlvii. 16, 17), does all his work in wisdom; but many men do not fully appreciate how much a freezing of the ground does to set at liberty the plant-food locked up in almost all soils.

Water, in freezing, expands about one-eighth its bulk with tremendous force; and if confined in the strongest rock and frozen, will burst it asunder. The smallest particles of soil, which are in fact only minute bits of rock, as the microscope will show, if frozen while moist are broken still finer. This will go on all winter in every part of the field or garden reached by the frost; and as most soils contain more or less elements that all growing plants or crops need, a good freezing is equivalent to adding manures or fertilizers. Hence it is desirable to expose as much of the soil as possible to frost action, and the deeper the better, for the lower

soil has been less drawn upon, and is richer in plant-food. We know that in spring the ground "breaks up," and sometimes there are great holes made in the middle of the roads. This is because the water which has expanded in the frost of winter into ice, lifting and moving all the soil, now melts away, and allows the earth to break in pieces and drop down.

The cold wintry frosts not only kill weeds, and germs of disease, and make the air pure and healthy, but they also save poor farmers a deal of hard work, in spading, digging, plowing and making the soil ready for the seed.