

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## Bedtime.

Three little girls are weary—  
Weary of books and play;  
Sad is the world and dreary—  
Slowly the time slips away.  
Six little feet are aching,  
Bowed is each little head;  
Yet they are up and shaking,  
When there is mention of bed.

Bravely they laugh and chatter,  
Just for a minute or two,  
Then when they on their clatter,  
Silly comes quickly to woo.  
Slowly their eyes are closing,  
Down again drops each  
head—  
Three little maids are  
dozing,  
Though they're not  
ready for bed.

That is their method  
ever—  
Night after night they  
protest,  
Claiming they're sleepy  
never,  
Never in need of rest;  
Nodding and almost  
dreaming,  
Drowsily each little  
head,  
Still is forever scheming  
Merely to keep out of  
bed.

The opening of "The Merchant of Venice," "In scotch, I know not why I am so sad," does not immediately catch a boy's attention and arouse his interest as does, "There was heard the sharp report of a pistol," or the "Once upon a time," of the detective and love stories. However, when "The Merchant of Venice" is read and digested, the boy has learned, and with pleasure, too, the lesson of obedience, the justice of the laws of Venice, the typical Jewish character, besides having read an ideal romance.

By suggesting the story of the caskets

## CROSSING THE STEPPES.

In the southern portion of the Russian empire, extending from the River Pruth, without a break to the Volga and the Caspian Sea, stretch vast plains of sterile aspect and unbroken monotony, called the Steppes. Covering a very great area, they are so bare as to be called absolutely treeless; the only vegetation they support being a low, straggling shrub, of which we see a very good example in the left corner of the picture. For a great part of the year the Steppes present an unbroken expanse of

of extreme hunger, will not hesitate to attack a lonely traveller—where the proportion will probably be fifty to one. The picture is a typical scene of the Steppes; with the dull and threatening sky, the scanty vegetation, and the village in the background, while in the foreground a sleigh, with the peculiar mode of harnessing the horses, setting out, with a vigorous driver, for some far-distant village and possibly to meet his worst enemy. May he have a prosperous and safe journey.

## A GENEROUS HORSE.

The horse is generally rated as one of the most intelligent of animals, and a pretty incident that was witnessed by a number of persons yesterday shows that generosity also enters into his character.

Two fine-looking horses hitched to single buggies were hitched to the curb opposite the Chestnut Street entrance to the Merchants' Exchange. They were hitched several feet apart, but the hitching straps allowed them sufficient liberty of movement to get their heads together if they so desired. The owner of one of them had taken the opportunity of a prolonged stop to give the horse a feed of oats, which was placed on the edge of the sidewalk in a bag.

This horse was contentedly munching his oats when his attention was attracted by the actions of the other horse. The other horse was evidently very hungry. He eyed the plentiful supply of oats wistfully and neighed in an insinuating manner. The horse with the feed pricked up his ears politely and replied with a neigh, which must have been in horse language an invitation to the other fellow to help himself. Evidently he accepted it as such, for he moved along in the direction of the bag as far as his hitching strap would permit. But the strap was not long enough and his hungry mouth fell about a yard short.

The other horse noticed and seemed to appreciate this difficulty. Fortunately there was some lee-way to his strap. So he moved slowly along the curb, pushing the bag with his nose, until the other horse was able to reach it. Then, after a friendly nose-rub of salutation the two horses contentedly finished the oats together.—St. Louis Republic.

## THE SHIELD OF SALVATION.

"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation."—2 Sam. 22. 36.

This beautiful little text teaches us a very precious truth. It shows us that the salvation which the Lord Jesus came to bring is not only salvation at last—just escaping hell—but that it is salvation now, and salvation in everything.

Salvation does not only mean victory at last, but it is like a broad, shining shield, given to us in the midst of the battle, coming between us and the poisoned arrows and sharp sword-thrusts of the enemy. It is a shield not only to keep us from death, but to keep us from being hurt and wounded. It is the shield which the Captain has given us to use now, as well as the crown which he will give when the warfare is ended.

How are you to use this shield? What does it really mean for you? It means, that if you have come to the Lord Jesus to be saved, he does not say he will save you, but that you are saved—that he saves you now.

And this is how you are to use it: Believe it, and be sure of it, because you have his word for it; and then, when a temptation comes, tell the enemy that he has nothing to do with you, for you are saved; that you belong to Jesus, and not to him. Look up and say: "Jesus saves me!"

Will he fall for you? Did he ever let any find themselves deceived and mistaken who looked up in faith and confidence to him, trusting in his great salvation? Never! And never will you find this shield of his salvation fail to cover you completely. Satan himself cannot touch you when you are behind this shield. Lift it up when you see him coming—even ever so far off—and you will be safe.

## READING FOR BOYS.

BY A. F. CALDWELL.

A healthy literary taste is a growth. Such a taste not only grows by that on which it feeds, but it produces results of a similar kind. Feed a boy detective stories or silly love tales, and you give him a stimulant, agreeable for a time, but it is sure to leave a diseased intellect. A mind nourished with strong and vigorous food not only digests the same, and receives it into its life current, but it creates as well. Thus he has that which remains and ever affords material for the up-building of his intellectual organism.

On your boys demanding food, allow them to go into the pantry, and nine out of ten will select tarts and preserves, while one may take, possibly, that which is more substantial.

Send the boys haphazard to a well-assorted library, and nine-tenths of them will return with the discouraging remark: "There's nothing there worth reading."

Now is the time when a bit of wise counsel will turn the tide of the boy's literary taste into a fortune of future thought. Make a careful selection of interesting, as well as instructive volumes of poetry and prose. Among them there may be "Ivanhoe," "Evangeline," "The Merchant of Venice," "The Tale of Two Cities,"—in fact, one can select volume after volume, the only trouble being in knowing where to stop.

To the majority of boys it would be causing them to commit literary suicide to place even these books before them and say: "Read!"

Every boy is fascinated by watching certain chemical changes, but put the raw materials into his hands, without any directions, and an explosion undoubtedly results. Why? Because he knows neither the nature nor the combinations of the chemicals.

and, by relating, in a few words, the powerful "trial scene," any boy of average literary taste would be led by a natural curiosity to know the book himself. By supplying him with a short list of "test questions" on the subject matter, he will read the drama in the light of investigation and criticism.

Other books may be read in the same way, and in a remarkably short space of time the boy has found the "open sesame" to the best of thought, and he fully realizes that "books are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages."—Epworth Herald.

snow-covered and hard-frozen wastes—as dismal and desolate a piece of country as can be found anywhere in Europe. These conditions naturally render travelling very difficult. It is all done in sleighs, drawn by three, and sometimes more, horses, and the distances covered in a single day are often incredible.

But distance and cold are by no means the traveller's worst enemies. Good warm furs and strong, swift horses render these comparatively harmless. The greatest danger takes the unwelcome form of large, roving packs of hungry wolves, which, though afraid to approach a settlement unless under the influence



CROSSING THE STEPPES, RUSSIA.