

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. VI.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 30, 1886.

No. 22.

## VENDOME COLUMN, PARIS.

The Vendome Column in Paris is an imitation of Trajan's column at Rome, 142 feet high and 13 feet in diameter. It was erected by order of Napoleon I. in 1806-10 to commemorate his victories over the Russians and Austrians in 1805. It was thrown down by the communists in 1871, but a bed of manure was prepared to receive it, so that, though broken, it was not utterly shattered. It was skillfully re-erected in 1875. It is constructed of masonry covered with plates of bronze, forming a spiral band of 300 yards, on which are represented in high relief the military career of Napoleon. The figures are about three feet high. The metal was obtained by melting down 1 200 Russian and Austrian cannon. A figure of Napoleon crowned the column. In 1879 the present writer climbed the monument to the gallery shown at the top.

## THE GREAT PLAGUE OF LONDON.

In 1665, immediately after the victory of the English over the Dutch, and before any rejoicing had begun, the capital was visited by the plague. During the winter a few cases had appeared in the suburbs, slowly increasing as the weather advanced, until, in the latter part of May, the disease broke forth from the filth and squalor of St. Giles, full upon the city and Westminster. On July 1, regulations were adopted, such as dividing the city into districts, with officers for each; and in each house where the disease was, there was marked upon the door a red cross, having over it the words: "Lord, have mercy upon us!"

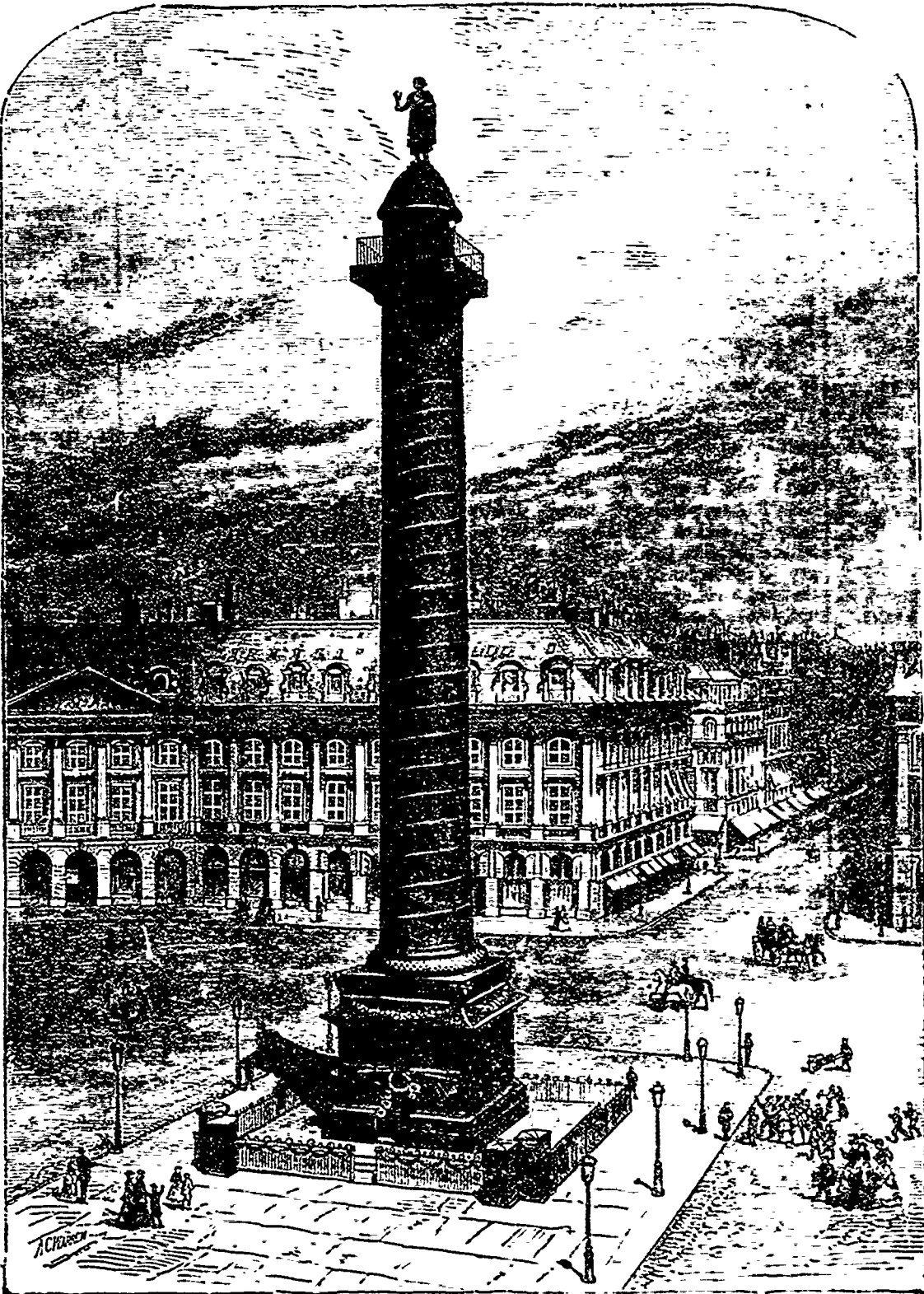
Fast carts went round in the night, the tinkling of a bell announcing their coming, and a voice crying, "Bring

out your dead!" By the light of a flaming link, or torch, the uncoffined dead were brought forth and put into the cart, and thence carried to the nearest church-yard, and thrown into

common pits. The men who buried the dead were of the lowest class, and barded in vice and brutality, and they committed deeds too horrible to tell. The nurses, also, having the

tent of the population.

The plague was brought from Holland into England, and was followed, the next year, by an awful fire, which laid waste two-thirds of the city.



VENDOME COLUMN, PARIS.

poor victims entirely at their mercy, often murdered those who might have recovered, in order to rob them.

So dreadful was the time that those who were not stricken seemed to be unhinged in mind, some of them going into the wildest riot, others giving themselves up to religious devotion.

At times, the silence which prevailed over the doomed city was broken by the unhallowed cries of revelers in brothel and tavern. Superstition sprang up, and many thought they saw a flaming sword in the sky, suspended over the city. There were assemblies in church-yards, where they imagined they beheld the ghosts of those who had been buried. Fanatics, in the characters of prophets, walked the streets, one with a pan of burning coals on his head, pronouncing woes on the city. Another proclaimed aloud, "Yet forty days, and London shall be destroyed." A third might be heard, day and night, crying in sepulchral tones, "O, the great and dreadful God!"

July and August proved very hot, and though September was less so, the deaths increased. Large fires were burned in the streets. On the third night, being September 8, a heavy rain fell and put out the fires, and the deaths then diminished, but the next week the disease was worse than ever, and many despaired. The equinoctial gales at length brought healing. By December, the deaths in London had exceeded one hundred thousand; the disease had spread over the rest of the kingdom, and its ravages in places were in proportion to the ex-