

Telling the Bees.

BY LUIGNE FIELD.

Out of the house where the slumberer lay
Grandfather came one summer day,
And under the pleasant or hard trees
He spoke thus to the murmuring bees:
"The lover I am that kissed her feet
And the pony beds where she used to play
Have honey store, but none so sweet
As ere our little one went away.
O bees, sing soft, and bees, sing low,
For she is gone who loved you so."

A wonder fell on the listening bees
Under those pleasant or hard trees.
And in their toil that summer day
Ever their murmuring seemed to say:
"Child, O child, the grass is cool
And the posies are waking to hear the
song
Of the bird that swings by the shaded pool,
Waiting for one that tarrieth long."
"Twas so they called to the little one then,
As if to call her back again.

O, gentle bees, I have come to say
That grandfather is asleep to day.
And we know by the smile on grandfather's
face
He has found his dear one's lying place,
So bees sing soft, and bees sing low,
As over the honey fields you sweep!
To the trees above and the flowers below
Sing of grandfather fast asleep.
And over beneath these orchard trees
Find cheer and shelter, gentle bees.

OUR PERIODICALS:

PER YEAR POSTAGE FREE.

The best, the cheapest, the most entertaining, the
most popular.

Christian Guardian, weekly	\$2 00
Methodist Magazine, 101 pp., monthly, illustrated	2 00
Methodist Magazine and Guardian together	3 50
Magazine, Guardian and Onward together	4 00
The Wesleyan Half-yearly, weekly	1 50
Canada's Standard, 32 pp., 30c., monthly	0 00
Onward, 8 pp., 4c., weekly, under 6 copies	0 00
5 copies and over	0 50
Pleasant Hours, 4 pp., 4c., weekly, single copies	0 20
Less than 6 copies	0 25
Over 6 copies	0 24
bumbeam fortnightly, less than 10 copies	0 16
10 copies and upwards	0 12
Happy Land, 4 pp., less than 10 copies	0 15
10 copies and upwards	0 12
Home Leaf, monthly, 100 copies per month	5 00
Quarterly Heaven Service. By the year, 24c. a dozen; \$1 per 100 per quarter, 60c. a dozen; 50c per 100.	

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, S. F. HERRIS,
3 Henry Street, Western Book Room,
Montreal, Halifax, N.S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

REV. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor

TORONTO, JUNE 4, 1892.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.

THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF EGYPT.

I WANT to write for the boys and girls of Canada a short account of the boys and girls of Egypt. I write this letter on board the Nile steamer, *Cleopatra*. We have just left the town of Assuan, about eight hundred miles up the Nile, a place of over ten thousand inhabitants. It is the chief town in Nubia, a very interesting and picturesque place. Here the great cataract of the Nile occurs. Here come long caravans of camels from Dufa and Khartoum, bringing dates, doura, a sort of grain, gum arabic, elephants' tusks and other products of the regions of the Upper Nile.

I have been greatly pleased with the boys and girls who swim all through the eight hundred miles of the Nile Valley, and especially with those of Assuan. They are the handsomest, brightest and cleverest children I ever saw. Most of them learn in the mission schools and in the Arab school, both Arabic and English and also some French. I was in two large schools to-day, one of eighty Arab children, the other a mission school of about forty, chiefly Copts or native Christians. The boys, handsome, yellow skinned lads, with large lustrous eyes, have very nice manners.

They all rose when I went in and read very nicely in English from a primer and from the Bible. I have since visited another mission school at Lefou, under the very shadow of the most perfect pagan temple of ancient Egypt, a tremendous pile, which was one hundred and twenty-five years in construction. Yet this humble mission school is doing more for the uplifting of the people than all the temples of the land ever did. The children sang very prettily in English and Arabic. "I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest," also, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star."

The native children are very fond of asking "backsheesh" (in plain words, of begging), but they try to do something for one to earn it, offering things for sale, gathering flowers, keeping off the flies, which are a great nuisance, with a long horse-hair whisk and the like. We were especially interested in a number of Berberese Arab boys and girls. They were orphan children whose parents were killed by the Mahdists during the late Soudan war. The Government has distributed them among the Nile villages. They are generally very black, but very beautiful, with handsome features as any children I ever saw, with large dark eyes, beautiful pearly teeth, a very winning smile, nothing of the Negro type about them. The girls wore their hair plaited in a great number of braids. The boys wore theirs in curls about their necks. They wear a single long piece of cotton or muslin draped round and round the body very gracefully, leaving the arms bare. One boy, of fifteen, was tall, slim, handsome as a girl, and walked with the grace of a young fawn. They have very nice manners and say very prettily, "Good morning, gentleman, how are you? Thank you very much." This they repeat over and over whether one gives them anything or not. I wish I could have brought that boy to Canada to educate him to become perhaps a missionary to his own people.

We all fell in love with one dear little nearly naked black baby of about three years old, as lovely as a cherub, with such pretty eyes and smile.

Yesterday we all rode five miles on donkeys to the famous temple of Isis at Philae, the most beautiful in Egypt. It is one of the newest of the temples, being only a little over two thousand years old, while many of them are twice that age, as was one we visited this morning. The steamboat people sent a lunch over on catals for the whole ship's company, and after exploring the ruins we all sat down in a great court surrounded by majestic columns, with the mild smiling faces of Isis and Hathor looking down upon us, as they had looked down upon successive generations for over twenty centuries. In the background among the columns sat groups of Arab and Coptic children and Arab or Nubian guides, dressed in white or yellow or blue gowns, with large white turbans, or scarlet fezes, and eagerly waiting the close of the repast.

One bright-eyed Arab boy, about fourteen, Achmet by name, took special charge of me. I did not need his help, but he would give it, brushing off the dust from my clothes, whisking away the flies, taking me by the arm and helping over rough places and fallen stones of the ruins. I found it useless to resist, and gave myself up a prisoner to his care. He knew all the best points about the temple and was really quite useful, especially in keeping the other would-be guides away, and was made lappy by a few cents. He was very proud of a paper which he showed containing a number of testimonials in French and English, given him by tourists. Some of them made fun of his rather comical features. If he had a chance he would make a very clever man.

Another set of boys that appealed very much to my sympathies was the donkey boys. We all rode out about five miles and back, to and from Philae, by donkey—as we go everywhere in this country—and these boys ran behind the donkeys all the way, although much of the time the little animals went full gallop. The boys recommend their donkeys very highly as "Mine very good donkey. Name Prince of Wales," "name Yankee Doodle," "name Telegraph," or, as one said, "name Grand Old Man." One of these boys complained of a pain in his chest and asked me to prescribe

for him. I had to explain that I was not that sort of a doctor.

We all went yesterday to see the great cataract of the Nile. We went by boat as far as we could and climbed a hill above the rushing and turbulent river. A number of men and boys leaped into the stream and swam the rapids, dancing like black corks on its surface, as they swept by. Others rode on palm logs about six feet long, waving their hands and shouting as they were carried down the rapids. Then they scrambled out and came about us begging in their dripping and scanty garments.

At every village through which we passed the children rushed after us offering beads, toys, bracelets, and clamouring "Howay, backsheesh," i. e., "alms, traveller," till we got beyond their reach. I supplied myself well with a lot of small coins, less than half a cent, for the very little ones. Even babies scarce able to speak stretch out their little hands for backsheesh.

I was glad to find that so much was being done for the education of those interesting boys and girls. I visited in Cairo a large school—over forty years old—founded by Miss Whateley, daughter of the famous Archbishop Whateley. She died only four months ago. In every considerable town in Egypt is a mission school of the American Presbyterian Church, which is doing noble service in giving a religious education to these boys and girls. Many of the boys become teachers and preachers, and others enter the civil service of Egypt, the railway, post-office and other departments.

Our Canadian boys and girls cannot be thankful enough that though they live in so new a country they have so much greater advantages than the children of this oldest country on the face of the earth.

I shall have the pleasure of writing other letters in this paper, in *Onward*, and especially in the *Methodist Magazine*, about these interesting people. In the latter periodical I shall publish a number of illustrated articles which will, I think, prove instructive to the young people of Canada who may favour them with a reading. Many schools are ordering copies of that magazine containing these sketches of travel in Bible lands for circulation instead of library books.

MYSTERIOUS PERSIAN WELLS.

In the neighborhood of Shiraz, on a hill an hour's ride to the northeast, the traveller comes upon some very, very ancient wells. Near the top of this steep hill, with no trace of masonry to mark the site of fort or palace, there yawns an opening about eight yards long by six yards wide, which is the mouth of a well going straight down into the bowels of the mountain. The shaft is cut in the rock. The sides are as perpendicular as the plumb line could make them; and the depth, as ascertained by the time of a falling stone, must be something under four hundred feet, the bottom at present being dry. Within a distance of fifty yards, on the same hill, are two other smaller wells; and it is said that there is an underground communication among the three. This theory finds support in the fact that when a pistol is fired at the mouth of one of these wells, to disturb the pigeons that flock thither at noon, the noise of their wings, at first very loud, gets gradually fainter, as though the birds were escaping through some lateral galleries. They certainly betake themselves in some manner away from the perpendicular shaft, without coming out of the upper mouth, though where they go does not appear.

The labour expended on the boring of these wells must have been enormous, and it is a puzzle whether they were indeed wells, or intended as passages for the sudden exit of troops from some fortress built on the hill to hold the plain in awe. In the latter case, some sort of spiral staircase would necessarily have been attached to the walls of the shaft, of which, at the present day, no trace remains.

No traveller has yet visited Shiraz who was sufficiently enterprising to go down the four hundred feet of perpendicular side with rope or ladder. Curious relics of by-gone times might certainly be found at the bottom; but without a proper windlass and better ropes than those now made in Persia, the risk of a broken neck would cool the

ardour of the most venturesome antiquary, and so up to the present the pigeons alone enjoy the sight of the secret treasures which possibly lie at the bottom of these mysterious and most astonishing shafts.

EFFIE'S INVITATION.

BY ANNIE S. TILTON.

SHE was a bright-eyed, rosy cheeked school-girl, and as the town's people saw her sauntering home from school with one and another friend, they would nod smilingly towards her, and say to each other, "There goes a pleasant little girl. Good scholar, too, and she does have about the best time, in a quiet way, when school is out."

But even these kindly disposed people didn't give Effie credit for some serious thoughts that crowded upon her as she considered her responsibilities in life. Only a few months before she had given the life to her Saviour, won by his great and marvellous love for her, and, as always happens, she wanted all her friends and schoolmates to participate in that love. She had found a new pleasure in the weekly prayer meeting of the school, although she had always been a regular attendant before her conversion; but she was one of the workers, and these heads were full of new plans for winning others to Christ. Only last Thursday at the Christian boys and girls had pledged themselves to ask, at least, one schoolmate, who did not usually attend the meetings, to come the following week, and to secure their attendance if possible; and now the week was almost gone and still Effie hadn't given her invitation. Don't think the child meant to shirk! Oh, no! but there were so few of her friends whom she had not previously invited, and they occasionally attended the meeting. So this had been a great subject for Effie's prayers, and as yet she had received no answer. One or two positively refused, and others carelessly answered, "Perhaps."

She was thinking of this on Thursday afternoon as she hastened up the street to school, and realized that she had only one more recess for her effort, when she was suddenly joined by a tall youth who just then emerged from one of the yards fronting the street. They had hardly exchanged friendly greetings, when there came a great choking in Effie's throat, and her heart thumped as loud as the school-house bell, for she knew that here was her opportunity. Like a lightning flash all the old excuses went through her mind: "What will he think? I know he won't go; I shall only get laughed at," and so on indefinitely, as all the while they were gaily chatting and rapidly nearing the school house. Almost before she knew it she said, as they turned in at the gate,—

"Won't you stop to our prayer-meeting to-night? They are very interesting, and Charlie B. leads this time."

A wondering look passed over his face, but he answered in quite a new and gentle tone, "I don't know. I can as well as not. Do you stay?"

"Oh, yes, always," was the prompt response, as they hastened to their respective desks.

Outwardly Effie was calm and studious, and attentive all that afternoon, but there was a subdued inward excitement, which was only partially quieted by the frequent petitions which arose from her inmost heart; and as the closing bell was rung, and twenty or more of the scholars repaired to their usual place of meeting, she didn't even dare to raise her eyes to see if Bert C. were coming.

Yes, he did come; and that was only the beginning. He came again and again, and in a few months he had asked his schoolmates to pray for him, and soon joined the church he had always attended.

Can anything ever sound sweeter to Effie's ears than Bert's words one afternoon, after they had been to the meeting and were quietly talking it over on their way home? As they parted, he suddenly grasped her hand and said,—

"How can I thank you? You did it!" and was gone.

Effie is not the only gay and happy school-girl who looks up and thus lifts up her companions. —*Zion's Herald*.