

### How Scotland Was Saved.

THE Danes once attempted fair Scotland's destruction,  
They sought to dethrone her and spoil her of power.  
Their scheme proved but futile, though wise in construction,  
Their warriors were conquered and foiled by a flower.

Their plan was to fall on a garrison sleeping,  
And capture it ere it could flee from the foe;  
At night they would come—all so stealthily creeping,  
And Scotland's stout sleepers should waken to woe.

They were nearing the spot, each with death-dealing missile,  
But cunning and caution alike were in vain;  
A barefooted soldier stepped on a great thistle,  
The hurt made him utter a sharp cry of pain.

Thus warning was given; each woke from his slumbers,  
And sprung to his arms, at the luckless Dane's call,  
And soon the invaders fell back, weak in numbers;  
The sharp, prickly thistle had conquered them all.

Thus the thistle saved Scotland. Though humble, 'tis ever  
Her joy and her pride, and the emblem of power.  
In grateful remembrance she'll wear it forever  
Engraved on her shield as the national flower.

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, AUGUST 24, 1895.

### LEONIDAS AND THE THREE HUNDRED SPARTANS.

MANY centuries ago there was a city called Sparta, or Lacedæmon, the capital of Laconia, in ancient Greece. Xerxes, the renowned Persian conqueror, desired to take possession of Greece, and for this purpose advanced with an immense army against the Spartans, who were the most determined of all the Greeks to defend their country from the invader. The men of Sparta were very brave, and were trained to warfare from their boyhood. Still they were far too few to meet the Persian host in the open field. So they resolved to await the approach of Xerxes' troops in a pass of the mountains through which they must come, called the Pass of Thermopylæ. Here a small body of soldiers could make a stand against a much larger force.

At first Leonidas, who commanded the Spartans, had the support of five thousand Greeks besides his own men. But gradually these withdrew, and the Persians having, through the treachery of a Greek, obtained an entrance at the other end of the pass, Leonidas found himself so hem-

med in that there was no possibility of defending his position. Still he did not think of yielding, and his Spartans, who were just three hundred in all, were resolved, like their king, upon resistance to the last. This handful were able, with their long spears, spreading shields, and close ranks, to repulse many times the attacks of their enemies. But though they fought with the greatest valour and determination, the vastly superior numbers of the Persians at last prevailed. Leonidas himself was slain, and the weary little band, now much reduced by the arrows of the foe, were overwhelmed, and all who were left put to death. Yet Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans will never be forgotten for their heroic though vain attempt to defend their native land at the Pass of Thermopylæ.

Now fighting is a horrid and hateful thing, whether there be only two men who are trying to hurt each other, or thousands of men in a field of battle. Even when it is waged in self-defence it is most lamentable. It becomes all God's people to work and pray for the blessed peace of Messiah's reign, when "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Yet there is a warfare in which Christians must take part. They do not war "against flesh and blood," nor with weapons which can wound the body. They are to fight against evil both outside of them and in their own hearts. For the conflict we are provided with a suit of armour called the armour of light, or of righteousness, or the panoply—that is, "the whole armour of God." In the battle of life our "shield," our best defence, is faith. Believe with all your heart in the Lord Jesus, and sin cannot overcome you. And by using "the sword of the Spirit," by taking counsel of God and by obeying his will, you shall certainly be able to withstand and to beat back the enemies of your soul.

Christians are often in great danger, not only of life, like missionaries and other servants of God among wild men and in plague-stricken places, but in danger from temptations which may seem as many and strong as the host of Xerxes, and they as unequal to their adversaries as the three hundred Spartans. But Christ their King is always with his people. Unlike Leonidas, he cannot be slain, and makes his "good soldiers" "more than conquerors." You too may be "good soldiers of Jesus Christ;" and remember that the fight of faith is far nobler and more glorious than the battle of Thermopylæ.

### STANLEY'S DWARFS.

THE most interesting people that Stanley met in Africa were the negro dwarfs who dwell in the deep forests. Here are two extracts from his new book:

"Eighteen days afterward, when the expedition had crossed the river and had halted at Avatiko, the first full-grown pigmy man was brought into camp and measured. He was four feet high and twenty-five and a half inches around the chest, his colour being coppery and the hair over his body being almost furry and nearly half an inch in length."

"On examining the boxes of ammunition before stacking them for the night, it was found that Corporal Dayn Mohammed had not brought his load in, and we ascertained that he had laid it at the base of a big tree near the path. Four headmen were at once ordered to return with the Soudanese corporal to recover the box. Arriving near the spot, they saw quite a tribe of pigmies, men, women, and children, gathered around two pigmy warriors who were trying to test the weight of the box by the rope handles at each end. Our headmen, curious to see what they would do with the box lay hidden closely, for the eyes of the little people are exceedingly sharp. Every member of the tribe seemed to have some device to suggest; and the little boys hopped about on one leg, spanking their hips in irrepressible delight at the find; and the tiny women, carrying their tinier babies at their backs, vociferated the traditional wise woman's counsel. Then a doughty man cut a light pole and laid it through the handle; and all the small people cheered shrilly with joy at the genius displayed by them in inventing a method for heaving along the

weighty case of Remington ammunition. The Hercules and the Milo of the tribe put forth their utmost strength and raised the box up level with their shoulders, and staggered away into the bush. But just then a harmless shot was fired, and the big men rushed forward with loud shouts, and then began a chase; and one overfat young fellow of about seventeen was captured and brought to our camp as a prize."

### "THE DOOR IS OPEN."

"WHY do you go out that way, when this is the nearer way to the office?" asked Harry's mother as her boy was going out not by the usual way. "Oh, this door is open," was Harry's careless reply. How significant often is the simple fact of an open door. Paul spoke of "a great door and effectual is opened" to him at Ephesus for doing a grand work in preaching the Gospel. To the church at Philadelphia, addressed in one of the letters to the "seven churches," Jesus said, "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." This meant a door of opportunity for great usefulness. Such doors will be constantly found if we look for them. Every one who wishes to do good work for Christ will find the door opening for him.

But there are also other doors that are open every day and every night, inviting the feet of the young and unwary to the ways of death. These doors are, alas! very many; and there are many influences to carry the young within. It is necessary to be ever watchful to guard against them; for they are the open ways to death—the gates whose steps take hold on hell.

### KEEP RIGHT WITH GOD.

A CHILD of God should not leave his bedroom in the morning without being on good terms with his God. We should not dare to go into the world and feel, "I am out of harmony with my Lord. All is not right between God and my soul." In domestic life we are wise if we square matters before we separate for the day; let us part with a kiss. This method of unbroken fellowship should be carefully maintained toward God. Be at perfect rest with him. "Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace, for thereby good shall come unto thee." If you cannot get rest with God, perhaps some fault of character may prevent you enjoying that perfect rest. See where that flaw is. Are you living in any sin! If so, the sun may have risen, but there is a bandage over your eyes; you will still be in the dark. Get rid of that which blinds you. Or are you trusting yourself as well as trusting in Christ? Are you relying on your experience? Then I do not wonder if you miss the rest of faith. Get rid of all that spoils the simplicity of your faith. Come to the Lord and rest in him; tell out your grief to Jesus, and he will breathe on you, and say, "Peace be unto you."—*Our Young Folks.*

### A FABLE.

"I'll master it," said the axe; and his blows fell heavily on the iron. But every blow made his edge more blunt, till he ceased to strike.

"Leave it to me," said the saw; and with his relentless teeth he worked backward and forward on its surface till they were all worn down or broken, then he fell aside.

"Ha! ha!" said the hammer, "I knew you wouldn't succeed; I'll show you the way." But at his first fierce stroke off flew his head, and the iron remained as before.

"Shall I try?" asked the soft, small flame. But they all despised the flame; but he curled gently around the iron and embraced it, and never left it till it melted under his irresistible influence.

There are hearts hard enough to resist the force of wrath, the malice of persecution, and the fury of pride, so as to make their acts recoil on their adversaries; but there is a power stronger than any of these; and hard indeed is that heart that can resist love.

### New Every Morning.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

EVERY day is a fresh beginning,  
Every morn is the world made new,  
You who are weary of sorrow and sinning,  
Here is a beautiful hope for you—  
A hope for me and a hope for you.

All the past things are past and over;  
The tasks are done and the tears are shed,  
Yesterday's errors let yesterday cover;  
Yesterday's wounds, which smarted and bled,  
Are healed with the healing which night has shed.

Yesterday now is part of forever,  
Bound up in a sheaf which God holds tight,  
With glad days, and sad days, and bad days  
which never  
Shall visit us more with their bloom and their blight,  
Their fulness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Let them go, since we cannot re-live them,  
Cannot undo and cannot atone;  
God in his mercy receive, forgive them!  
Only the new days are our own;  
To-day is ours, and to-day alone.

Here are the skies all burnished brightly,  
Here is the spent earth all re-born,  
Here are the tired limbs springing lightly  
To face the sun and share with the morn  
In the chrism of dew and the cool of dawn.

Every day is a fresh beginning;  
Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,  
And, spite of old sorrow and older sinning,  
And puzzles forecasted and possible pain,  
Take heart with the day, and begin again.



Epworth League.

JUNIOR LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

September 1, 1895.

ASKING AND RECEIVING.—1 John 5. 14, 15.

Our lesson is a grand illustration of prayer, that is believing prayer, for without faith he exercised prayer is useless. We must believe that God hears and answers prayer. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The word "confidence" here means faith. Persons who pray aright, feel assured that they will not pray in vain. The word "ask" is a beautiful description of prayer. The Saviour himself explains prayer by the well-known words "asking," "knocking," "seeking." Of course, it must be understood that in praying or making requests to God for any special favour, that we pray in submission to the Divine will.

We are like children asking favours of our parents. They know best what is suitable for children. Our heavenly Father knows best what is suitable for us. You will observe that while He has left upon record many great, exceeding precious promises, he has nowhere promised that he will give us all that we want. We might "want" certain things which would be exceedingly injurious to us. The promise is he will "supply all our need." There is a great difference between need and want. Need means necessity, want may signify that which merely relates to enjoyment.

The passage containing to-day's lesson is a beautiful description of the Christian life, which is emphatically a life of faith. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I henceforth live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2. 20.)

Never imagine that if we do not receive such answers to our requests as we desire, that God has not heard our prayers. He may be trying our faith, that is testing our confidence. If we love him as we should we will serve him continually both in prosperity and in adversity, knowing that he is too wise to err and too good to be unkind. Seek to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

SOMETHING around which to twine  
God gives every little vine;  
Some little nook or sunny bower  
God gives every little flower;  
Some green or mossy sward  
God gives every little bird;  
Night and day, at home, abroad,  
Little ones are safe with God.