

Indian Cradle Song.

Swing thee low in thy cradle soft,
Deep in the dusky wood;
Swing thee low and swing aloft—
Sleep as a papoose should;
For safe in your little birchen nest
Quiet will come, and peace and rest,
If the little papoose is good.

The coyote howls on the prairie cold,
And the owlet hoots in the tree;
And the big moon shines on the little child
As it slumbers peacefully;
So swing thee high in thy little nest,
And swing thee low and take the rest
That the night wind brings to thee

The father lies on the fragrant ground,
Dreaming of hunt and flight,
And the pine leaves rustle with mourn-
ful sound
All through the solemn night;
But the little papoose in his birchen nest
Is swinging low as he takes his rest,
Till the sun brings the morning light.
—Detroit Free Press.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 11, 1897.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

DECEMBER 19, 1897.

Hark, what mean those holy voices.
—Methodist Hymn-Book, 143. Luke 2: 14.

MEMORABLE SEASON.

Persons who are abroad in the night season, when the stars are shining, have frequent opportunities to behold beautiful sights, but these shepherds never saw such a sight before as that which they now behold. The glory of the Lord shone around them, far more brilliant than the light of the sun, when shining in a meridian splendour. The light of the sun dazzles the beholder, so that we can hardly understand how the shepherds would be overpowered.

THE HYMN

The poet in this beautiful hymn has caught the spirit of the inspired record, and has beautifully set forth all the incidents thereof in most appropriate language. The hymn is worthy of being committed to memory. Its sentiments will always afford a profitable theme for meditation.

THE ANGELS' WORDS.

Verse 10 The shepherds would be consoled when they heard the sweet words which the angels spoke "Fear not." Do not be afraid. We have joyful tidings to bring to your ears. Suppose you are full of fear, and you hear some cheerful voice speaking, does not all your fear immediately leave you. No doubt it was so here.

THE TIDINGS.

Verse 10. Tidings of great joy. What pleases most. Some are most pleased with tidings of wealth. See how many have gone to Alaska and the Klondike, because they have heard of the wonderful treasures of gold that are there to be secured. And with a view to obtain a portion, they have left their

homes, and will endure the most fearful sufferings, both in travelling and perhaps from the want of suitable food. But the tidings which the angels brought was more precious than gold, which perisheth.

A SAVIOUR.

The Jews were now an enslaved people, and to be told of a Saviour they would suppose that meant an emancipator, who would soon liberate them from bondage. But the Saviour now announced was not for the Jews alone, but for all mankind. Christ came the world to save.

THE ANTHEM.

Verse 14. No sooner were the tidings made known than there was a multitude of the heavenly host who burst into the loud and rapturous song of "Glory to God in the highest," etc. Christ's coming is twofold. It brings glory to God and peace to mankind. Thus unites heaven and earth, and joins angels and men into one grand, holy, happy association.

CONFIRMATION.

Verse 15. After the first display of majestic power and glory the shepherds were left alone, and the conceived the idea of going to Bethlehem to see the wondrous things of which they had now heard, and away they went, and they found exactly those things of which they had heard. There was the child Jesus and Joseph and Mary.

APPLICATION.

We rejoice at this season, but why do we do so? Are we glad that Christmas has come again, but should we not more especially rejoice because of what Christmas is associated with? Is Christ your Saviour?

DREAMS.

There are dreams and dreams. There are dreams that come of laziness, idleness, selfishness and overfeeding; gross nightmares fit for swine; dreams coming of self-indulgence and worldliness, poor grovelling things; a man's mind is not much better for them. There are dreams that are born of a backboneless sentimentality, of sweet mock chivalry, that loves to represent itself in pretty pictures; not much good comes out of them. But there are other dreams that come out of a man's wideawake activity; dreams that are the vapour rising from a fervent spirit, from the cooling of the machinery. They work out the character that God is weaving in that lad or in that young girl. These dreams are prophetic, they have something of heaven in them; they are something higher than the common; from God they come; they are the threads and fibres by which he would lead us on to do great deeds on earth, and at last receive us as faithful and good servants of our Master. I do believe in the dreams of youth, that come in at that window which is open heavenward to every young soul, until the dust and dirt of youth cloud it over; the dreams of romance that stupid old people try to crush and drive out, and that the world puts its heel upon; those dreams of friendship and honour, of truth and purity, to be chosen rather than worldly gain; those dreams of love, generous and tender, that shall make two lives knit together into one of exceptional tenderness and goodness. There is the breath of heaven here; these are the golden glows in the mists of life's morning that come from God, and are the guarantees of a splendid sunset on earth, and beyond, a brighter dawn in heaven.

Would to God that all of us when we are old men and women, may be able to think without shame and remorse about the dreams of our youth; that the woman has been true to her dreams, and has fulfilled the sweet, unselfish ideals of her girlhood, and been a noble, loving wife and mother; that the lad has come through this world at least comparatively unspotted, with a heart fresh and tender, not eaten by selfishness and greed, with a clean conscience, with the benediction in his old age of having made other men happy and good. Oh! the worst enemies of your dying bed that will come to mock you, will be the dreams of your youth, or your boyhood and girlhood, should they be unfulfilled! But if you can only in part realize them in your life they will be angels that will come to comfort you.

TAKE 'EM, JACK.

The following incident occurred on one of our busy streets during the heated term, and is told by The Temple Magazine as an illustration of the fact that princely generosity is not confined to those who give by the millions:
"It was a fatiguingly hot day, and only those whose business was urgent were found upon the scorching streets.

Presently a little newsboy appeared in sight. He was not alert and bustling as is the ideal newsboy, on the contrary, he moved along as if each step he took was painful to him. Meeting an acquaintance, he stopped to exchange greetings under the friendly shade of an awning.

"What's the matter, Jack? You get along 'bout as fast as a snail."

"So would you, I guess, Tim Ragan, if your feet were full of blisters walking on the hot sidewalk. Every time I put my foot down it's like to set me a-cryin'," the other answered.

"Tim looked down at the bare feet in question and glanced at his own, encased in a pair of shoes that had certainly seen duty, but which still afforded protection from the heat of the dazzling pavements. Quick as a flash he dropped down on a step, and the next moment was holding out his shoes to Jack.

"Here, you can wear them till tomorrow. My feet ain't blistered. Take 'em, Jack, it's all right." And away he went crying, "Three o'clock edition of The Post" at the top of his voice, seemingly unconscious that he had just performed a praiseworthy deed."

"I CAN, I WILL."

A professor of mathematics in one of our largest colleges, whose reputation as a mathematician is very high, began his career under the inspiration of "I can and I will." A writer in an exchange tells the story:

"I knew a boy who was preparing to enter the junior class of the New York University. He was studying trigonometry, and I gave him three examples for his next lesson. The following day he came into my room to demonstrate his problems. Two of them he understood, but the third—a very difficult one—he had not performed. I said to him, 'Shall I help you?'"

"No, sir; I can and will do it if you give me time."

"I said, 'I will give you all the time you wish.'"

"The next day he came into my room to recite another lesson in the same study."

"Well, Simon, have you worked that example?"

"No, sir," he answered; "but I will do it if you will give me a little more time."

"I always like those boys who are determined to do their own work, for they make our best scholars and men, too."

"The third morning you should have seen Simon enter my room. I knew he had it, for his whole face told the story of his success."

"Yes, he had it, notwithstanding it had cost him many hours of hard work. Not only had he solved the problem, but what was of much greater importance, he had begun to develop mathematical power."

A WISE BIRD.

Many years ago, when our navy had a station on the African Coast, the natives were in the habit of bringing off parrots for sale. They were very pretty birds, of a soft gray colour, enlivened by touches of red, and their price was a bit of tobacco, a piece of soap, or half a dozen brass rings—any trifle, in fact. The sailors bought a lot of them and taught them nautical terms.

On morning inspections, while the men were at the guns, the parrots in their cages were on the gun-deck. The captain had a habit of clearing his throat before he gave an order, "Ahem! Starboard, fire!—Port, fire!"

Before he could fairly deliver it, the parrot would call out:

"Ahem! Starboard, fire!—Port, fire!"

And so it went on with other orders; the birds took them up instantly, to the great amusement of the captain, officers and men.

I was one day performing some duty on deck, when one of the parrots lighted on my hand. Intent on my affairs I threw it off more roughly than I was aware, and it fell rather heavily on the deck. The owner picked it up and caressed it, saying, "The master doesn't like parrots, does he?" After that the bird always called me "master" whenever he saw me.

We brought the ship into Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on our return home. Not long after I was walking down Tremont Street, Boston, at an hour when it was filled with people, and heard a cry, "Master! Master!" and turning in the direction of the voice I found myself opposite a bird-shop, in the doorway of which hung an African parrot. I went over and asked the proprietor where he found it. He told me he had bought it about three months before of a sailor just returned from the coast of Africa.

By this I recognized my old acquaintance and stopped some time, going over the "talkee-talkie" it had been familiar with on board ship, and apparently making it very happy.

The bird had known me from the thousands passing the door.

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

BY REV. GEO. BOND.

I had been told that one could not travel in Egypt or Palestine and drink only water, that it would be necessary to take spirits of some sort, or wine, to qualify water. I drank the water freely, as it was furnished to us at meals, and I never touched one drop of spirits or wine, and I never suffered to the smallest extent from dysentery or any of those ills which it was threatened would overtake one who drank the water unqualified. I had the most perfect health, strength and spirits amid all the fatigue and excitement, amid all the heat and unrest of our journeyings. And, further, we were a large party; some were accustomed to stimulants and, of course, took them with them; some were habitual abstainers, but thought it necessary to use the spirits and wine, according to the notion I have referred to; two or three of us determined not only that we would not use them, but that we would not take any with us even for medicine. Some of those who used them suffered from dysentery; some admitted at the close that they believed they would have been better without them, and those of us who did not use them at all, had perfect health all the way through. My experience is, therefore, this, that a man may make an Eastern tour on total abstinence principles, not only with impunity, but with very great advantage, so far as health is concerned.

DECISION.

In a recent address to young men, Mr. Spurgeon said:

"Let there be no half-heartedness about your religion. Avoid it. Do not be like church mice that come out once a week and nibble a service book, or like rats who come out when nobody is looking, and run in so fast that no one can see so much as their tails. There is nothing in Christianity to be ashamed of. Do not trouble Christ at all if you cannot take up your cross and follow him. There are those who say, 'I don't believe in denominational religion.' Well, I do not want to decide the question for you—you must do that for yourself; but join some church, and whatever branch you join stick to it, work for it with all your heart. You know the story of the little lad who was asked, 'Is your father a Christian?' He said, 'Yes, but he has not been working at it much lately.' Do you know the fate of salt that has lost its flavour? It will not do for the land; no, nor is it even fit for the dunghill. Why, men must cast it out, and what then will God do with it? Decision is demanded of us by our Lord. Does Jesus Christ deserve lukewarm service? Make up your mind. If God be God, serve him, if Saal be God, serve him, but do not sit on the rail all your life, not knowing on which side to alight."

The Rev. Charles Garrett, a Wesleyan minister, tells us this story. "We have lately been doing a blessed work amongst the cabmen of Manchester, many of whom have signed the pledge. I heard the other night that one of them had broken his pledge, and I went to the cab-rooms to look after him. I saw him there, but he tried to avoid me. He was ashamed to face me. I followed him up, and at last he presented himself before me, wearing a most dejected look. I said to him: 'When you are driving your cab, and your horse falls down, what do you do?' 'I jumps off the box and tries to help him up again.' 'That is it, my friend,' I replied. 'I heard you had fallen, and so I got off the box to help you up. Will you get up? There is my hand.' He caught hold of it with a grip like a vice, and said: 'I will, sir! before God, and under his own blue heavens, I promise you that I will not touch a drop of strong drink again; and you will never have to regret the trouble you have taken with me.'"

Did you ever hear of a saloon-keeper who strictly regarded all the laws touching his traffic—such, for example, as those forbidding the sale of liquor to children, to habitual drunkards, on Sundays and election days, and after certain hours at night?