

In these few paragraphs I have thus given you an outward picture that is beautiful exceedingly, the appearance is that of a peaceful and orderly community, but we left it with a deeper disgust of this system of fanaticism and sensuality. The Mormon would have the stranger believe that there is no city in the world like his so virtuous, so pure, so happy but if common report be true, it is one of the saddest communities in all the world. There is not pure water enough flowing down its streets to cleanse the abominations, nor pure silt enough gathered up as it is in waggon-loads from the shores of its beautiful lake, to preserve it from decay.

Mormonism is a huge reality, a formidable power. It occupies a territory larger than that of Spain, and has developed into a vast and growing church. The United States Government is evidently determined to arrest the illegalities and immoralities of Utah. It is now fairly engaged in the problem of putting down polygamy. With the Mormon faith the Government, tolerant of all religions, has nothing to do; but polygamy is a crime against the common law of all civilization. The polygamous practices of Utah may be arrested, but even this will not destroy this heaven-daring villainy. This spiritual despotism, this pseudo-theocracy this American Thugism may long remain to desecrate the soil of Deseret.

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## Pleasant Hours:

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.  
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, AUGUST 25, 1900.

### A SAD DISAPPOINTMENT.

Do you suppose you could count the sad hearts in the world, if you tried? Not one of us could ever do that, for there are so many. We ought to stop and think, now and then, how many there are, though we have never counted them. If people are often troubled here in this land where they know the true God, just think how much worse it must be in the countries where dumb idols are worshipped and where there is no knowledge of our Saviour.

A poor heathen man in China had a bitter disappointment that ought to make our hearts feel sorry for him. One day he saw on the street a missionary sent out by the Methodist Board. This missionary had a long beard, which the Chinese never have, but consider something wonderful and as belonging to the gods. The Chinaman felt sure that the missionary must be the god Buddha in human form. He fell down at the minister's feet, and begged him to take him with him and save him. The missionary tried to explain to the mistaken heathen who he was and what God he worshipped, but the man refused to believe the story. He still thought this was Buddha, but that the god would have nothing to do with him, and in his disappointment and despair he went off and killed himself. Was it not distressing?

Now you could never have such a disappointment, for you never could make such a mistake. You have known better all your life. Ought you not to pray for these poor heathen, and give money to send more missionaries and more Bibles to them so that they may learn better? The children are more easily taught than

grown ups, and we must begin now with them, so that none of them will ever think a mortal man is a god.

If you knew nothing of Jesus would you wait others to do for you? Will you do as you would be done by?

### IN THE QUICKSAND.

#### A BOY'S ADVENTURE.

Brightly shone the afternoon sun as Frank Pryor, with basket slung over his shoulder, made his way quickly along the shore.

"The tide is wonderfully low to-day," he soliloquized, "and if I can reach the Bolder Gully I ought to get a good picking. Then mother will be able to meet me to-day all right."

The Bolder Gully was two miles away, a long channel running by the side of a reef of rocks, low-lying and covered with sea-weed. Only during especially low tides was the place accessible to the oyster-gatherer. In consequence of the distance and the infrequency of the tides during which it could be worked it was not often visited by the fishermen of the island, and, as a result, its oyster bed could always be relied on, and the natives were large and succulent.

As Frank sauntered along, his mind ran back over the events of the past few weeks—the accident which laid his father helpless on his bed, and threw the task of bread-winning upon his mother, who was far from strong. Frank could do but little to relieve her, and the struggle weighed heavily on the overtaken woman.

Now she too was laid aside. Yesterday the inevitable collapse had come, and in the little white cottage by the sea the doctor had another patient in his charge. Frank's little thus had become their all. The duty of earning the daily bread had descended from the strong man to the weak woman, and thence to the weaker child. Bravely did he face the duty, but all his efforts that morning had secured only a solitary shilling. Then the great project of gathering oysters in the Bolder Gully entered his mind, to be at once accepted as the path of success and pursued without delay.

The still rapid receding of the tide promised well, and Frank began to picture the happiness he would bring to his mother's heart. A market would easily be found in Yarboro', especially as there was a good influx of visitors to that fashionable watering-place. Possibly, too, some smaller oysters might be left for his sick parents.

Suddenly Frank woke from his reverie. His feet were sinking beneath him. Where was he? In the Bolder quicksand? The question brought its own answer. Absorbed in thought, he had forgotten the one danger of the coast. Unheeding, he had walked into it.

The quicksand was indeed a treacherous place. Above it the cliffs rose with sheer ascent into the sky. A vein of sandstone drained the water from the land above, and sent it precolating in a perpetual ooze across the shore below, turning a large area into a dangerous trap for unsuspecting pedestrians. There was nothing to distinguish the spot from the long stretch of sand on either side that might be safely traversed. It could only be located by carefully noticing the cliffs, and avoided by making a wide detour. Watching your footsteps, you might know if you were getting too near, for the sand, firm and hard to the sight, would suddenly become like jelly and quiver for yards around. Then was the time to spring hastily back, and make a wider circle.

For Frank it was now too late to retreat. He had proceeded so far into the quicksand without observing the quivering warning that he was almost in its centre. Even as he awoke to his danger he sank above his ankles, and the attempt to lift one foot only thrust in the other almost to the knee. Earnestly he struggled, but sank deeper, deeper still, till the sand-line reached his waist.

Oh, that help would come. Eagerly he looked around, but not a soul was visible. Yet again he made a desperate effort to free himself, but with less strength, less hope, and, of course, with less success than before.

Faint and exhausted, at length his struggles ceased, and with a flash his presence of mind returned. He noticed that when he was still the action of the sand almost ceased. His frantic exertions had but aided the suction of the sand; now, though still he sank, it was almost imperceptible. Vain, then, all attempt to save himself. His only hope was that some one might pass that way, and his best plan was to keep as still as he could. Placing his basket so as to give a little additional support, he stretched his arms straight out and laid

them on the sand, to retard his downward progress.

So he waited, almost without hope. The activity of the body forbidden, the mental powers awoke to greater strain. He recalled the tales, some true, some mythical, which tradition handed down concerning the place. He remembered hearing it compared to a gigantic ogre's mouth, opening and shutting, for in dry seasons its area grew smaller, as the fringes of the spot, lacking moisture, grew firm; while in wet weather it widened its borders, like a great gaping mouth. Was he to be swallowed therein? He recalled an occurrence within his own memory. A bullock had strayed from a neighbouring farm, found its way to the shore, and, wandering on, had been entrapped. Unable to extricate itself, it filled the air with its bellowings as it struggled and sank, to be swallowed entirely out of sight. How deep was this, his destined grave?

He thought of his parents in their helplessness, and wondered what they would do if he returned not that night—if he never returned—if his fate was never discovered.

The idea of death strangely affected him. He was not exactly afraid to die; but the possibility of death being so near seemed so unreal. He had always looked on death as something far off. And now, in health and vigour, to have to face that possibility. Was he ready to die, to meet God? Had he not better pray while able to collect his thoughts?

So into the gathering twilight rose the word of prayer, trembling, to the Giver of Life, for his life to be spared, if that could be; if not, then that the Better Life might not be denied him.

But ere he had finished his petition his strength gave way, and, with a quivering sob, the boy lost consciousness.

Meanwhile, in the little cottage there was growing anxiety. As evening wore away and the boy came not, the mother dragged herself from the bed and frequently peered through the window. But there was no sign of Frank.

"What can have happened?" she said to her husband. "He has never been so late as this before."

They may understand something of her anxiety when we remember that Frank was her only son—in fact, her only child—a boy of much promise and the object of many prayers.

Her husband turned his face away with a suppressed groan. It was his only reply to her question. The time spent on a bed of sickness had been to him a time of remorse. His failing had been one very common among men of his occupation. With no settled income, living upon the spoil to be wrested from the inconstant sea, sometimes having abundance, and again passing through a period of straitness, he had learned to take life carelessly. Genial in disposition, honest and true at heart, he was soon comrade to all his fellow-fishers, and had developed a habit of indulgence in drink, and of spending much time in the various inns of Yarboro'.

The accident which had stretched him on his bed might never had occurred had he been sober. Now he saw, as never before, how his sin was inflicting suffering upon those whom, after all, he loved with true affection.

As his wife had nursed him and toiled from day to day, he had marked her weakness, her failing strength, and knew that but for his dissipation it would not have been so. Was the lad to suffer too? Had anything come to the boy as a consequence of his sin? If so, how could he longer live to bear the pangs of appraising conscience and the look upon his wife's face?

"Hark!" said Mrs. Pryor. "I hear steps!"

Her heart sank within her as the heavy tread of men slowly approached the house. Something had happened. A knock at the door, and it was thrust open. A burly fisher entered, followed by a mate, who bore in his strong arms the form of a boy. The mother gave a cry of pain, and clutched her chair to prevent her falling.

"Now don't ye take on," said one of the men; "the lad ain't much the wuss for what he've bin through. Let's get 'im to bed, and he'll be all right in a day or two."

Frank joined in with feeble voice in his desire to allay her fears, but his assurances that there was "nothing much the matter" with him were not calculated to convey much conviction or give much comfort, so faint and weak was he. However, Mrs. Pryor bustled herself in warming blankets and getting him something warm to drink, postponing till this had been done the recital for which she so much longed.

When she had him safely tucked up and asleep, the story was soon told. The two fishermen had themselves been visit-

ing the famous reef, had toiled as long as tide and light permitted, returning home as the shades of evening fell. Hearing a faint voice from the direction of the quicksand, as of one in distress, they made their way toward it, and saw the form of the unconscious lad almost buried therein.

The work of rescue was carried out as speedily as possible. It necessitated a visit to the farm near by for planks and spades. The planks were laid upon the sand to permit a near approach, and more dead than alive, they had dug out the boy. Their simple remedies had restored him to consciousness, and, at his request, knowing what would be his mother's fears, they had brought him home, instead of leaving him for the night at the farmhouse, as was first suggested.

After the men had gone, the mother's first act was to kneel and thank God for the rescue of her son, even from the gates of death.

The strange story soon found its way round Yarboro', and many people were attracted to the little cottage. Nor did they come with empty hands, and their sympathy and help greatly assisted Mrs. Pryor in this bitterest period of her life. Yet, with all its bitterness, it was ever after looked back upon with thankfulness, for it proved to be that darkest hour which precedes the dawn. Her husband was touched by the kindness of the neighbours, and his convalescence was accompanied by a growth in moral and spiritual strength. He received the visits of the minister with gladness, and when he resumed his occupation he was a changed man—the Wheatshaf and Red Lion saw him no more.

It was during this period of convalescence that the family attended chapel one Sunday, with a sense of great importance, especially Frank. For was not he the hero of the day?

The minister had announced his intention of "improving" the recent event and great was the expectation. Attentively Frank listened as the servant of God discoursed from the words:

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

Using Frank's danger and deliverance as an illustration, the preacher pointed out that there are worse pits and greater deliverances, pits of sorrow, pits of sin, threatening the destruction of the soul; and greater deliverances, for they are deliverances from the power of the destroyer. Such salvation demands heartfelt praise.

Many in the little congregation sang with new-found joy the paraphrase of the Psalm at the close of the service.

"He drew me from the fearful pit,  
And from the miry clay;  
He placed my feet upon a Rock,  
And led me in his way."

In the little cottage that Sabbath evening the conversation turned on the sermon, which Frank declared the finest to which he had ever listened.

"Is it not wonderful to think," said he, "that it was really God who saved me? For I did cry to him, and, as the minister said, the fishermen were only his agents. I shall always look upon that verse as my own: 'He brought me up out of an horrible pit.'"

"Ah!" said his father, "but I can say it with greater meaning, for I have been lifted from one of those worse pits of which the preacher spoke."

The mother was silent, but she thought of the past darkness and sorrow, the "patient waiting" for the Lord, and as she faced a future bright with hope and love, her heart cried, "Me also."

And a "new song" of praise to God filled her thankful soul.

### TRUE GENTLEMEN.

"I beg your pardon," and, with a smile and a touch of his hat, Harry Edmond handed to an old man against whom he had accidentally stumbled the cane which he had knocked from his hand. "I hope I did not hurt you."

"Not a bit," said the old man. "Boys will be boys."

"I am glad to hear it," and lifting his hat again, Harry turned to join his playmates.

"What do you raise your hat to that old fellow for?" asked Charlie Gray.

"He is old Giles, the huckster."  
"That makes no difference," said Harry. "The question is not whether he is a gentleman, but whether I am one; and no true gentleman will be less polite to a man because he wears a shabby coat or hawks vegetables through the streets."