

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Jesus Still Heals as at Capernaum.

At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around thee lay;
Oh, in what divers pains they met!
Oh, with what joy they went away!

Once more 'tis eventide, and we
Oppressed with various ills draw near;
What if thy form we cannot see?
We know and feel that thou art here.

O Saviour Christ, our woes dispel!
For some are sick, and some are sad,
And some have never loved thee well,
And some lost the love they had;

And some have found the world is vain,
Yet from the world they break not free;
And some have friends who give them
pain,
Yet have not sought a friend in thee;

And all, O Lord, crave perfect rest,
And to be wholly free from sin;
And they who fain would serve thee best,
Are conscious most of wrong within.

O Saviour Christ, thou too art man;
Thou hast been troubled, tempted,
tried;
Thy kind but searching glance we scan
The very wounds that shame would
hide;

Thy touch has still its ancient power;
No word from thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in thy mercy heal us all.

A VISIT TO CAPERNAUM.

BY THE EDITOR.

Leaving to the left Khan Minyeh, where we were to camp, we rowed slowly on to the ruins of Tell Hum, near the head of the Sea of Galilee. With some difficulty we landed upon some rocks of basalt, and through a fringe of oleanders and tangled thicket of thorns, briars and thistles made our way to the mouldering ruins of Capernaum. The ground was strewn with the debris of an ancient city of considerable size.

Amid these ruins lie the remains of an ancient synagogue of white marble, which must have been of exceeding beauty. Its outline can be distinctly traced. It is about seventy-five feet long, and fifty-seven wide, with walls nearly ten feet thick. It is composed of very large blocks of stone, among which are numerous fragments of plinths and pedestals with carved reliefs. There were originally twenty-eight columns, two and a half feet in diameter, with Corinthian capitals and elegant mouldings; the bases of most of these still exist. On one lintel was carved the pot of manna with on either side a reed, probably Aaron's rod.

There is good reason to believe that these remains are those of that very synagogue built by the Roman centurion, on whose behalf the elders of the Jews "instantly besought Jesus, for he was worthy for whom he should do this, for he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue." To him also the Saviour paid the memorable tribute, "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." If this be true, and the demonstration seems positive, this is surely one of the most sacred spots on earth, for it was doubtless in this building that our Lord uttered his discourse recorded in John 6, and possibly not without reference to the carved pot of manna, he repeated the words, "I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead."

Near here, doubtless, by the seaside was the Custom House where Matthew

heard the words, "Follow me," and the garrison where the centurion of the Gospel held command, and the house where Jesus said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

These ruins mark our Lord's "own city." Here it was that he healed the paralytic who was let down through the roof. Here it was on that busy Sabbath day, described in Mark 1, that he cast out unclean spirits, healed the mother of Simon's wife, and "at even when the sun was set they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils, and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases and cast out many devils."

Our Lord on entering his public ministry left his quiet village of Nazareth, secluded among the hills, where he spent thirty years of his life, and came to the mixed and busy population of this gateway of the nations. These are the rounded hills, this the winding shore, these the blue waters, and above all bends the tender blue sky on which the eye of Jesus must often have lovingly rested.

How vividly amid these thorn-grown ruins come home the words to our minds, "and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell." So fearfully, it has been well remarked, have the woes pronounced upon Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, wherein most of his mighty works were done, been fulfilled, that it has been a matter of dispute as to their very site. McCheyne well expresses this feeling in the lines:

"Those days are past—Bethsaida, where?
Chorazin, where art thou?"

crumbling ruins. A spring, gushing from the cliff, fills a reservoir, from which, by a stone-hewn aqueduct, the Plain of Gennesaret was once copiously watered. The aqueduct can still be distinctly traced. A picturesque old mill, square, solid, and moss-grown, is still supplied by this stream. This spot has been conjecturally designated as Bethsaida, the "House of Fish," the home of Peter and Andrew and the two sons of Zebedee, who left their boats and nets at the command of Jesus to become fishers of men.

THE MAGIC APPLE.

"Such a rainy day!" said little Amy, dolefully. "I wish I knew something new to do."

"When I was a little girl," said her mamma, "I used to think it great fun to make a magic apple and surprise my papa. How would you like to make one for your papa?"

Amy was delighted with the idea and brought a large, fair apple. Her mamma gave her a long needle and strong thread and showed her how to take a long stitch in the apple close under the skin. Amy drew the thread, leaving about two inches hanging out of the apple. Then she put the needle into the very hole that it came out of and took another long stitch and so on all around the apple, at the end bringing the needle and thread out of the very first hole. Then she took hold of both ends of the thread and pulled hard, but carefully, and all the thread came out of the first hole. Amy rubbed the apple,

"YE NEXTE THING."

Claire was waiting for her cousin to appear, for the two girls had planned to make some charitable visits that afternoon. Claire's stock of patience, never very large, was soon exhausted. She gave her gloves such a twitch that one of them tore across.

"Better mend it, dear," suggested mamma.

"I haven't any time; Grace may be here any moment, and these visits are important ones—they are duty visits, you know."

"Well, dear, duties never clash, never; and the near-by duty is the one that ought to be performed first. Here is a needle and thread; now mend your glove, and you may have it finished before Grace gets here after all."

Claire commenced her task with a little frown, saying, discontentedly, "I don't see what you mean by saying that duties never clash. Sometimes there are so many things that need doing at the very same time."

"God doesn't expect any person to perform more than he is competent to. People who are always so overburdened by tasks are often people that drop the near-by home duties and rush into fields that really belong to others. The near-by duties, even if they are homely, are what God expects us to do first. Then our way and opportunity broaden naturally, and there is no clashing of duties as you say. God makes the way plain."

"But there is so much to be done!"

"All the more reason, then, for taking things systematically, as they come to hand; then you will pass nothing by in a vain endeavour to accomplish something visionary and remote. When Christ was on the way to the house of Jairus to heal the ruler's sick daughter, you remember that many people afflicted with various diseases met him on the way, asking to be healed."

"And he did heal them," said Claire, thoughtfully; "I suppose he might have told them that he was too busy to delay, that he was on a mission of great importance."

"Yes, but he didn't; he healed those that came in his way, because it was a near-by duty. That is what he wishes us to do: to perform what lies next in our paths, even if it be no greater thing than mending that glove of yours."

"And that glove is done now, too, just as I see Grace coming; I have really not lost any time, and I'll not have that task confronting me this evening when I want to be doing something else."

"Remember that, then, childie, when you want to rush by a duty. It is 'ye nexte thinge' always that should be done, not the one after that!"

A writer who speaks of the successful experiments of a Dr. Berson, of Stassfurt, remarks that mountain climbers will be interested to read of the successful experiments of this same gentleman, who, by means of "bottled breath," has been enabled to ascend to great heights, both on land and in balloon. To use this writer's own words:

"The doctor, when endeavouring to get further above the level of the sea than anyone else has ever climbed or flown, carries along a cylinder of compressed oxygen, fitted with a tube for breathing. Whenever he experiences discomfort on account of the rarity of the atmosphere a few whiffs from the cylinder suffice to restore him. Dr. Berson, by means of this device, recently ascended to an altitude of 31,300 feet, which is two thousand feet higher than the summit of Mount Everest.



CAPERNAUM, AND RUINS OF WHITE SYNAGOGUE.—SEE LESSON NOTES.

His tent the wild Arab pitches there,
The wild reeds shade thy brow.
Tell me, ye mouldering fragments, tell,
Was the Saviour's city here?
Lifted to heaven, has it sunk to hell,
With none to shed a tear?"

About two miles further north of Tell Hum is another group of extensive ruins, whose modern name, Kerezeh, points probably to the long-lost Chorazin. Tyre and Sidon had an eminence in wickedness, and the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah had been for generations a warning to mankind, yet these guilty cities which rejected Christ have a deeper guilt and condemnation.

In full view across the head of the lake was the broad plain, somewhere on which the miracle of feeding the five thousand took place. But the wind had so risen that our timorous boatmen refused to cross. So we sent for our horses to convey us back to Tabeyeh, and a rough ride it was, through tangled thickets and

which was a fine red one, until it shone like glass. The needle holes did not show.

When her papa came home, Amy gave him the apple; and he sat down by the fire to eat it. He began to peel it with his sharp knife. Oh, how surprised he looked when the apple suddenly fell in two when he had it a little more than half peeled!

Amy was pleased and surprised, too, for she had not realized that she had cut the apple in two under the skin when she pulled the thread out; but she had.

Any child, with a little care, can make a magic apple just as Amy did and surprise somebody very much.

The inch was formerly divided into three "barleycorns," these divisions being originally the length of a well-dried grain or "corn" of the barley.