

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. VII.]

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MAPLE SUGAR.

BY UNCLE HENDERSON.

Our company in sugar-making was made up largely of young folks. Fathers and mothers who had begun to feel the infirmities of age very prudently stayed at home and attended to the affairs of the house and barn-yard, while all the younger members of the family went to the sugar camp. After we had boiled the sap down to a thin syrup, it was then clarified with milk or eggs, and put away to settle for a day or two. This process we called "syruping off," and was very important in order to have clear, clean sugar. After a sufficient amount had been collected to fill a large kettle came the happy, long-looked-for day for "sugaring off." The boys and girls from neighbouring camps were invited to participate in the joyful occasion. A lump of ice, a heap of snow, or a pail of ice cold water was provided, in order that a good supply of wax might be had. At the proper time, when the sugar was on the verge of crystallizing, or "graining" as we called it, a quantity would be poured upon the ice, snow, or into the water, and was thus made into a wax—very sweet and nice, but very hard on the teeth. Sometimes the sugar would be stirred off, and was then something similar to the coarse brown sugar to be found in the stores at the present time, except more pleasant to the taste. But usually—and in our camp always—the sugar, at a time when it was well grained, but not yet dried, was poured into tin pans and allowed to form into cakes of various sizes. When dried, these were taken from the pans and laid on shelves overhead in the cabin, to be used when needed. They became very hard, and whenever a bowl of molasses was needed for our buckwheat griddle-cakes the housewife



MAPLE SUGAR.

would take down a cake of sugar and break off a pound or two and dissolve it.

Our confectionery of those days consisted of lumps of sugar, instead of sticks of candy. It was sweeter, purer, and healthier than modern sweetmeats.

Quite a quantity of the sugar was bartered for goods at the country stores; and at a time when money was scarce, it was considered very lucky if we had sugar enough to buy

our blue drilling pantaloons, and other necessary wearing apparel, and to lay in a few pounds of coffee or tea.

But the old sugar-making is a thing of the past. New methods and new surroundings have taken away much of the pleasure of the camp and the merry fireside where we worked forty years ago.—*Morning Guide.*

He that seeketh forgetfulness of God in this life will reap the reward of being forgotten in the life to come.

A QUEER CHAPEL.

It is a small chapel, having only one room, and that about the size of a common sitting-room, but it is said to be worth over three hundred thousand dollars!

Now, I will tell you where this chapel is, and why it is so valuable. Over three hundred years ago, Queen Anne, of Russia, caused an enormous bell to be made. So large was it that it took twenty-four men to ring it, and they could only ring it by pulling the clapper. Twice this great bell was broken in pieces by falling, and twice was recast. There is a story told that the rich nobles threw their gold and plate in with the melted metal, so that a large proportion of the bell is of gold and silver. It has a shining white appearance; but whether there be any precious metal in it or not, its value is very great. After being re-cast the second time it was named, "Tsar Kolo-kol," which means "King of bells."

For over a hundred years it lay in a deep pit. During this time some falling timbers in a fire broke a piece from its side which has never been replaced.

The people of Russia almost worshipped it, coming from far and near as they would to a church.

Finally it was taken from its pit and placed on huge blocks of granite, a door was fitted to the broken place, and it was consecrated as a chapel.

And there it stands to-day, and Moscow can boast of the largest bell in the world, it being about twenty feet in diameter and the same in height, and weighing over four tons.

So you see a very small chapel may be a very large bell.

EXPERIENCE, says the *Electrician*, has shown that the life of a submarine telegraph cable is from ten to twelve years.