

Holiday Cheer.

Oh, welcome, welcome Christmas time!
Bright well we love to hear
The merry bells so sweetly chime
Their music far and near.

We hang the holly on the wall,
We make our homes so gay,
For little children, one and all,
Rejoice on Christmas day.

We've peace and joy, though winds be wild,
For praise we sing to-day
To Him who as a little child
Within the manger lay.

And for His sake we'll comfort take
And help unto the sad,
And all around us we will make
This Christmas bright and glad.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, JANUARY 1, 1896

ROBERT AND HAROLD.

BY L. EUGENIE ZBORIDGE.

ROBERT and Harold Leslie were genuine city boys. Their home was near the centre of a great and prosperous city. They knew nothing of life, except city life. Their father was a busy city man, their mother an active city woman.

As a rule, the boys were quite content. Their school was excellent, their home attractive, and pervaded by a wholesome moral atmosphere. They were required to be punctually in their place in church and Sunday-school, father and mother setting the example. Nevertheless, they longed for a change, especially in summer vacations, when they heard their school-fellows tell of visits to the country where grandfather or Uncle John lived on a farm.

One day toward the end of the spring term a surprise came. It was an invitation from Aunt Hester Grey—mamma's Aunt Hester—to the boys to spend two months in her rambling old house at Plymouth, on the Massachusetts coast. This was delightful. Robert and Harold were so pleased they could think or talk of little else. It was hundreds of miles from their home; a long distance to them.

Papa decided they must go; mamma packed the trunk. Each wore a new suit complete, hat and shoes included. They started off in true city style, hurrying to catch the train, but papa found time to say:

"Make good use of your time, my sons, and remember you are to keep your eyes open and learn all you can."

Aunt Hester was at the station to meet them, and they soon left the town behind as the strong farm horse bore them toward her home, which was on the outskirts. About the first thing the boys noticed was the room. Room everywhere. Their first letters home were full of this subject. Out of doors was so large and free. Young

calves were skipping in the meadows, while sedate cows in meadow clover and daisies ate with unconcerned that the ground they occupied would bring thousands of dollars in rent money if transferred cityward. Evidently occupants of the farm know little of economizing space; and the sky, the air, and the billowy sea, seen from a high and behind Aunt Hester's house, gave a sense of nature's greatness they had never before known.

Aunt Hester was the best of entertainers. She knew where to take them both for pleasure and profit. The berry pastures, fish ponds, and fish ponds were often visited, and daily, almost hourly, they roamed about the farm with the men who managed it. Besides, Aunt Hester often drove them to Plymouth, of Pilgrim fame. There is Pilgrim Hall, lined with relics of Pilgrim and Puritan; Burial Hill, the old Pilgrim burying-ground; and Plymouth Rock, canonized now, and revered in all English-speaking countries as the spot where the feet of the exiled Pilgrims pressed in landing.

So the days passed till vacation was almost over. One evening Aunt Hester said:

"To-morrow, boys, is your last day with me. I shall take you to look into the glass."

Just what this meant they did not know, but set out the following morning. How delightful was that ride! The road ran by the seashore. The blue waters of Plymouth Bay sparkled and dimpled in the morning sunlight, while its breezes fanned their brows.

"Many illustrious people have walked the paths and grazed at the sea," said Aunt Hester. "Miles Standish and his company, John Alden, the scholar, Governor Bradford, with his councillors, and in later time the great statesman, Daniel Webster, made a homo not far from this place."

After riding a long distance, they drew up before a very old house. In one of its rooms between two windows hung an ancient looking glass. It was said to have been brought to this country in the Mayflower, and long ago it was the custom to gather in the children once each year—about Thanksgiving time—to look into the glass, telling them the story of the Mayflower Pilgrims, and Aunt Hester was anxious Robert and Harold should look into the old glass before they returned, as they had been studying the Pilgrim story. As they looked they seemed to see those brave heroes and soldiers for truth who left their home and crossed the ocean for the cause of liberty and right; and Aunt Hester felt that she could see two other pilgrims, brave and young, yet none the less strong and true, burnishing their armour, polishing their shields and helmets, ready likewise to do battle for truth and right.

When the young pilgrims started cityward next day, they believed they were not just the boys who came, for they had looked into the glass, and received the lesson of heroic courage and self-sacrificing love for truth and liberty.

THE EPWORTH HOME.

The name of John Wesley is intimately associated with Epworth, the place of his birth and early education. By him the spot was warmly cherished. Epworth was the great school which gave shape and impulse to his life. In his mother, Susanna Wesley, he found his most helpful teacher. Other great teachers were given him in the course of his education; but no one of them equalled his mother, who was at once intelligent, sympathetic and inspiring, and who knew well how to draw to the surface what was best in the heart and purposes of her favourite son, and to guide him into those great life plans which have made his name familiar to the ends of the earth.

The domestic training in the old Epworth rectory has been the frequent theme of admiration and eulogy. Without entering into detail, we can here notice only the main features of it. She began early. The moulding influence was to be felt in the cradle. At a year old the child must begin the lesson of self-restraint, in the control of weeping. He must not cry. In a word, to break the will was a first point in her method; and the second was order

and system. The household moved with the regularity of the heavenly bodies. From rising to rest, each hour had its duties. Each member of the household was a sort of living machine, capable of running on to the end of life without variation.

The book education of the Wesleys was begun in the household. The know no other primary school, they needed no other. The mother was a born teacher. She knew how to awaken curiosity and hold attention. In quality, the Charter House and Oxford had no better teaching.

But the religious element was a main feature. To know God was the chief end of education. The thought of God and duty was early brought before the mind of the child. The attention was drawn from material objects to the invisible world; and, as an aid, due attention was paid to the forms of religion. As soon as they could speak, the children were taught to repeat the Lord's prayer at morning and evening, and later to add some of the collects of the Prayer Book and other forms. At table they joined in the blessing, as also in the prayers at the family altar. The Bible reading was a daily and delightful task, and made lasting impressions on the minds and hearts of the children.

LOVE FOR MOTHER.

When gruff old Dr. Johnson was fifty years old, he wrote to his aged mother as if he were still her wayward but loving boy: "You have been the best mother, and, I believe, the best woman in the world. I thank you for all your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness for all I have done ill, and of all I have omitted to do well." John Quincy Adams did not part with his mother until he was nearly, or quite, as old as this; yet his cry even then was: "O God, could she have been spared yet a little longer! . . . Without her the world seems to me like a solitude." When President Nott, of Union College, was more than ninety years old, and had been for half a century a college president, as strength and sense failed him in his dying hours, the memory of his mother's tenderness was fresh and potent; and he could be hushed to needed sleep by a gentle patting on the shoulder, and the singing to him of the old-time lullabies, as if his mother were still sitting by his bedside in loving ministry, as she had been well-nigh a hundred years before. The true son never grows old to a true mother.

EARTHQUAKE INCIDENTS.

A CONSTANTINOPLE correspondent of the New York Tribune says that it will probably never be known how many persons were killed in that city by the earthquake of last summer. The Turkish Government has a chronic hatred of facts, and the newspapers were forbidden to publish statistics of the earthquake. What are believed to be moderate estimates place the number of deaths at about one hundred and fifty, and the number of the wounded at about six hundred.

The correspondent cannot help praising the courage of the firemen stationed on watch at the top of a tower more than two hundred feet high. They stuck to their post, although the tower swayed like a flagstaff, and when the fires broke out, after the overthrow of dwellings, they gave the signals as usual.

Another case of a similar sort was that of a minaret builder, who had gone up to the top of a minaret to remove a conical cap which the first shocks had thrown away. While he was there another shock occurred, and there was another panic in the streets. His assistants, who were in one of the galleries of the minaret, began to run downstairs, and the mosque servants below shouted to him to come down, but he stayed where he was. "If this is going to fall," he said, "it will fall before I can get out of it;" and he proceeded with his work.

Many wonderful escapes occurred. Two men were walking together. A Turk met them, and as is not unusual when a Turk meets foreigners, he pushed in between them, instead of turning to one side. At

that instant a stone fell from the building above them and hit the Turk, who fell dead between the two horrified foreigners.

But the most marvellous escape was that of a boy three years old. He was running along the street at the base of the city wall just as one of the ancient towers was overthrown. When the dust cleared away he was discovered pinned to the ground by great stones lying on his skirts on each side of him, but himself quite unhurt.—*Youth's Companion*.

HAVE YOU A BOY TO SPARE?

THE saloon must have boys, or it must shut up its shop. Can't you find one? It is a great factory, and unless it can have two million from each generation for raw material, some of these factories must close up, and the operatives be thrown upon the cold world and the public revenue dwindle. "Wanted, two million boys!" is the notice. One family out of every five must contribute a boy in order to keep up the supply. Will you help? Which of your boys shall it be?

These statements are as true as they are startling. It is beyond a peradventure that if no boys were tempted and ruined during the next generation, in three and thirty years every saloon in America would have to put up in its window the placard, "For Sale," or "To Let." The old drunkards would be dead, and there would be no young ones to take their places.

Here, then, is an indisputable fact: if they are not closed within the next thirty years, two million boys, who are now innocent and pure, will be ruined.

If it was believed that within forty years two million boys would die of hydrophobia, or a tenth part of two millions, every dog in America would be destroyed, and a law of absolute prohibition would be passed on dog-kennels and their occupants.

Epworth League.



JUNIOR LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

January 20, 1896.

KNOWLEDGE AND POWER.—Job 28. 5.

A great man once said, "Knowledge is power." No doubt, other things being equal, a person who possesses knowledge will be influential among his fellows. God is all-wise. He is omniscient—that is, he knows all things. He is the source of knowledge. All knowledge proceeds from him. Evidences of his knowledge appear all around us. "The heavens declare his glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork." When men acquire knowledge, their attainments stimulate others to pursue the same path, and in due time they may even surpass their competitors, but however much knowledge men may acquire they will never become equal to God. By searching men cannot find out God. He sees the end from the beginning. Men often use their knowledge for personal aggrandisement, regardless of the consequences to others, hence, if men acquire knowledge, they should also possess wisdom which will enable them to use their knowledge. God never uses his knowledge to the injury of mankind. He visits them with affliction and chastisement, but in so doing he always acts wisely, though we may not understand how that may befall us can possibly be our profit. What we know not now we shall know hereafter. If we could understand the design of God's providential dealings, we would act exactly as he does.

What is our duty? To get knowledge. Search for it, as men search for hidden treasure. Use every means in our power to become wiser and more intelligent as our years increase. In all our acquisitions of knowledge aim at usefulness. Do not selfish with your gifts, as though their only purpose is to increase your own enjoyment. Let wisdom direct you in all the affairs of life. Seek to know God. Every individual stands related to the human family, as the various members of the body are related to each other. We are members one of another. Our knowledge should never be used to gain an advantage of our fellows. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. To do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifice God is well pleased.