

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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NOW I LAY ME.

GOLDEN head, so slowly bending,
Little feet so white and bare,
Dewy eyes, half shut, half opened,
Lisping out her evening prayer.

Well she knows when she is saying,
"Now I lay me down to sleep,"
'Tis to God that she is praying,
Praying him her soul to keep.

Half asleep, and murmuring faintly,
"If I should die before I wake,"—
Tiny fingers clasped so saintly—
"I pray the Lord my soul to take."

O, the rapture, sweet, unbroken,
Of the soul who wrote that prayer!
Children's myriad voices floating
Up to heaven, record it there.

If, of all that has been written,
I could choose what might be mine,
It should be that child's petition,
Rising to the throne divine.

THE GIRAFFE.

OF all the strange creatures to be seen in zoological gardens, none are more remarkable than the giraffe, the tallest animal in the world. It was called the camelopard by the ancients, because it had long legs like the camel, and was spotted like the leopard; but it is not really like either animal, though it has some resemblance to the camel, as in the shape of its nostrils and upper lip it is more nearly allied to the deer; but its most striking peculiarities are all its own, and in general from it is unlike any other quadruped. The spots with which it is adorned are totally different to those of the leopard, being large, and of irregular shape, and are arranged in a geometric pattern along its sides. The small horns with which its head is armed are made of horn, like those of the ox or deer, but are of bone, and seem like a prolongation of the bones of the skull; they are terminated by a tuft of stiff bristles.

The singular shape of the giraffe is adapted to its habits of life; it feeds on the young branches and top shoots of the trees, and its long fore legs and neck enable it to browse at a far greater height than any other animal.

In feeding it stretches up its neck, and with its long prehensile tongue, which it can protrude to a surprising distance, hooks down the tender shoots and leaves into its mouth. But the creature's peculiar form, though enabling it to feed on what it likes best, is sometimes the cause of its destruc-

tion. The fore-legs are so long that to reach the ground it has to stretch them wide apart, and bend down its neck in a semi-circle, and while drinking in this defenceless attitude the lion or leopard springs upon it, and overpowers it before it can recover

injuries. Most horned animals lower their heads, and butt at the object of their attack; but the giraffe swings its long neck sideways, and delivers a tremendous blow which sometimes proves fatal. A young female giraffe at the Zoological Gardens, London,

admiring the giraffes at the Zoological Gardens, one of the animals, attracted by the decorations of one of their bonnets, took advantage of the lady's turning her head to stretch its neck over the high iron railings, and hooking its long tongue round a brilliant flower, plucked it out, chewed it up, and swallowed it before the fair owner was aware of her loss!

Every one who has seen the giraffe must have noticed the great size and beauty of its soft black eyes; they have a gentle yet fearless expression, and their prominence enables the animal to see almost behind it, so as to guard against an enemy attacking it while feeding. In walking the giraffe does not move its legs like the horse, ox, and most other quadrupeds, but moves both the fore and hind legs of the same side at once, like the elephant and camel.

In its native country of Africa the giraffe sometimes attains the height of seventeen feet; but of those taken to or bred in Europe, few have exceeded fourteen feet. The giraffe was first brought to Europe by the Romans after their conquest of Africa. Julius Cæsar exhibited it in his gorgeous spectacles to the wondering eyes of the citizens of Rome, who thought they saw in this new and strange creature a combination of the characters of the horse, ox, camel, and leopard; but the short stiff mane down its neck is certainly not like that of a horse, though its tufted tail may have some resemblance to that of an ox. But every rare or strange animal brought to Rome was only destined to heighten the barbarous sports of the amphitheatre; and, however much the Romans admired the giraffe, or camelopardalis, as they called it, it was slaughtered without mercy. In the reign of the Emperor Philip ten of these beautiful creatures were slain in the arena at one time for the amusement of the populace! It is difficult to imagine the cruelty of people who could find pleasure in witnessing the destruction of such animals.



THE GIRAFFE.

itself. The giraffe is rather a timid animal, and as it runs with great swiftness it usually seeks safety in flight; but when hard pressed it will turn and beat off even the lion by striking out with its strong fore-hoofs. Its horns, too, though they are so small, are capable of inflicting severe

Eng., once playfully drove her horns through a wooden partition an inch thick.

In feeding, the giraffe appears to be guided by sight rather than smell, for it has been known to eat artificial flowers and leaves. On one occasion, as some gaily dressed ladies were

"JAMES, my son, take this letter to the post-office and pay postage for it." The boy James returned quite elated, and said: "Father, I see a lot of men putting letters in a little place, and when no one was looking I slipped your's in for nothing."