

# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## DAVID AND GOLIATH.

THE subject of this picture is an excellent illustration of the text, "If God is for us who shall be against us?"

The Israelites and the Philistines are about to fight a battle, when from the ranks of the latter steps forth a giant, full of boasting and trusting in his huge spear and heavy armour and shield. This giant, Goliath by name, challenges any Israelite to fight him, and thus to decide the issue of the battle. But Israel is afraid, and has no match for him. We all know well how, at length, David the shepherd boy offered himself as their champion; how he was laughed at by his brethren; how he was armed by King Saul, and how he refused the armour and goes to meet the giant with only a sling and five smooth pebbles out of the brook. He put no faith in himself but in his God, and, though the giant despised him, exclaiming, "Am I a dog that thou shouldst come against me with stones?" yet the first stone that David slung hit Goliath in the forehead and slew him.

Thus the glory was to God who gave him the victory.

## NIPPED.

BY ANNA BREATH.

"LIGHT another lamp, Mary dear; the room must be more cheery against father's coming home tired and cold; and light is cheap, that's one comfort;" and mother, glancing toward the door as she spoke, drew a big armchair nearer the fire.

"Here, father," she said as a tall, handsome old man entered; "sit down and keep little Nell company while I bake the pancakes for supper."

Her grandfather held the lamp shade as Mary reached for a match. "Yes," he said; "light is cheap nowadays, when one can pump it out of the ground, but fifty years ago when I sailed the seas to bring it home it cost men as well as money."

"Tell us about it, grandpa dear," quoth little Nell. "Where did the oil grow? far away in the islands of the sea where monkeys swing among the branches and the sun shines always?"

"Nay, my lass; the sun indeed shines always, day and night, in the months that we call summer, amid the icebergs of the north, but naught grows there. The whales in the great gray waste of tossing water yield up their lives and many a man has frozen in the darkness to send light and brightness into the homes of the land."

"Whaling was hard work, gran'ther," said Mary. "Joe and I used to play with the harpoons and funny little iron spade that stand under the eaves in the south attic. Joe said always he'd be a whaler when he was a man."

"A good business it was in my time, child; one fit for a man, and many a town along this seacoast lived by it. There was many a wife said good-bye to her husband with a brave light in her eye, knowing well the danger he would suffer; and then for a year, or for three years, maybe, if he happened to be nipped by the ice, she watched the flour-barrel and the pork-keg with an anxious eye, knowing not whether she were wife or widow."

"Good stout ships they were, heavy oak planks six inches thick over the ribs, great broad bows, to stand strong and stiff amid the shock of heavy ice. In the hold were piles of empty casks which we hoped to bring home full. We could depend on melting snow for water, but to stow away food enough to supply fifty men for eighteen months was no light task. Once we were nipped near the Greenland shore; there

we were held like the filbert in the nut-cracker for six long months, only half dim dreary light through that long winter, but that was better than the eternal brightness of the summer. But that Greenland time wasn't had after all; ducks were to be had any where on shore for the powder to shoot them, and within a mile of our boat was a real Eskimo but, where father, mother, and two children (and nice gentle children they were) lived their lives, knowing none better.

"At the front door we went down, on our knees, and crawled through a long passage on all-fours. At the farther end

dingy white ice a black streak crept into view. Up went the sails, but we were too eager to escape into open water to trust to the wind when strong muscles were aching for want of use. Forty men tracked her out, as it is called, fastened by stout belts to the whale-lines aboard the ship, they pulled like mules on a towpath, singing as the long line slowly crept along. Every few rods the line of water seemed to close before us, but as we paced on bravely the way opened always, as ways always do open to push and pull. At last the good ship was herself once more, sailing like a bird, as she was meant to sail.

"A hard life it was, but good hauls we made sometimes, I'll confess, and when we came home with a full ship we know our man would have his share on every ton of oil tried out, as well as the good silver pay clinking in his pocket."

"How would you like, little Nell," the grandfather continued, twining a golden curl round his finger, "how would you like to be chained to a great whale as long as this house, and go tearing and plunging through the white foam, like the stories they tell of Neptune's car careening through the waves behind those wondrous dolphins? I've tried it, my lass, and my heart beats faster now, with fifty years lying between that minute and this."

There she blows, quoth the man in the look-out at the mast-head, and away off on the tossing waves we see a faint spurt of white foam puffed out by the monster as he rises to breathe, and overboard go the boats, six men in each, besides the harpooner, who stands in the bow, his harpoon fastened to the great coil of rope at his feet.

"He stands there steady as a statue, and as about, while the boat dances and skims over the waves, sent flying on by six strong pairs of arms. Now we come close to the great black mass, the harpoon poised for its flight. Whiz! it skims through the air and is buried deep in the monster. 'Back water!' shouts the harpooner, and the men bend to their oars for their lives, for, dashing the waves in his fury, one flip of his tail would shiver that little boat into kindling wood."

Then down he goes as though he were bound for China by the shortest cut. Out runs the line—fathoms of it, the boy standing at the side bales up water and pours it on the rope as it races out over the gunwale, or the friction would start a fire in two minutes.

"Lost to sight he is, but the line still pays out, more slowly now, now it slacks altogether: the great fish is coming to the surface to breathe. Again the harpooner stands ready, this time with a light spear in hand. It flies through the air and strikes, another! and another! The water is dyed red, churned into fury—the huge mass rolls over and over, a mighty shiver, and the grand beast is dead."

"Then for the work of towing the great prize to the ship, and there, securely fastened alongside, the men put on boots with heavy spiked soles and clamber about on the monster as though on an island. Some go into the mouth to strip off the baleen, or whalebone—the strips are ten feet long sometimes, others with the blubber-spade (that is one in the attic, Mary) cut into the blanket of blubber, tear it up in strips, and hoist aboard by means of tackle."

"Then what a time there is aboard that ship! The great boilers are started and the fat tried out; the refuse from one pot serving as fuel under another.

A curtain of sooty smoke hangs over the ship, and grease, fat, oil is everywhere; enough to drive the mother crazy. The grease is then stowed away in empty casks below, to be taken home and boiled for oil."

"And do they leave all the rest of the whale on the waves, gran'ther?"

"Yes, it feeds the bears and fishes; a whale is a regular treasure, Mary, the oil from one might be worth enough money to buy this house." The children's eyes opened wide, mother stood in the doorway, father came in through the kitchen. "Yes," he said, "whale oil bought this house, but grandfather risked life and limb to get it, and though he was the best harpooner that ever paddled the seas we mean to keep him snug in port, moored fast by chains of love."



DAVID AND GOLIATH.

was a large room with a roof sloping toward the entrance hall. All across the end ran a bed place, and a sick woman huddled at one end was coaxing a seal-oil lamp to heat some medicine for her rheumatism. Three dogs, big shaggy fellows, were in the room and a little girl no bigger than our Nell sat sewing moccasins made of deerskin. She had to keep close to the smoky oil lamp, for there was no other light in that close little hole underground.

"Pretty, did you say? if we could have seen through the dirt and smoke the colour of her skin, I might be able to say."

"By-and-bye, one day, we heard a tick, tick, in the distance and then cracking and creaking, and we knew the icy fingers were loosening their hold. Then amid the

"But, children, you must think of the real life out in the open sea, the great icebergs looming up like marble palaces, spires and pinnacles glistening, and in the heart the glow of the ruby and the emerald, the fire of the sun imprisoned there. Many a time have we cast an anchor into the mass of ice and held safe through the night—the night which is brighter at midnight than our twilight, the natives sleep, but decent white men can't. Many is the time I've longed and yearned for one good pitch-dark night."

"A hard life? yes, my lass, it was, and amid a crew of fifty men rough once there were bound to be, but lazy, sufficient, never do we see a carcase ever tossed face to Arctic weather."