

# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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A MEXICAN WATER-PEDDLER.

## The Juniors' War Song.

We are Juniors in the army,  
We fighting for the Lord;  
Let us one and all go forward  
Trusting in his holy Word.

### Chorus.

When the battle here is over,  
And we reach the shining shore,  
We will sing his praise forever,  
And be happy evermore.

He will give us grace to conquer  
In the thickest of the fight;  
So we'll trust alone in Jesus,  
And we'll work with all our might.

I remember when a sinner  
How I would delight in sin;  
But I'm glad I came to Jesus,  
And he freely took me in.

Little children, come to Jesus,  
Cast on him your every sin;  
In his precious blood he'll wash you  
And he'll make you white within.

## MEXICAN WATER-PEDDLERS.

In many Mexican towns they have neither pumps, hydrants, nor springs; they have no cisterns,—or not many, at all events,—for it seldom rains there; so they have to depend on the river for their supply of water to drink, and for cooking.

Quite a number of men in each town make their living by selling water. The city of Matamoras refused to allow a company to erect water-works to supply the city with water, because it would deprive the water-peddlers of their business.

Every peddler has a barrel, with a piece of plank or scantling nailed across each end. In the middle of the plank is a stout spike, or iron pin, to which is attached a piece of chain reaching beyond the edge of the barrel; and to the ends of the chains are attached raw-hide, or other kinds of rope.

The barrel has at one end two large wooden plugs. To fill it, the Mexican goes up to his knees, or deeper, in the water, pulls out both plugs, and the water rushes in at one hole while the air in the barrel goes out at the other. When the barrel is filled, the peddler turns it over on its side, taps inside the rope, and walks through the water, seeking a customer.

The peddlers are queer-looking men, with dark complexion, and long, straight black hair, like Indians. They wear wide-brimmed, low-crowned "sombreros" (hats), trousers rolled up to the knees, or higher; and are almost always smoking a cigarette.

Sometimes a peddler saves his money and buys a "burro," a funny little donkey, not much higher than a table; and, either tying the rope of his barrel to the saddle, or putting the rope around the burro's neck, gets astride the little animal, and enjoys a ride while going around with his barrel of water.

Just imagine a man wearing a hat with a brim as wide as a small parlour centretable, with no shoes, with trousers rolled above his knees, riding a donkey so small that he has to hold his knees away to keep his feet from dragging on the ground; and with a barrel of water rolling over the ground after him.

## A SUGGESTION FOR A "SHUT-IN."

ONE who is laid aside from the active duties of life, and is compelled to spend most of her days on a bed of pain, says that she found pleasure in an acorn hung by a bit of thread about a half-inch above a glass of water. In a week or so a tiny root ran down into the water, and soon a stem arose covered with glossy green leaves. The water was kept clean with a bit of charcoal, and when the leaves of the oak turned yellow a few drops of ammonia were added.

## BE HONEST.

DR. LIVINGSTONE, the famous Africa explorer, used to tell this story about one of his Highland ancestors. The good old man, as death drew near, summoned his family around his bed, and said: "Now, lads and lassies, I have looked all through our history, and I have never found the name of a dishonest man in all the line, and I want you to understand you inherit good blood. You have no excuse for wrongdoing. Be honest."

## A DAY WITH THE ALLIGATORS.

BY COUSIN FRANK.

I WANT to tell the young folks who read PLEASANT HOURS something of my visit to Florida. We first went to Jacksonville, which lies on the St. John's River, and is a very pleasant city.

One day, as I sat in the reading room of the hotel, I heard shouts of laughter followed by the clapping of hands. "What can it be?" thought I, throwing down the newspaper I was reading, and running into the corridor.

There I saw five or six little reptiles, about half the length of my arm, that seemed to be running a race over the canvas carpet with which the floor was covered. A number of people were looking on. They appeared to be highly amused by the queer movements of the creatures.

"What are they? Lizards?" cried I. "Lizards! No: they are young alligators," said a little girl, in a tone that implied pity for my ignorance.

"Alligators!" said I, retreating in alarm, as one of them came towards me.

"Oh, you coward!" cried the little girl, laughing. "They are too small to hurt you. See me." And, saying this, she took one of them up in her apron, and brought it to me.

These little alligators grow to be huge creatures, sometimes more than twenty feet long. They live in the creeks and little rivers that run into the St. John's. They rarely go very far from the shore. They live partly on land and partly in the water.

In Florida the weather in January is often quite as warm as it is in Canada in June. So on a fine winter day we went on board the steamer *Mayflower* for a trip upon the St. John's River, and up some of the small streams, where alligators may be found.

We went some thirty miles towards the south, and then turned into a small river, where the scenery on both sides resembled that given in the picture. Cypress swamps and high trees overgrown with moss everywhere met our view. On the banks, and generally on fallen logs, might be seen alligators basking in the sun.

Many of the passengers in the steamboat had brought pistols and guns, with which to fire at the poor alligators. This is a very cruel and useless sport, for the alligators do no harm to anybody. I saw ladies and young girls firing at them. We passed some fifty alligators on our way.

Father and another gentleman took a boat, and rowed some distance up a creek. There we saw an alligator with a young one by its side. The young are very small, compared with the full-grown reptile. You can see from the picture that the alligator is not handsome: but that is no reason why bullets should be lodged in its hide. I came to the conclusion that firing pistols at these animals was poor and mean sport.

What a lovely day it was! and how we enjoyed the excursion! Just think of sitting in your summer clothing on a day in January, and passing through scenery where the trees and shrubs are all green. We returned to Jacksonville just in time to see the sun set, and we shall not soon forget our visit among the alligators.

## All You Can.

"I CANNOT do much," said a little star,  
"To render the dark world bright:  
My silvery beams will not struggle far  
Through the folding gloom of night;  
But I'm only part of God's great plan,  
So I'll cheerfully do the best I can."

"Oh, what is the use," said a floppy cloud,  
"Of those few drops that I hold?  
They will scarcely bend the lily proud  
If caught in her cap of gold;  
But I too, am part of God's great plan,  
So my treasure I'll give as well as I can."

A child went merrily forth to play,  
But a thought like a silver thread  
Kept winding in and out all day,  
Through the happy golden head;  
Mother said, "Darling, do all you can,  
For you are part of God's great plan."

She knew no more than the glancing star,  
Or the cloud with its chalice full,  
How, why, or for what all strange things are,  
She was only a child at school;  
But she thought "It is part of God's great plan  
That even I should do all I can."

So she helped another child along  
When the road was rough to the feet;  
And she sang from the heart a little song,  
That we all thought passing sweet.  
And her father, a weary, toil-worn man,  
Said: "I too, will do the best I can."



A DAY WITH THE ALLIGATORS.