

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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The Little Boy Blue.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

The little toy dog is covered in dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them, and put them there,
"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys.

And, as he was dreaming, an angol-song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true.
Aye, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face,
And they wonder, as waiting these long years through,
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue
Since he kissed them and put them there.

THE BUILDING OF THE MINSTER.

BY J. E. NILLER, D.D.

In an old city, long ago, some zealous men determined to build a minster for their Master. The building was to be reared with great magnificence, and they brought costly wood and marble from distant lands, and employed the best artists to make the elegant figures for them. When all was ready, they met together to plan where they should build it.

"We will not have it here," they said, "in these narrow streets, where the smoke and dust of traffic would defile the pure whiteness of the marble."

"No," said another, "we will put it on yonder green hill whose summit can be seen from all the surrounding country. There we will build our minster; the world about us shall see it and know what we have done."

So they chose the summit of the hill, and there with willing hands they laboured all the summer long. The grain was just planted when they began, and it was waving like gold when they came together once more to talk about it. They had laboured for months, yet the towers of that minster never rose, and its walls never grew. The people said that what the men did in the daytime a band of angels undid at night.

"It is the hand of God," an aged man said to them; "he will not have the minster builded there for the whole world to see. You should have wrought for his glory, not for your own."

Meekly the builders bowed their heads. They saw the hand of God in the failure of their work, and looking deep into their own hearts they saw there what they could not see before—that they had been working for their own glory, not for God's. So they took up their work again. This time they chose a site in the midst of the city's traffic, where the poor, the lame, the old, the woman and children could go, fair days or foul, to worship. As they laboured a strange Workman came and helped them. He was clad in pure white garments, whose brightness dazzled their eyes. Like magic the walls rose, till they grew to be a wondrous pile. As the men wrought day by day, no one heard the sound of strife, for they knew that their strange fellow-Workman was Jesus Christ, the Lord.

This old legend contains a lesson for us. It is not an easy one to learn, for we all want to erect our pile to God on the summit of the hill, where it will be seen by all the world. We easily forget that sometimes the greatest work we can perform for him is to do quietly and sweetly the little things he gives us to do. He stands by us as a fellow-workman when we labour thus for him.



REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

STREET PREACHING IN LONDON.

One of the most notable features of early Methodism was its street preaching. Wesley, Whitefield, and many others often took their stand amid the crowded fairs of Moorfields and proclaimed the Word of Life with a power that was attested by the tear-washed furrows on the dusky faces of those who thus heard it. One of the most hopeful signs of the times is that this primitive usage of Methodism is being largely employed in the crowded streets of London, and other great cities. Our picture on this page shows a common scene in Whitechapel Road, London. Every Sunday morning the street is like a fair with crowds of people buying and selling. But faithful ministers take advantage of the opportunity to preach to the multitudes the Gospel of Christ. The picture on this page shows the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, one of the foremost workers in the "forward movement" of the Wesleyan Church in Lon-

don, preaching in the open air. This movement has been attended with the greatest success.

THE STORY OF A QUESTION.

BY ELIZABETH PRESTON ALLAN.

In a long, one-story building on the high bank of an Indian river, there was a strange silence one day. For more than a year since those walls had gone up, with the queer windows so near the roof, and the green slatted blinds, there had been a pleasant hum of young voices, girls' voices, learning the letters of the alphabet; learning that the world is a globe revolving in space, and not placed on the back of an elephant or tortoise; learning that the bright stars are worlds, also, and not "the Sky Lord's cows and buffaloes turned out at night to graze"; learning, above all, of Jesus, the "One above all others," who could be a friend



STREET PREACHING IN LONDON.

and helper in the sad lives of India's ignorant, oppressed women.

But now the rooms are silent, except for the soft footfall of the "Mem Sahib," as she paces up and down, thinking of the strange happenings of the last few days.

"It all began with the beating of that unfortunate boy," she says to herself, recalling how—a few days before as she was threading her way down an alley, with her old syce, who had seen a lad, closely followed by two men, dash across the street. After blows and yells, the lad had been dragged into a house and the door locked.

"Money lenders!" had been the syce's answer to her question. "Oh, yes! they may kill him; no one dares to interfere."

The missionary went straight to the police; the lad was found to be badly injured, and the case came into court. Then the Mem Sahib found out why "no one dared to interfere." For immediately a rumour spread, no one knew how, though one might guess whence, that a hungry goddess wanted one hundred and fifty little bodies, and that—some said, the Mem Sahib was engaged to provide them! Others who knew the missionary's gentle ministrations, said, "Oh, no!" but on their way to school they were kidnapped; and there was a third report, not so boldly uttered, that Queen Victoria was this hungry goddess!

Perhaps there were still other stories, at any rate the school was emptied, the missionary's work broken off, and the Adversary seemed to be triumphing.

"I can only pray and wait," said the missionary. But praying and waiting have often more splendid results than the most fussy and showy activity, and as this child of God waited, the father of one of her girls came begging—like that father of old—that she would come and heal his little daughter, who was at the point of death.

The missionary took her portable medicine-chest and her old syce, and set out at once. The Hindu girl was in a raging fever, and everything they had done had but aggravated her malady; but after twenty-four hours of skilful treatment the fever declined, the wild delirium abated; another twenty-four hours and the child showed that she was recovering. Then the father, who like most men of his nation, had been unwilling for the coming of a daughter, and yet was kind and affectionate in his way—wanted to overwhelm his benefactor with gifts; but she would take nothing.

"The only return I ask of you," said the wise Mem Sahib, "is that you shall put a simple question for me to your neighbours and friends. I do not ask you to answer the question, I only ask you to ask it. What can be the harm in asking a question?"

The grateful father promised, and kept his promise. And, lo! the question was answered by the opening again of the long, low school-room, by the hum of sweet young voices at work again on simple, suitable lessons, by the singing of Gospel hymns, and the uttering of prayers in that strange tongue.

What was this question that had defeated the malice of cunning adversaries, and given the missionary back her little dark-skinned pupils? This was the question put in the mouth of the father whose child had been healed: "If the Mem Sahib's medicine is so good for the body, may not her teaching be good for the heart?"

It was a little thing, not more than David's pebble from the brook, yet the giant Distrust was slain! And shall we not follow the one perfect Example who healed all manner of sickness and disease among the people, and then called upon them to believe, "for the very work's sake"? Shall not the healer of bodies go hand in hand with him who proclaims soul-healing, that together they may work the works of him from whom went forth both virtues? If there is an earnest-hearted lad or lassie among our readers to-day asking, "What shall I do with my life?" let these facts—for these are facts—from a far land suggest a glorious possibility of service.