

taken; then winding his handkerchief around his head, in urban fashion, he limped out in the direction of the voice.

Just around the corner of the house, under a great oak tree, a woman sat churning. From three smooth poles joined at the top to form a tripod, a goat skin bag hung by long leather straps. This was filled with cream, she was slapping it violently back and forth to time to her weird song.

Her feet were bare and she wore only a coarse cotton dress. But a gay red handkerchief covered her black hair, and heavy copper rings hung from her nose and ears.

The song stopped suddenly as she saw Joel. Then recognizing her master's guest, she smiled at him so broadly that he could see her pretty white teeth.

Joel hardly knew what to say at this unexpected encounter, but he thought himself to walk the way to the sheep-folds and the watch-tower. "It is a long way there," said the woman, doubtfully. Joel flushed as he felt her black eyes scanning his misshapen form.

Just then Sarah appeared in the door, and the maid repeated the question to her mistress.

"To be sure," she said. "You must go out and see our shepherds with their flocks. We have a great many employed just now, on all the surrounding hills. It hada, call your son, and bid him bring hither the donkey that he always drives to market."

The woman left her churning, and presently came back with a boy about Joel's age, leading a donkey with only one ear.

Joel knew what that meant. At some time in its life the poor beast had strayed into some neighbour's field, and the owner of the field had been at liberty to cut off an ear in punishment.

The boy that led him wore a long shirt of rough half-cloth. His feet and legs were brown and tanned. A shock of reddish sunburned hair was the only covering for his head. There was a squint in one eye, and his face was freckled.

He made an awkward obeisance to his mistress.

"Buz," she said, "this young lad is your master's guest. Take him out and show him the flocks and herds, and the sheep-folds. He has never seen anything of shepherd life, so be careful to do his pleasure. Stay!" she added to Joel. "You will not have time to visit them all before the mid-day meal, so I will give you a lunch, and you can enjoy an entire day in the fields."

As the two boys started down the hill, Joel stole a glance at his companion. "What a stupid-looking fellow!" he thought: "I doubt if he knows anything more than this sheepy beast I am riding. I wonder if he enjoys any of this beautiful world around him. How glad I am that I am not in his place."

Buz, trudging along in the dust, glanced at the little cripple on the donkey's back with an inward shiver.

"What a dreadful lot his must be," he thought. "How glad I am that I am not like he is!"

It was not very long till the shyness began to wear off, and Joel found that the stupid shepherd lad had a very busy brain under his shock of tangled hair. His eyes might squint, but they knew just where to look in the bushes for the little hedge-sparrow's nest. They could take unerring aim, too, when he sent the smooth sling-stones whizzing from the sling he carried.

"How far can you shoot with it?" asked Joel.

For answer Buz looked all around for some object on which to try his skill; then he pointed to a hawk slowly circling overhead. Joel watched him fit a smooth pebble into his sling; he had no thought that the boy could touch it at such a distance. The stone whizzed through the air like a bullet, and the bird dropped several yards ahead of them.

"See!" said Buz, as he ran to pick it up, and display it proudly. "I struck it in the head."

Joel looked at him with increasing respect. "That must have been the kind of sling that King David killed the giant with," he said, handing it back after a careful examination.

"King David?" repeated Buz, dully. "accuse to me I've heard of him, some

time or other; but I don't know about the giant."

"Why, where have you been all your life?" cried Joel, in amazement. "I thought everybody knew about that. Did you never go to a synagogue?"

Buz shook his bushy head. "They don't have synagogues in these parts. The master calls us in and reads to us on the Sabbath; but I always get sleepy when I sit right still, and so I generally get behind somebody and go to sleep. The shepherd's talk to each other a good deal about such things; I am never with them though I spend all my time running errands."

Shocked at such ignorance, Joel began to tell the shepherd king's life with such eloquence that Buz stopped short in the road to listen.

Seeing this the donkey stood still also, wagged its one ear and won't to sleep. But Buz listened, wider awake than he had ever been before in his life.

The story was a favourite one with Joel, and he put his whole soul into it.

"Who told you that?" asked Buz, taking a long breath when the interesting tale was finished.

"Why I read it myself!" answered Joel.

"Oh, can you read?" asked Buz, looking at Joel in much the same way that Joel had looked at him after he killed the hawk. "I do not see how anybody can. It puzzles me how people can look at all those crooked black marks and call

music of the shepherds' pipes played softly on the uplands.

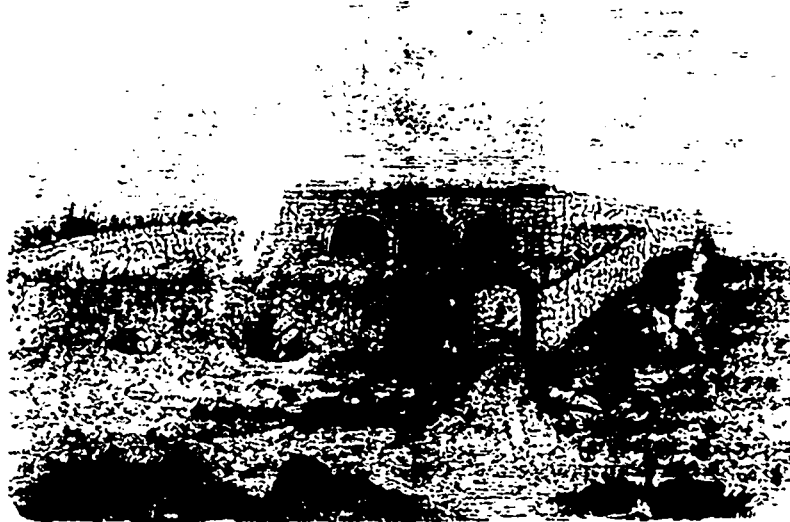
A distant rumble of thunder aroused them late in the afternoon; and they started up to find the shepherds calling in their flocks. The gaunt sheep dogs raced to and fro, bringing the straying goats together. The shepherds brought the sheep into line with well-aimed sling-shots, touching them first on one side, and then on the other, as oxen are guided by the touch of the goad.

Joel looked up at the darkening sky with alarm. "Who would have thought of a storm on such a day!" he exclaimed.

Buz cocked his eyes at the horizon. "I thought it might come to this," he said; "for as we came along this morning there were no spider-webs on the grass; the ants had not uncovered the doors of their hills; and all the signs pointed to wet weather. I thought though, that the time of the latter rains had passed a week ago. I am always glad when the stormy season is over. This one is going to be a hard one."

"What shall we do?" asked Joel.

Buz scratched his head. Then he looked at Joel. "You never could get home on that trifling donkey before it overtakes us; and they'll be worried about you. I'd best take you up to the sheep-fold. You can stay all night there, or comfortably. I'll run home and tell them where you are, and come back for you in the morning."



SHEEPFOLD.

them rivers and flocks and things. I looked one time, just where Master had been reading about a great battle. And I didn't see a single thing that looked like a warrior or a sword or a battle-axe, though he called them all by name. There were several little round marks that might have been meant for sling-stones; but it was more than I could make out, how he could get any sense out of it."

Joel leaned back and laughed till the hills rang, laughed till the tears stood in his eyes, and the donkey waked up and ambled on.

Buz did not seem to be in the least disturbed by his merriment, although he was puzzled as to its cause. He only stopped to pick up more stones for his sling as they went on.

It was not long till they came to some of the men,—great brawny fellows dressed in skins, with coarse matted hair and tanned faces. How little they knew of what was going on in the busy world outside their fields! As Joel talked to them he found that Caesar's conquests and Herod's murders had only come to them as vague rumours. All the petty wars and political turmoils were unknown to them. They could talk to him only of their flocks and their faith, both as simple as their lives.

Joel, in his wisdom learned of the Rabbis felt himself infinitely their superior, child though he was. But he enjoyed his day spent with them. He and Buz ate the ample lunch they had brought, dipped up water from the brook in cuns they made of oak-leaves, and both finally fell asleep to the droning

music of the shepherds' pipes played softly on the uplands. Joel hesitated, appalled at spending the night among such dirty men; but the heavy boom of thunder, steadily rolling nearer, silenced his half-spoken objection. By the time the donkey had carried him up the hillside to the stone-walled enclosure round the watch-tower, the shepherds were at the gates with their flocks.

Joel watched them go through the narrow passage, one by one. Each man kept count of his own sheep, and drove them under the rough sheds put up for their protection.

(To be continued.)

VICTORIA'S EARLY PIETY.

Even as a child Victoria was piously inclined. Until she was twelve years old she did not know that she was heir to the throne; at that age she found it out by a genealogical tree being left in her way. On asking if it was really true that she was the next to reign, and being informed that it was, she said, "Now, many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty; there is much splendour, but more responsibility." Then, raising her right hand, she added, "I will be good." Years after, when the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain came to tell her Majesty of her accession, she was roused from sleep at five o'clock in the morning. As soon as she was told that she was Queen of Great Britain, with a strong sense of her need of God's help in her new responsibility, she turned to the Archbishop, and kneeling down, said, "Let us pray."

Dare to Say "No."

Dare to say "No" when you're tempted to drink.
Pause for a moment, my brave boy, and think—
Think of the wreck upon life's ocean tossed
For answering "Yes," without counting the cost.
Think of the mother who bore you in pain!
Think of the tears that will fall like the rain;
Think of her heart, and how cruel the blow;
Think of her love and at once answer "No!"

Think of her hopes that are drowned in the bowl;
Think of the danger to body and soul
Think of sad lives once as pure as the snow;
Look at them now and at once answer "No!"
Think of a manhood with rum-tainted breath;
Think how the glass leads to sorrow and death;
Think of the homes that, now shadowed with woe,
Might have been heaven had the answer been "No!"

Think of lone graves both unwept and unknown,
Hiding fond hopes that were fair as your own;
Think of proud forms now for ever laid low,
That still might be here had they learned to say "No."
Think of the demon that lurks in the bowl,
Driving to ruin both body and soul;
Think of all this as life's journey you go
And when you're assailed by the tempter say "No!"

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, MAY 23, 1896.

THE HOMELINESS OF THE QUEEN.

The Spectator concludes a notice of the Queen's book, by saying that her Majesty, Queen though she be, is in everything a woman of homely impressions and homely affections. She thinks no domestic to be compared with her most devoted domestics, no girls cleverer and sweeter than her daughters, no courage more admirable than her sons'. She was as pleased with getting Dr. Norman McLeod's authority for being as much at Balmoral as she desired, as if Dr. Norman McLeod had been her constitutional adviser instead of one of her spiritual advisers. She is far from feeling too excited to take pleasure in being advised to do what she wishes to do. She is far from feeling too excited to be vexed by