

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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Palm Bearers.

WHEN Christ, as King, descended
The slopes of Olivet,
The gladdest of all visions
His sacred gaze that met,
Were throngs of Jewish children
That came in singing bands,
And pressed about him, bearing
Palm branches in their hands.

"Out of the mouths of children
Thou perfectest thy praise,"
He said, as their hosannas
Rang o'er the crowded ways.
"Out of the mouths of children,"
The same dear lips may say,
These hosts of happy children
Who meet him here to-day

We come with songs of triumph,
No doubtful Christ to own;
The Galilean Prophet
Is King upon the throne!
With greater gladness bearing
Our palms than those he met,
That day when he descended
The steep of Olivet.

O Saviour I may we children
Strive on till life shall cease,
To send to all the nations
The palm branch of thy peace!
And own our service, saying,
As in Judean days,
"Out of the mouths of children
God perfecteth his praise."

A FLOWER-SERMON.

A GOOD while ago I read an account of a Scotch traveller who went to Africa, and spent much time in trying to find the spot where the river Niger begins its course. He had been long on his journey, had crossed sandy deserts and deep streams, and walked up and down mountain paths, until he was almost wearied out.

One day he was plundered by robbers, and left almost naked and in great distress. Finding no water to drink, no shady tree to shelter him from the burning sun, covered with dust, and too much tired to take another step, he threw himself on the parched ground to die. He was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement, and was entirely alone, except that he was surrounded by savage animals. His spirits sunk within him. Thoughts of his cool, green, mountain home came over him; the faces of his beloved friends in far-distant Scotland were all remembered, and his heart was filled with sorrow. He thought no human being pitied him; and he even forgot the good God who has a care over all his creatures.

As he lay alone on the ground, with despair in his heart, he cast his sorrowful eyes around on the dry heath of the desert, and they rested on a tiny, bright flower of the moss, which preached him a little bit of sermon, only one moment long; but that sermon put faith into his heart, strength into his limbs, and brightness into his eyes. There on the burning sand, God had planted this sweet

blossom, unfolded, painted, and nourished it, for the comfort of this poor traveller. This little wayside missionary stood in silent beauty, and opened for his heart a way right up to heaven. He thought then of his heavenly Father.

Very likely his own dear mother had taught him, when a boy, the beautiful lily-sermon which Christ preached in Palestine so long ago. For there came to his mind the same thoughts which Jesus then expressed to his disciples, that if God so clothed and protected this tiny flower, much more would he care for him whose heart was now filled



PALM BEARERS.

with prayer and thankfulness. And then, without a cooling draught of water, without a morsel of bread, or even a refreshing breeze, he rose up full of hope, and went on his way, and soon arrived at a village, where the chief treated him very kindly.

Perhaps some of you recognize in this account the story about Dr. Mungo Park.

Ten cents per day, Christian smoker, will build a church in ten years, at \$36.50 per year, with ten years' interest.—*Buds and Blossoms.*

A LAND OF QUEER CUSTOMS.

ALL things are reversed in Holland. The main entrance to the finest public building in the country, the palace, or late town hall, of Amsterdam, is its back door. Bashful maidens hire beaux to escort them to the Kermis, or fair, or festival days. Timid citizens are scared in the dead of night by their own watchmen, who at every quarter of the hour make such a noise with their wooden clappers one would suppose the town to be on fire. You will see sleds used in summer there. They go bumping over the bare cobble stones, while the driver holds a dripping oil rag in advance of the runners to lessen the friction.

You will see streets of water, and the country roads paved as nicely as Broadway. You will see vessels hitched, like horses, to their owners' door posts, and a whole row of square-peaked houses leaning over the street as if they were getting ready to tumble. Instead of solemn striking clocks you will hear church chimes playing snatches of operatic airs every quarter of an hour by way of marking the time. You will see looking glasses hanging outside of the dwelling, and pincushions displayed on the street doors. The first are called *spionnen* (or *spionnetjen*), and are so arranged outside the windows, that persons sitting inside can, without being seen, enjoy a reflection of all that is going on in the street. They can learn too what visitor may be coming, and watch him rubbing his shoes to a polish before entering. The pincushion means that a new baby has appeared in the household. If white or blue, the new comer is a girl, if red, it is a little Dutchman. Some of these signals are very showy affairs, some are not cushions at all, but merely shingles trimmed with lace; and among the poorer class it is not unusual to see merely a white string tied to the door latch—fit token of the meagre life the poor little stranger is destined to lead.

Sometimes, instead of either pincushion or shingle, you will see a large placard hung outside of the front door. Then you may know that somebody in the house is ill, and his or her present condition is described on the placard for the benefit of inquiring friends, and sometimes when such a placard has been taken down, you may meet a grim looking man on the street, dressed in black tights, a short cloak, and a high hat, from which a long black streamer is flying. This is the Aanspreker, going from house to house, to tell certain persons that their friend is dead. He attends to funerals, and bears invitations to all friends whose presence may be desired. A strange, weird-looking figure he is, and he wears a peculiar, professional cast of countenance that is anything but comforting. All these customs are in striking contrast with those of America.