

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## Building a House.

BY LIZZIE DE ARMOND.

"My dear," said Mrs. Hummingbird,  
"I think we'll build to-day;  
Just stir yourself, and soon we'll have  
A house well under way.  
I found a safe and cozy spot  
Up in the apple tree,  
Where you and I can live at ease,  
And rear our family."

Now, Mr. Hummingbird was such  
A kind, good-natured fellow,  
He hastened to obey his wife,  
Brushed off his coat so yellow,  
With stripes of red and lustrous green,  
And straightened out his vest;  
Then, turning up his collar, swift  
He started on his quest,

To find material to build,  
Out in the field he spied  
Three snow-white horsehairs and a tuft  
Of old gray moss beside,  
A luckless sheep, in passing by  
The prior bush, had torn  
Some fleecy wool from off its back  
That very summer morn.

So Mr. Hummingbird toiled hard—  
He never liked to shirk—  
While Mrs. H. reviewed the things,  
Then also went to work.  
She hummed a merry little tune,  
Till wool and moss and hair  
Were woven in a dainty nest,  
Destined her eggs to bear.

The lining, something soft and fine  
It ought to be—ah! see  
That frowny-headed dandelion  
Under the apple tree!"  
Cried Mr. Hummingbird, and pulled  
The wig off in a trice.  
"Now, dear," quoth Mrs. Hum-  
mingbird,  
"Our home is surely nice."

Some twigs and moss she glued  
outside,  
So deftly and so well,  
That where the tiny nest was hung  
No robber birds could tell;  
And when within that cozy house  
Two eggs were laid with care,  
And hatched, no family around,  
With theirs could e'en compare.

## MENDING THE NETS.

The fisherman's wife, in the illustration, is trying to teach her little daughter how to mend her father's nets when they are broken, and they need mending very often. They are sitting on the beach and working away at the net as it hangs from the big fishing vessel. There is a certain way of making nets, and also a certain way of mending them, and they have to be well and strongly netted. Don't these things—the sea, the boat, the nets, and the mending—remind us of something we have read in the story of the life of Jesus? Didn't the Master call two of his noblest disciples to leave their lowly occupation of mending the nets with their father on the shores of Galilee, to come and follow him? And these two men, James and John, left their work and their home and their friends, and cast in their lot with him who had not where to lay his head. Do you think Christ would have called them if they had not been doing anything?

## THE JEWS' PLACE OF WALLING.

J. James Tissot, the distinguished French illustrator of the Life of Christ, writes in *The Century* for April of a walk "Round About Jerusalem," and gives this picturesque description of a scene at the Wall of Lamentation:  
Let us now turn down into the Jews' quarter, and go to the Wall of Lamentation. Friday is the best day to choose for this, because on that day the Israel-

ites are there in greater number, and one thus has a wider variety of types at hand. All along this old Solomonian wall, every stone of which is of the greatest antiquity, are leaning crowds of men, most of whom are clad in more or less shabby fur greatcoats. The majority of them seem to be poor, but one must not be certain as to that point. Some hold their heads in their hands and press their brows against the wall; others read. From time to time one will sob whereat all the rest begin to weep and wall in the most doleful manner. I saw among those present many who had real sorrows, profound griefs, several of whom

forts us, and we go through life aided, sustained, and uplifted by it."

## A LEGEND OF THE DELUGE.

The Hydahs, of Alaska, occupy Prince of Wales Island. They have a tradition of a great deluge, which covered all the land and mountains; the people tried to save their lives by taking to their canoes, anchoring them to the highest mountain peak, in proof of which they point you to an anchor stone now on top of the highest mountain on Prince of Wales Island. But despite all this, every liv-

## THE RABBIT IN THE MOON.

I suppose every boy and girl on this side of the world has heard of the man in the moon, and has looked many a time for his jolly round face in the great silver ball in the heavens. But our opposite neighbours, the Chinese young folk, look for a rabbit in the moon.

Once upon a time, the story runs, there was a grand meeting of animals in China to do honour to the god who was their special friend and protector. On a high hill there was an altar built of stone for sacrifice to the deity. The wood was piled upon it, and the priest stood by with his torch waiting for the beasts of the field and wood to come and lay their offerings upon the altar. And first there came from the jungles of Tibet the lion, the great king of the forest. Advancing with stately step he declared with a mighty roar that he would use his great strength for the support of his god, he would crush to the earth and tear in pieces any enemy who offered him insult.

As the great beast retired into the forest, the beautiful and fleet horse pranced forth. Proudly curving his neck, he spoke, saying that his deity might rely on his swiftness at any moment. The lion was strong and savage, but where speed was required he was useless. At any moment, he said, he was ready to travel on the errands of the god anywhere over the broad earth; and he would carry his friend into safety, and bring to him news of the treason of his enemies. And then with a graceful leap the horse bounded away and in a moment was out of sight. Then the cow stepped forth in her gentle way, and promised to nourish all little children who were in the god's favour; and the patient ox declared that he would drag, day after day, great stones for the building of the temple in honour of the deity. The dog offered to sit before the entrance and defend the holy place from all unworthy to enter. The tiger and the leopard, the elephant, and even the anaconda, each and all came forth and promised to use their power to the glory of their god. The gay and brilliant birds of Asia, perching in the trees overhead, all sang praises in his honour, and declared that the groves around the temple should ever resound with their songs.

And then, last of all, in the humblest, quietest manner, a little white beastie hopped forth from the shade, a timid little rabbit. In a gentle voice he said that he was neither strong, nor fleet, nor graceful, nor in any way useful, and as he had nothing to offer whereby his god could be glorified, he desired to offer himself, and without another word he leaped forward and cast himself on the smoking pile. The Chinese say that the god was so pleased that he placed the modest little rabbit in the moon, and said he should always be kept in honourable remembrance.

## THE STORY OF A PARROT.

A parrot, in a remote country district, escaped from its cage and settled on the roof of a labourer's cottage. When it had been there a little time, the labourer caught sight of it. He had never seen such a thing before, and after gazing in admiration at the bird with its curious beak and beautiful plumage, he fetched a ladder and climbed up it with a view of securing so great a prize. When his hand reached the level of the top of the roof, the parrot flopped a wing at him and said, "What d'ye want?" Very much taken aback, the labourer politely touched his cap and replied, "I beg your pardon, sir, I thought you were a bird!"



MENDING THE NETS.

were fine, dark Jewish types, and who, I learned, had come from Portugal. What touched me most deeply, however, and that which at the same time caused the tears to dim many an eye, was the sight of a group of Jewish women. They were moving slowly away, with tears streaming gently down their cheeks, they murmured softly to themselves or were quite silent. They would walk a few paces, then turn gracefully about, and drawing their hands from their black mits, they would throw a good-bye kiss, a last adieu, to their beloved wall—their consoler, their confidant, their true friend. "For," said an honest Jew who often acted as guide for me in my many wanderings about Jerusalem, "this wall is a friend to whom we confide all our sorrows; it has known our fathers when they were happy and prosperous, it sees us now in our misery and many troubles, it links us with the past, it consoles us, it com-

ing thing perished, except a solitary raven.

When the waters subsided, so the tale runs, the lone raven flew to the beach, when, lo! it heard above the roar of the elements the cries of babes. It saw a huge shell cast up high and dry, this the raven succeeded in opening, where upon there trooped out a legion of small people, who, thanking the raven for their deliverance, promised to care for it evermore. These were the Hydahs, and the raven has always been held in superstitious regard by them.

"You must be broken of that bad habit of yours," said Johnny's father, when he gave him his third scolding about playing with fire.

Johnny looked at him thoughtfully. "Father," said he, "hadn't I better be mended 'stead of broken?"