

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVII.]

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 6, 1897.

No. 6.

The Sunshine.

The sunshine is a glorious thing
That comes alike to all,
Lighting the peasant's lowly cot,
The noble's painted hall.

The music of the birds is heard,
Borne on the passing breeze,
As sweetly from the hedgerows as
From old ancestral trees.

There are as many lovely things,
As many pleasant tones,
For those who dwell by cottage hearths
As those who sit on thrones.

TWO BRAVE CHILDREN.

This story is told by a Western paper: "The sky at night in the vicinity of Apple Creek, in Dakota, was red all around the horizon, and people knew that prairie fires were burning. Every evening as darkness fell the farmers saw the glare becoming more and more distinct, and during the day the smoke increased until it got to be almost suffocating. Not far from Apple Creek is the little village of Sterling, and near Sterling lived the Stevens family. Mr. Stevens was away from home on the day that the fire approached his house, and it so happened that his wife was sick in bed. Their children were a girl of eight years and a boy of eleven. The boy had heard that it was a good thing to plough a furrow across the path of the advancing flames, and about noon of the day in question he tried to protect the property in that manner. With the two-horse team and the plough he cut a trench around the house and the sheds, and then another trench around the stacks of unthreshed wheat. He was not strong enough to plough the trench to a great depth; but the wide line of damp earth thrown up would be hard for the flames to leap across, especially since his little sister followed him around, carrying away all trash that would add to the fury of the flames. That night the fire was so near that the poor woman thought of getting out of bed with the purpose of attempting to escape, but she was too ill to try such a thing. Moreover, she knew that if her husband could reach the house he would come, and she watched and prayed as the light came into her room from the crimson skies without. When the flames, running before the wind, came down upon the Stevens' place they licked up the fences in a jiffy, swept away the shocks of grain and stacks of hay in the fields, and then rolled suddenly up to the furrows ploughed by the boy. The wheat stacks fell a prey, and numberless sparks were scattered around the house; but the brave boy and his sister ran all about, trampling out the fire wherever it caught. The little workers were desperate, for they knew that should the house burn their poor mother surely would perish in her bed. They fought with brooms, shovels, and water. Wherever they could they dug up fresh earth, and for

a quarter of an hour they did not pause a single moment. Once the house caught, and the wood began to add its crackling to the rush and roar of the vast prairie fire; but the children dashed bucket after bucket of water upon the burning spot, and so put it out. They carried the day. The great fire swept past, and in its wake came the father, half frantic with joy, to find that his little hero and heroine had saved their mother's life.

A SPELLING-BEE.

"I'm going to have a spelling-bee to-night," said Uncle John, "and I'll give a pair of skates to the boy who can best spell 'man.'"

The children turned and stared into one another's eyes.

"Best spell 'man,' Uncle John? Why, there's only one way!" they cried.

"There are all sorts of ways," replied Uncle John. "I leave you to think of it a while."

"I think this is Joe's to tell," interrupted Uncle John. "How was it, boy?"

"Why," said Joe, "I thought the girls had as much right on the pond as the boys. So I spoke to one or two of the bigger boys, and they thought so, too, and we stopped it all. I thought it was mean to treat girls that way."

There came a flash from Uncle John's pocket. The next minute the skates were on Joe's knee.

"The spelling-match is over," said Uncle John, "and Joe has won the prize."

Three bewildered faces mutely questioned him.

"Boys," he answered, gravely, "we've been spelling 'man,' not in letters, but in acts. I told you there were different ways, and we've proved it here to-night. Think over it, boys, and see."

"Katie, why haven't you warmed my study better? The thermometer shows only fifty-eight degrees!" "But, Professor, for so small a room it seems to me fifty-eight degrees are enough."

BISHOP ADJAI CROWTHER.

A SLAVE WHO BECAME A BISHOP.

American travellers in England, as a rule, make a pilgrimage to the ancient cathedral of Canterbury, which is filled with associations of moment to the historian and the Christian. Here the Crusaders kept vigil before departing to the Holy Land. Here Becket was murdered. The stone steps are still here, worn in deep hollows by the knees of countless pilgrims in past centuries. Every stately pillar and carved stone has its record of dim, far-off days in English history.

One scene, however, which was witnessed in this great minster, is more significant to Americans, vexed as they are with their race problems, than any murder or coronation.

Here, before the high altar, with all the solemn splendour of the ceremonial of the English Church, a poor freed slave, with a skin as black as coal, was consecrated the first bishop of the Niger.

Adjai, a Yoruba boy of twelve, was taken prisoner with his mother by the Foulah tribe, and sold to Portuguese slave-traders. His mother was left in Africa. An English man-of-war ran down the slave-ship, and they brought out from the hold the wretched prisoners frantic with terror at the white skins and blue eyes of their rescuers. They mistook the cannon-balls on deck for skulls, and the carcass of a hog in the cook's cabin for a human body, and tried to escape from the supposed cannibals by jumping into the sea.

The boy Adjai, was sent to the mission school at Sierra Leone. There he was taught the Christian faith, and trained to be a carpenter. He was baptized

under the name of Samuel Crowther, but kept, too, his own name, Adjai, saying proudly:

"I am Christian. But I am always black and Yoruba."

He proved to be so faithful and practical, both as Christian and negro, that he was sent to England to make known the condition and wants of his people. Large sums were given him, which he used with much sagacity for his race. The Queen sent Bibles, Prince Albert a steel corn-mill, and other farming implements, which Adjai taught his people how to use.

On his second visit he was made bishop. He returned to his own tribe, and after long search found his mother. He took her to his home, and she became a devout servant of Christ, and lived to a great age. But she persisted in wearing always the decent Yoruba costume, and in speaking that language, answering all arguments by saying:

"I am negro. Jesus will know me in my own skin and in my blanket."

No man in Africa served the Master more faithfully than Bishop Adjai Crowther. The thoughtful reader in the story of his life can find a meaning which, rightly used, will uplift his own.

The pond is an ocean to the tadpole.



PALACE OF DOM PEDRO I.

PALACE OF DOM PEDRO I.

Few things in history are more remarkable than the sudden and almost bloodless revolution which hurled from the throne of the vast Empire of Brazil, Dom Pedro, one of the most beneficent and liberty-loving monarchs the world has ever known. In his case the often quoted saying was abundantly verified, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Doubtless when this unquiet dignity was laid aside, he enjoyed more real comfort and repose than when bearing the burdens of an empire.

"I ought to study photography," mused the seaside young man who had proposed again. "I really ought. I can develop more negatives in a given time than anybody I know of."

When going through a coal mine it is necessary to carry a safety-lamp, in order to throw a light across the path. The light prevents many a stumble over the uneven ground. This world is full of the darkness of sin; snares and temptations lie in the Christian's path; but if he carries with him the lamp of God's word, it will show him where the danger lies, and so keep him from falling.

And he buttoned up his coat and went away.

"What does he mean?" asked Bob. "I think it's a joke," said Harry, thoughtfully, "and when Uncle John asks me, I'm going to say, 'Why, m-a-n, of course.'"

"It's a conundrum, I know," said Joe; and he leaned his head on his hand and settled down to think.

Time went slowly to the puzzled boys for all their fun that day. It seemed as if that after-supper time would never come; but it came at last, and Uncle John came too with a shiny skate-runner peeping out of his great-coat pocket.

Uncle John did not delay; he sat down and looked straight into Harry's eyes.

"Been a good boy to-day, Hal?"

"Yes—no," said Harry, flushing. "I did something Aunt Mag told me not to do, because Ned Barnes dared me to. I can't bear a boy to dare me. What's that to do with spelling 'man'?" he added, half to himself.

But Uncle John had turned to Bob.

"Had a good day, my boy?"

"Haven't had fun enough," answered Bob, stoutly. "It's all Joe's fault, too. We boys wanted the pond to ourselves for one day, and we made up our minds that when the girls came we'd clear them off. But Joe, he—"