

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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ISRAELITES TOILING IN EGYPT.

It is recorded in our lesson for May 13th that the Egyptians set over the Israelites task-masters to afflict them with burdens. "And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Rameses. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service wherein they made them serve was with rigour."

These great cities, built by the unremunerated toil of generations of slaves, are to this day a memorial of the tyranny and cruelty of the Egyptians, and the suffering of their victims. On the walls of some of these buildings are seen pictures of the toiling Israelites making brick in the fields and suffering under the lash of their cruel taskmasters.

But soon God was to prepare a deliverance for his people, to lead them through the Red Sea and to overwhelm their oppressors with confusion. To-day the very names of the Egyptians are known chiefly through the ruined monuments of their former greatness, while the despised Jews became the depositories for ages of the knowledge of the true God. Though for their unbelief scattered throughout the nations, they are still in a large degree the bankers, the statesmen, the artists, poets, philosophers and physicians of the leading nations of the world.

A ROYAL SAFEGUARD.

BY S. B. T.

"GOOD-BYE, mother. You know it is best that I go."

"I do know it, my son; but I foresee your temptation. Take the motto of your little society as your own: 'Loyalty to Christ in all things.'"

"I will, mother dear. A loyal soldier, with God's help."

Thus did Ben Bassett go out from the brown farmhouse, at eighteen, to begin his life-battle. It was early dawn when the farewells were spoken, and mid-afternoon found him standing, bewildered, in a crowded railroad station in New York City.

Only one soul did he know in the great metropolis. Cousin John Bassett's card, with his address, was in his hand. How should he ever find him? Never in all his life had he felt so utterly alone.

He was looking about for a policeman, when a well-dressed man, with an insinuating smile, asked:

"What can I do for you, my friend?"

Ben turned to him with a feeling of relief, showed him his cousin's address, saying:

"I am a stranger in the city, and do not know how to find the place."

"Come right along with me," the man

said, blandly. "I am going that way myself, and can guide you as well as not."

The fellow's manner did not altogether inspire Ben with confidence. Yet, quite ignorant of city rogues, he went with him, not knowing what else to do. His companion introduced himself as "Mr. Hopkins, sir, very much at your service."

As they walked along, Ben noticed sus-

It was a test moment for Ben. Should he offend his guide, who had kindly offered to help him in his perplexity? He need not drink. The hesitation was only for a moment. "Loyalty to Christ" would not permit him to enter such a place.

He declined going in, offering to wait outside. Mr. Hopkins's face darkened. He seized Ben's arm as if to force him in,

the police have their eyes on him. Now, where do you want to go?"

Ben handed him Cousin John's address. The officer considered a moment, then said:

"He led ye way off the track, sure. Pretty sort of guide he was! Here, sonny," he called to a newsboy, who had just sold out his afternoon papers, "take this young gentleman to Washington street, and be quick about it. He'll give ye a dime."

Ben would gladly have promised twice that amount, small as his stock of money was, for safe guidance. He thankfully followed his small conductor, who rattled off such a surprising amount of information, as they walked along, that the country boy was quite impressed.

It was a two-mile journey to find Cousin John, but Ben reached his destination safely at last. His heart was full of reverent thanksgiving for his deliverance. "Loyalty to Christ in all things," had proved a royal safeguard in imminent peril.

THE POWER OF HABIT.

YOUTH is the forming time of habits and these, unless carefully watched, will grow until they bind like ropes and handcuffs. There are few young men who are awakened to the evils of a bad habit in time to conquer as did a certain young man who had thoughtlessly formed the habit of taking a glass of liquor every morning before breakfast.

An elder friend advised him to quit before the habit should grow too strong for him.

"Oh, there's no danger; it's a mere notion. I can quit any time," replied the drinker.

"Suppose you try it tomorrow morning," suggested the friend.

"Very well; to please you I'll do so, but I assure you there's no cause for any alarm."

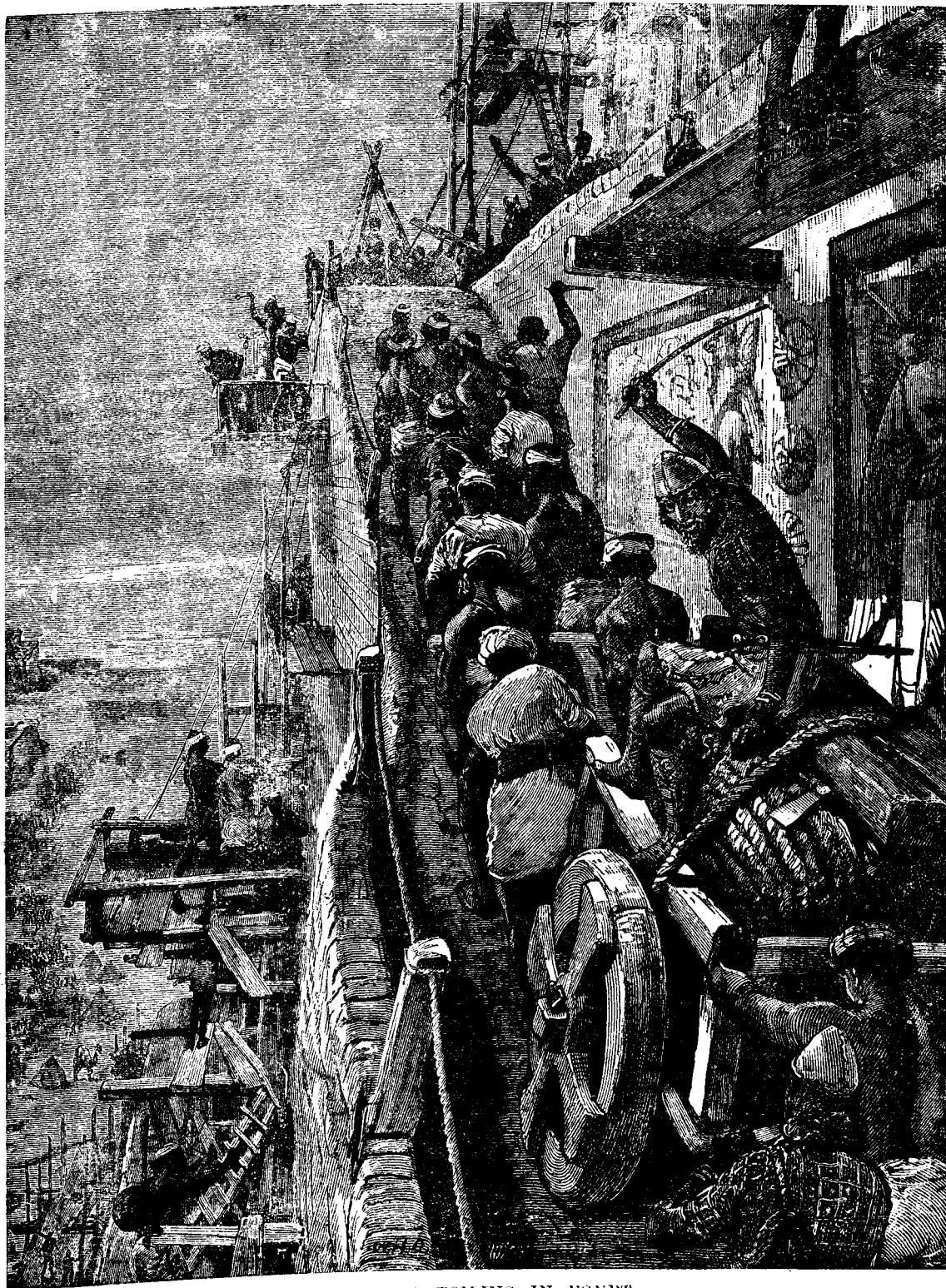
A week later the young man met his friend again.

"You are not looking well," observed the latter, "have you been ill?"

"Hardly," replied the other. "But I am trying to escape a dreadful danger, and I fear it will be long before I have conquered. My eyes were opened to an imminent peril when I gave you that promise a week ago. I thank you for your timely suggestion."

"How did it affect you?" inquired the friend.

"The first trial utterly deprived me of appetite for food. I could eat no breakfast, and was nervous and trembling all day. I was alarmed when I realized how insidiously the habit had fastened on me, and resolved to turn square about and never touch another drop. The squaring off has pulled me down severely, but I am gaining, and I mean to keep the upper hand after this. Strong drink will never catch me in his net again."



ISRAELITES TOILING IN EGYPT.

picious glances cast in their direction. But Mr. Hopkins talked so pleasantly, skillfully drawing from Ben his personal affairs, that he could not believe there was anything wrong.

It seemed to Ben they had walked miles, when Mr. Hopkins, stopping in front of a saloon, said:

"Come in, Mr. Bassett, and we will drink to better acquaintance."

when the appearance of a policeman caused him to vanish.

The officer questioned Ben closely. The lad's evident honesty and ignorance of city ways cleared him of suspicion.

"Better be thankful, lad, that ye didn't go in. Ten chances to one, ye'd never have come out alive. That rogue makes a business of robbing green fellows like you, when they come to the city. He knows