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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK. Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 24, 1900

ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE!

Dr. Chalmers, describing Methodism in a phrase said, "They were all at it, and always at it." That is the reason of its success. It is because the people, and all the people, had a mind to work that the walls of Zion have gone up. The Sunday-schools and Epworth Leagues have a very important part to play in bringing to completion this Twentieth Century Thinkings Fund. It would be a disaster if this were left to the generous donors of large sums. It is important that every scholar, however humble, every scholar, however poor, should have some part in this great work. This has been the secret of the success of the movement in Great Britain, and also of the grand missionary work of Methodism for the last hundred years. It is more by the peccot of the poor than the poudness of the rich, that these missions triumphs have been won, that hundreds of missionaries have been sent to the foreign field, that thousands of prayers have gone up to God for their success. So it will be in connection with our own great mission work, and especially with this Twentieth Century Movement. Dr. Potts has already received pledges for about \$500,000 of this fund. The remainder of \$400,000 will be by far the hardest to obtain. It can only be secured by the hearty effort of every school and League throughout the entire of Canadian Methodism. We have pleasure in

presenting and endorsing to the utmost extent possible the following urgent appeal from the General Secretary of the Twentieth Century Thinkings Fund To the Sunday school Superintendent. My Dear Brother, In the good providence of God you are placed in a position of extraordinary responsibility and influence to place the name of every scholar of the Twentieth Century can hardly be over-estimated. The Twentieth Century Thinkings Fund should appeal strongly to the Sunday schools of the Connexion. Many have organized with the determination to place the name of every scholar on the Historic Roll. With intelligent organization and aggressive work this should not be very difficult. Has your school been organized? If not please organize it, and so that you may complete the work within the year and if possible by October. Kindly inform me of your action re the T. C. T. F. Ever yours,

JOHN POTTS, Gen Sec. Victoria College, Toronto.

BILLY'S CRUTCH

"Will you please buy my geranium, sir?" If a musical voice by a bright face and a beautiful plant, all belonging to a young girl with dimpled cheeks and laughing blue eyes, will not bring a man to a standstill then it must be that he is hurrying at least too fast that he wants nothing to come into his life that will gladden his heart and renew his youth.

I came to a full stop, and would not have missed that sight for a good deal. As the girl stood there on that bright October morning, it was difficult to tell where the sunshine left off and where the girl began. They were fast made for each other. It was not difficult to catch with the dividing line hard to discern. "Have you any objection to tell me your name?" "Oh, no, sir! My name's Gertrude."

"What a beautiful geranium you have there. Isn't it lovely?" "Indeed it is, and the finest I ever saw. Where did you get it?"

About three years ago a lady left a slip lying on the seat in a horse-car. I took it home, got the richest dirt I could find, put it in this old pot, and then set the slip in it, and it began growing right away. I've given it plenty of water to drink, and kept it in the sunshine as much as possible.

"Why, I should think you would love it." "Love it! I guess I do love it. It seems just like a part of myself." "Well, my dear, if you love it so much, pray tell me why you do it, if I sell it?" "Oh, I don't care if you do, I don't want to help God answer Billy's prayer. Don't you think it splendid to help answer somebody's prayer?"

"How do you know I believe in prayer?" "Oh, I am sure you do, for you have said such a prayerful look."

She broke out into a merry laugh, and I joined her in it, as I said "Yes, I do believe in prayer. Now tell me who Billy is?"

As I made this request, a joyous look came into her face, and her large blue eyes shone with delight, and as the simple depend on it, she handed me a picture that was worth going a long way to see.

"What! Billy? Oh, he's the nicest and best little fellow in all the city. Why, he is going to shine and make all in one lump. Somebody let him drop when he was quite young and broke his hip, and ever since he has been a cripple. But his leg is the only crooked thing about him. My mother says that Billy's mother was the best Christian she ever knew. Well, when she died last year, everybody in our tenement house wanted to adopt Billy, so you see he belongs to all us. He pays his way by selling newspapers, and no one with good legs can get around livelier than Billy can with a crutch. But yesterday his crutch caught in a hole in the sidewalk, broke in two and he fell. He couldn't be managed to get in the house, and was not hurt. Well, last night, just as I was going to bed, I heard Billy praying. His room was next to mine, and only a board parted all us. He says his way by saying 'I shall never forget his words, as he said: 'Dear Lord, I've never complained about my broken hip, and I am willing to go through life with it, but I can't get on without a crutch. I've no money to

get another, and I don't know who to ask, so please, dear Lord, send me another one. Mother always told me to go to you when I was in trouble and no other way. Please, dear Lord, answer my prayer, for Jesus' sake. Amen.' "I laid away a good while thinking of that prayer and it was the first thing I thought of this morning. I couldn't do something to help God answer Billy's prayer. Well, while I was wondering I saw my geranium, and then I said: 'Oh, maybe I can sell it and get enough to buy another crutch!'"

"Now you know who Billy is, and why I want to sell my geranium. Won't you, please buy it?" She was greatly moved and interested, and I'll own up to a great deal of moisture about my eyes as I inquired, "How tall is Billy?"

"Oh," she quickly responded, "I've got the measure of his old crutch, if that is what you mean."

"Yes, that is just what I mean, so if you please, Gertrude, we'll go and see about a crutch."

"I can't take me long to find a store where such things were to be procured, nor a great while to get the keeper of the store as much interested as I was in the girl's story. Just as the right kind of crutch was found, and a minimum price put upon it."

"Well," I said, "I'll give you that much for the geranium, Gertrude, and it is very cheap at that."

"Oh, thank you," she said, and her eyes fairly danced with gladness. "I'll take the crutch, please, but Billy mustn't know a word about where it came from. Can't I just pretend to help God answer Billy's prayer?"

The moisture in my eyes didn't subside one bit, as I said, "I want you to do me a favour, Gertrude, and please to keep it as good as from the place where I live, and I can't carry this plant around with me. Would it be too much trouble for you to keep it for me?"

"Oh, do you want me to take care of it for you?" "Yes, my dear, if it will not be too much trouble."

"Oh, you splendid man, you! I'll be glad to do it, and I'll take as good care of it as I did when it was mine."

I carried the plant, while she carried the crutch, and after reaching the house, Billy was called in to see me, while Gertrude amused the crutch into his room, and came back with her face as happy as a face could be, but never betraying to Billy, by word or look, that she had been answering Billy's prayer.

It was not long before Billy had a new crutch, and he is the happiest cripple in the big city. Gertrude helped answer his prayer, and a happier girl don't live. I own the handsomest geranium bush in the city, and I'll take as good care of it for me as I proud as I am of that plant."

WHO WAS AESOP? BY D. VIRGINIA FARLEY. AESOP, the celebrated fabulist, was born about 620 B.C. He is supposed to have been the son of a free man, but the date of his birth is uncertain; as a number of Grecian cities claim the honour.

While quite young he was brought to Athens as a slave. He faithfully served his master, and was afterwards manumitted on his wit and beauty of mind, he was given his freedom. It is said that AESOP was at one time the chief servant of a philosopher named Xanthus. One day Xanthus died, and he was directed to some of his friends, and he instructed AESOP to buy for the dinner "the very best things in the market."

AESOP went to market, bought a great number of tongues, then told the cook to serve them with different sauces. When the dinner was ready there were tongues in all styles, but not one thing else!

Xanthus was enraged. He called AESOP to him, and said: "I ordered you to buy the very best things in the market. Why did you not obey me?" "I did obey you, Master Xanthus," AESOP replied, "but I placed anything better than tongues. Is not the tongue the bond of civil society, the key of sciences, and organ of truth and reason?"

It is not by and means of the tongue that you can give to the poor, only such things as you would not miss out of your great abundance! Is that true charity to the poor, little niece?" and Aunt Lena told the rosy-cheeked face between both hands.

"No, auntie," said Bessie, and then jumped up. "Where are you going, Bessie?" "I am going to dress Rosampend and Redlegs in new gowns, dolls, and give them to Mary Flanagan and Katie Humel; and I think I will shine the runners of my old sled and give it to Katie's little brother, Johnny, for, though I dearly love you, I don't like to see you give things as you would not miss out of your great abundance! Is that true charity to the poor, little niece?" and Aunt Lena told the rosy-cheeked face between both hands.

of nothing but tongues! Xanthus, violently angry, demanded an explanation of AESOP.

"Master," said AESOP, "you told me to buy for dinner to-day the worst things in the market. Is there anything worse than tongues? Is not the tongue the instrument of strife and contention, the fomentor of lawsuits, and the source of divisions and wars? Is not the tongue the organ of error, of lies, of calumny, and blasphemy?"

AESOP convinced his master that the tongue, when used aright, may be considered the best of all things, and the very worst when put to any other use. Soon after AESOP was given his freedom he visited Croesus, the Lydian king, whose name was then, and is now, a synonym for great wealth. He said many wise things to Croesus, and became well acquainted with Solon, "the great lawgiver." He went to Athens, and while there composed the fable of Jupiter and the frogs for the instruction of the Athenian citizens.

About 654 B.C. AESOP met with a cruel death. Croesus sent him to Delphi with a large sum of money that he wished to have distributed among the poor. But a dispute arose on the matter, and AESOP refused to distribute the money. Thereupon the Delphians became angry, accused him of sacrilege, and hurried him from a public place. He was afterwards banished by some authorities that AESOP left no written fables; but it is a fact that fables bearing his name were popular in the city of Athens when the literary period was at its zenith. Epworth Herald.

SOMETHING ABOUT GIVING.

"Aunt Lena, if I were rich I would give over so much to the poor, said Bessie. Soon after AESOP was given his freedom he visited Croesus, the Lydian king, whose name was then, and is now, a synonym for great wealth. He said many wise things to Croesus, and became well acquainted with Solon, "the great lawgiver." He went to Athens, and while there composed the fable of Jupiter and the frogs for the instruction of the Athenian citizens.

"And what would you give them, Bessie?" asked her Aunt Lena. "I would give them lots of balls, sleds, and tops; and to the little girls I would give boxes and boxes of dolls," Bessie answered.

"But why don't you give the poor some of these nice things now?" Aunt Lena asked, stroking one of the girl's long curls.

"Oh, auntie, you know I have no money!" exclaimed Bessie, widely opening her brown eyes.

"But you have three dolls, any one of which would no doubt make little Mary Flanagan as happy as I am."

"But I think you've so much of all my dolls, and I couldn't bear to part with one," said the little girl.

"Then you would like to be rich so that you could give to the poor only such things as you would not miss out of your great abundance! Is that true charity to the poor, little niece?" and Aunt Lena told the rosy-cheeked face between both hands.

"No, auntie," said Bessie, and then jumped up. "Where are you going, Bessie?" "I am going to dress Rosampend and Redlegs in new gowns, dolls, and give them to Mary Flanagan and Katie Humel; and I think I will shine the runners of my old sled and give it to Katie's little brother, Johnny, for, though I dearly love you, I don't like to see you give things as you would not miss out of your great abundance! Is that true charity to the poor, little niece?" and Aunt Lena told the rosy-cheeked face between both hands.

Catherine and the Joke. BY ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL. Marjorie's merry and sprightly. Full of her whimsies and jokes; Catherine's gentle and winning. Demurest of little folks.

One night, at the sandman's hour, In their little white bed upstairs, These two little maidens lay talking - After their whispered prayers.

"I'll tell you a joke—now, listen!" I overheard Marjorie say. And her clear little, dear little voice ran on, In its own bewitching way.

And then, of a sudden, it ended; A little silence—a pause— And I knew that Marjorie waited, Impatient, for her applause.

But nobody laughed in the darkness. "Can't you see a joke, Catherine?" Marjorie cried, and Catherine replied: "Of course, I can't; in the dark."