

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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A Brother of Men.

BY IDA WEIPPLE BENHAM.

He was a mighty emperor,
He ruled in pride and power;
He trampled many a human heart
As a foot may crush a flower.

The jewels in his coronet
Were scorn and fear and hate;
The menace of his angry nod
Was like the frown of fate.

To exile, to prison,
To torture and to death;
And women toiled with bleeding hearts,
And men with bated breath.

The elders and the fathers
Sat listless in the gate:
They bowed their beards upon their breasts,
And sadly whispered, "Wait!"

He was a mighty emperor,
He stretched him on his bed;
And ho! the sentry on the wall
Proclaimed the czar is dead!"

They plucked away his costly robe,
They washed him clean and white;
They wrapped him in his winding-sheet,
And he lay in all men's sight.

As once within his mother's arms
A tender babe he lay,
So harmless, aye, so helpless he
Upon his burial day!

The scorn had vanished from his lip,
The menace from his brow:
"He was the czar," the old men sighed,
He is our brother now.

"Would he had learned the lesson
In those years of power and pride—
Would that the czar had learned to be
Our brother ere he died."

CARAVAN IN SIBERIA.

SIBERIA is one of the vastest and dreariest countries in the world. For nearly four thousand miles it stretches across the northern part of Asia. Much of it is composed of bleak steppes and vast marshes, where the earth is often frozen to the depth of many feet, and indeed scarcely ever thaws out even in mid-summer.

In some of the remotest parts of this bleak country are the mines of silver and gold and other precious metals where the Siberian exiles are compelled to toil away their lives. Many of these exiles are sent to the mines for political offences—that is, they may have loved liberty too well, or spoken disrespectfully of the Czar or of some of his officers. These pilgrims are sent hundreds of miles into the interior, suffering incredible hardships and many of them dying by the wayside.

But the whole country is not a desert. There are great fertile areas where wheat and other grain will grow, and an extensive commerce in the productions of the country and the further Orient exists. Even tea and other productions of China are brought by caravans of camels in the summer, and by sledges, such as are shown in our cut in the winter, to the great fairs of Russia.

Wherever the telegraph wires extend, one feels that he is within touch at least with civilization. We felt this strongly in some of the wildest parts of Palestine and Syria. As we looked at the wires skirting the roadside we felt that there was a link with home and native land.

BRITISH NERVE.

It was in India. Dinner was just finished in the mess-room, and several English officers were sitting about the table. Their bronzed faces had the set but not unkindly look common among military men. The conversation at best had not been animated, and just now there was a lull, as the night was too hot for small talk. The major of the regiment, a clean-cut man of fifty-five, turned towards his next neighbour at the table, a young subaltern, who was leaning back in his chair with his

"Do you think," continued the major, and his voice just trembled a little, "do you think you can keep absolutely still for, say, two minutes—to save your life?"

"Are you joking?"

"On the contrary, move a muscle and you are a dead man. Can you stand the strain?"

The subaltern barely whispered, "Yes," and his face paled slightly.

"Burke," said the major, addressing an officer across the table, "pour some of

report of the major's revolver, and the snake lay dead upon the floor.

"Thank you, Major," said the subaltern, as the two men shook hands warmly. "You have saved my life."

"You're welcome, my boy," replied the senior. "But you did your share."—*Youth's Companion.*

MOTHER'S LAST LESSON.

A MOTHER lay dying. Her little son not knowing of the sorrow coming to him, went, as was his custom, to her chamber saying: "Please to teach me my verse, mamma, and then kiss me and bid me good-night! I am very sleepy but no one has heard me say my prayers." "Hush!" said a lady who was watching beside her, "your dear mother is too ill to hear your prayers to-night," and coming forward, she sought gently to lead him from the room. Roger began to sob as if his heart would break. "I cannot go to bed without saying my prayers—indeed I cannot." The ear of the dying mother caught the sound. Although she had been insensible to everything around her, the sob of the darling aroused her from her stupor, and turning to her friend, she desired her to bring her little son to her. Her request was granted, and the child's golden hair and rosy cheeks nestled beside the cold face of the dying mother. "My son," she whispered, "repeat this verse after me, and never forget it: 'When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.'" The child repeated it two or three times, and said his little prayer. Then he kissed the cold face and went quietly to his bed. In the morning he went as usual to his mother, but found her still and cold. This was her last lesson. He has never forgotten it, and probably never will as long as he lives.—*The Christian Woman.*

LEAD THEM STRAIGHT.

THERE is a touching story told of a young naval lieutenant in connection with General Wolseley's attack on the Egyptian stronghold at Tel-el-Kebir. The army was marched at night across seven miles of sandy desert. It was a dark, clear night; there was no moon, but the stars shone out. Lieutenant Wyatt Rawson had been detailed, because he was used to navigating by the stars, to guide the army across the desert to the enemy's intrenchments. With his eye on the stars he steered the force as he would have steered his ship. So accurately did he lead that the first gleam of breaking day revealed to the British troops the long line of solid earthworks three hundred yards ahead. The assault, within half an hour, put the earthworks and the Egyptian army into the possession of Wolseley's troops.

The skilful "steerer," charging with the men he had led, went across the ditch, up the embankment, and over the first line of earthworks. Then he fell, shot through the body. "Didn't I lead them straight, general?" he asked, as the commander-in-chief bent over him. When the pastor or Sunday-school teacher falls, how blessed is it to be able to appeal to our Great Leader with such confidence as this, knowing that the one end had been constantly in view. In Christian work let every one who has the guidance of others be sure to lead them straight.—*Christian Inquirer.*



CARAVAN IN SIBERIA.

hands clasped behind his head, staring through the cigar smoke at the ceiling.

The major was slowly looking the man over, from his handsome face down, when, with a sudden alertness and a steady voice, he said:

"Don't move, please, Mr. Carruthers. I want to try an experiment with you. Don't move a muscle."

"All right, Major," replied the subaltern without turning his eyes. "Hadn't the least idea of moving, I assure you. What's the game?"

By this time all the others were listening in a lazy, expectant way.

that milk in a saucer, and set it on the floor here just back of me. Gently, man! quick!"

Not a word was spoken as the officer quickly filled the saucer, walked with it carefully around the table, and put it down where the major had indicated on the floor.

Like a marble statue sat the young subaltern in his white linen clothes, while a cobra di capella, which had been crawling up the leg of his trousers, slowly raised its head, then turned, descended to the floor and glided towards the milk.

Suddenly the silence was broken by the