

PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH.

One illustration on this page is a picture of the workshop in which Joseph laboured, and where Christ toiled until he was ready for the work of his public ministry. If you should visit Nazareth to-day, you would be shown a room which, you would be informed, is the identical room in which Christ laboured. There is no probability that this is true; and yet the room which you would see, with its tools for work, may be very much like the one owned by Joseph in the early years of our Lord's life. In such a shop, as a humble toiler, he laboured with his reputed father to help support the family while he grew in favour with God and man.

But there is one thing to make us thoughtful as we look at this picture of the Nazarene carpenter shop. There was once a carpenter in that same town of Nazareth who had a wonderful boy in his shop. It was in such a place, perhaps, that the child Jesus played with the shavings, and fragrant cedar sawdust. Later he learned the use of such tools as these, and worked at that laborious trade until he was thirty years old and began to let the world know that he was the Son of God and the Saviour of men. Doesn't this teach us that the man who works with his hands is just as good as the man who works with his head—and better than the one who doesn't work at all?

In Mark 6. 3. we find the memorable words, "Is not this the carpenter?" Well may we be thankful that in a life of which no record was kept during his earlier years we have this authentic statement of his occupation. It has had a wonderful influence on the thought of the world. It has consoled those in poverty; it has cheered the weary toiler; it has given a dignity and grandeur to simple manhood far above and beyond the circumstances of wealth and position which made it valuable in the eyes of men.

Let the millions of earth remember that the Saviour of men came from the poorer class of people, from the humbler walks of life. In the cities the carpenters, no doubt, would be skilled workmen; but in little villages like Nazareth their position would be a lowly one, and their income very moderate. Other kings had come attired in royal purple, and fared sumptuously, but this one, who is the King of kings, and rules in the hearts of all men, sanctioned the better customs of his nation, and chose the conditions in life in which the vast majority of mankind ever have lived and must ever live.

Men have always loved idleness. Indolence has been a mark of aristocracy, and the man who labours with his hands has been looked upon as of inferior rank. The Master laboured with his own hand to show that labour was honourable, and a good and noble thing, needful for man's best development. He fashioned yokes and ploughs for his neighbours about him. He came to reach the masses, to regenerate the world; and to do so he must know something of the people who inhabit it. His work would be to give them a bet-

ter conception than they ever had of human nature. The real value is in the inner life, not in the outer life. It is not the occupation or the position which ennobles or dishonours the man, but the man who honours or dishonours the occupation.

Had the Master come to us from the court of the king rather than from the humble home of the carpenter, it is not likely he would have had as much knowledge of the wants of the lowly, or as warm and as sympathetic a heart as he always manifested for them. On the other hand, it is not at all likely that the affections and thoughts of the toiling, suffering world would have gone out to him as they do to-day. Even those who in their misguided zeal are apt to complain of the Church because, in their judgment, it has not aided them as it should, still have kindly thoughts of him who founded the Church, and is its source of strength and hope. Let earthly toilers everywhere, however sad and desolate may

be their lot, and however much they may be oppressed by the grinding power of capital, remember that the Saviour of men toiled like them for his daily bread, and therefore knows how to sympathize with them in their troubles.

FRED AND HIS COUSINS.

FRED is a city boy. He never was in the country until last year. He spent the summer vacation at his Grandma Stone's farm-house. The great out-of-doors was all new and very strange to him. He asked many queer questions. His country cousins thought many of them were foolish questions. He asked if the birch trees by the spring shed their skins every year; if a muskrat could climb as high as a squirrel; and he really did believe that cows gave skim milk, and that beans grew underground.

"A city boy does not know much," his cousins said to one another when Fred was not there to hear; but grandma would say: "Wait and see."

Grandma wanted some skullcap herb one day. Skullcap tea she must have for a very sick neighbour. She sent the children into the meadows and woods to search for it. None of them knew the herb or where it grew. "A little blue flower with a peaked green leaf" was all grandma could tell them of the herb.

Jack came home with a big bunch of lobelia, Lucy with water-woods, Joan with gentian flowers, the twins with an armful of snake-grass, but Fred came with his hands full of skullcap herb.

"I found it down in the south swamp, grandma," he said. "I had read of it in my botany, and I knew at the minute I saw it."

He does know something," the cousins whispered, and grandma said, "I told you to wait and see."

One evening grandma took a lighted lamp and went into the shed chamber for another cheese hoop. Jack and Joan and Fred went with her. She stepped on a loose board, it tipped, and the lamp flew from grandma's hand. The oil spilt and caught fire, and in a moment that end of the shed chamber was all ablaze. Grandma screamed for water, and grandma and the boys ran for it to dash over the flames, but Fred shouted, "Don't, don't, don't!" He caught a shovel from the floor, scooped it into a barrel of meal and threw shovelful after shovelful of the damp stuff upon the flames. The fire was all out when the boys came pulling up stairs with pails of water.

"Don't, don't throw water on oil flames, for it spreads the fire," Fred said. "Our teacher told us about it. Dash on flour, meal, salt, earth, dressing, wool, clothing, rugs, but never water."

"Fred saved our house this time, and no mistake," grandma said, looking at the scorched floor and wall in the open chamber. "The timbers and boards are as dry as tinder, and hung with everything that would easily catch fire. Water would have spread the flames and burned the house."

"City boys do know a whole lot," Jack whispered to Joan, sliding down the shed chamber stairs.

"SEALED ORDERS."—This suggestion for a Junior consecration meeting is given by Mrs. H. P. Wilcox, in *The Washington Endeavour*: "Just before the meeting began the chairman of the prayer-meeting committee passed around a plate containing little slips, each of which bore some direction in regard to taking part. The cheerful enthusiasm with which they all entered into the plan (for no Junior ever thinks of objecting to anything!) would have been instructive to many elder societies. Several received the suggestion to 'pray,' many of whom had never prayed in the meetings; and the earnest and unaffectedly simple little petitions that went up to the listening Father in heaven were very touching, especially when they betokened some effort to overcome timidity."



THE HOME OF JESUS AND CARPENTER'S SHOP, NAZARETH.