

LEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

EGYPTIAN DONKEY BOYS.

ONE of the most characteristic features of life in Cairo is the hundreds of donkey boys that throng the streets. At almost every corner, near every hotel they abound. A tourist can scarcely appear on the street but half a dozen will swarm around him, all shouting at once and urging the merits of their respective donkeys—"Mine very good donkey, him name 'Prince of Wales,'" or, if he thinks you are an American, "him name 'Yankee Doodle,'" or, perhaps, "him name 'Grand Old Man,'" or, "him name 'Lily Langtry.'" In Upper Egypt the donkeys have more aristocratic names, and I often had the pleasure of riding on the back of Rameses the Great, or, Tothmes III., namesakes of some of the mightiest of the Pharaohs.

The boys are bright-witted, wide-awake, handsome fellows, who speak a little English and a smattering of perhaps half-a-dozen other languages besides. The donkeys are generally shaven or branded in fantastic designs, and the donkey boy will run behind whacking the poor beast with his staff, and the more you ask them to "go easy," the more they beat him and make him go the harder. A gallant Irish major in our party used to say that "he was the heaviest man in the company and always got the smallest donkey," and sometimes, he would declare that "his donkey was a hundred years old," so slow and crippled was its gait.

The picture of the boys and donkey and the handsome architecture in the background are all very admirable reproductions of life in Cairo.

In the *Methodist Magazine* for 1893, the Editor will give a series of papers on "What Egypt Can Teach Us," with numerous graphic illustrations and explanations of the hieroglyphics, wall and tomb paintings, and quaint costumes and customs of that land, also a series of articles on "Tent Life in Palestine and Syria," similarly illustrated with admirable engravings of the scene in Palestine. These will be of special interest to Sunday-school teachers, indeed, to all Bible students.

"MIND THE DOOR."

Did you ever observe how strong a street door is,—how thick the wood,—how heavy the chain,—what large bolts it has,—and what a lock? If there was nothing of value in the house, or no thieves outside, this would not be needed; but as there are precious things within, and bad men without, there is need that the door be strong, and we must mind the door.

We have a house. Our heart, dear readers, may be called a house. Bad things are for ever trying to come in and go out of our hearts. I will describe a few of these visitors.

Who is that at the door? I know him! It is "anger." What a frown is on his face! How his lips quiver! How fierce



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he looks! I will hold the door and not let him in, or he will do me harm, and perhaps some one else.

Who is that swiftly coming after "anger?" Surely it is his twin-brother. Yes, it is "cruelty," sometimes called "bloody cruelty," for he delights to shed blood. The dumb, defenceless dog, or the helpless sparrow, are favourite objects for him to stone and maim. Keep out, keep out!

Who is that? It is "pride." How haughty he seem! He looks down on everything as if he thought it were too mean for his notice. Ah! wicked pride! I will hold the door and try to keep you out.

"Here comes a stranger. By his sleepy look and slow pace I think I know him. It is "sloth." He would like nothing better than to live in my house, sleep and yawn the hours away, and bring me to rags and ruin. No, no, you idle drone, work is pleasure, and I have much to do. Go away, you shall not come in.

Sometimes but not so often as we could wish, good visitors come to the door. Surely this is one! What bold, but gentle guise. What Christ-like look! "Pity," the sworn enemy of "cruelty," who at his frown, shrinks back ashamed. Blest "pity," in his loving offices, "dropping as the gentle dew from heaven!" Come in, come in; abide with me.

But who is this? What a sweet and winsome smile! What a kind face. She looks like an angel. It is "love." How

happy she will make us if we will ask her in, we must open wide the door for you! Others are coming. Good and bad are crowding up. How brazen faced and bold the wicked are, how timid and easily turned away the good! Therefore watch well the door. Choose carefully your visitors, for they are they which mould the character and shape the life. Remember the words of the wisest of men: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4: 23). The purity of the heart is a treasure above price. So, dear children, you'll "keep the heart," if you mind the door." *Children's Messenger, London.*

THE CRAB AND THE MONKEY.

A JAPANESE STORY.

ONCE upon a time there was a crab who lived in a hole on the shady side of a hill. One day he found a bit of rice cake. A monkey, who had just finished a persimmon, met the crab, and offered to exchange its seed for the rice. The simple minded crab accepted the proposal, and the exchange was made. The monkey ate the rice cake, but the crab backed off home, and planted the seed in his garden.

A fine tree grew up, and the crab was delighted to think of the nice fruit he was to have. He built a nice new house, and used to sit on the balcony, watching the persimmons. One day the monkey came along, and being very hungry, he exclaimed:

"What a fine tree you have here! Could you give me one of those nice ripe persimmons? I will not trouble you to pick it, I will go up for it myself."

"Certainly. Will you please throw down some to me? We will enjoy them together."

Up went the monkey, but he had no idea of throwing fruit down to the crab. He first filled his pockets, then he ate all the ripest persimmons as fast as he could, and threw the seeds at the crab.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the crab, pretending to enjoy the fun, so as to outwit the monkey. "What a good shot you are! Do you suppose you could come down from that tree headforemost?"

"Yes, indeed," said the monkey, "of course I can," and immediately turned around and started down the tree. Of course all the persimmons dropped out of his pockets. The crab seized the ripe fruit, and ran off to his hole. The monkey, waiting till he had crawled out, gave him a sound thrashing and went home.

Just at that time a rice mortar was travelling by with his several apprentices a wasp, an egg, and a seaweed. After hearing the crab's story, they agreed to assist him.

Marching to the monkey's house and finding him out, they laid a plot to dispose of him when he came home. The egg hid in a hole in the hearth, the wasp in the chest, the seaweed near the door, and the mortar over the lintel. When the monkey came home he lighted a fire to steep his tea, when the egg hatched, and scattered his face that he ran howling away to the well for water to cool his face. Then the wasp flew out and stung him. In trying to drive off the wasp he slipped on the seaweed, and then the rice mortar, falling on him, crushed him to death. The wasp and the mortar and the seaweed lived happily together ever afterward. This is a sample of what happens to greedy and ungrateful people.