

PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

AND when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping from sorrow. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.—Luke 22. 40-46.

SAVED BY A LARK.

PATTY lived in the country, in a white house with green blinds. There was a nice yard, with smooth-cut grass and green trees where the birds would sit singing on the boughs.

Patty had a swing, too—one that papa put up—of good stout rope, that would go up ever so high into the branches. Patty was six years old.

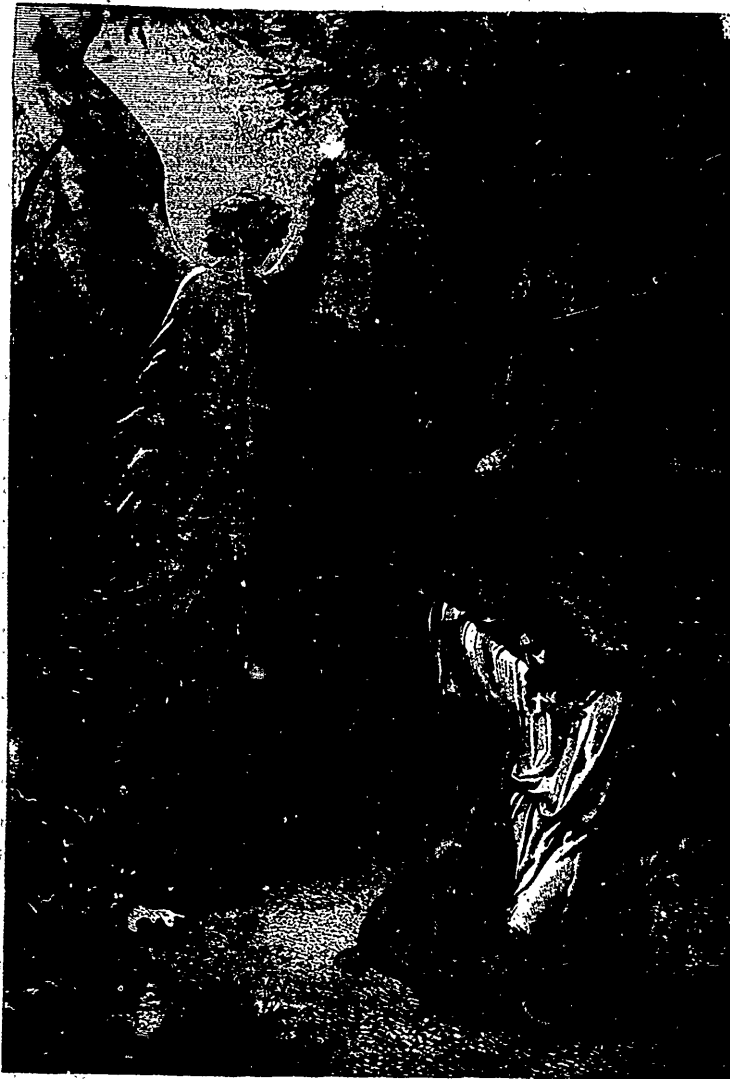
A short distance back from the house and gardens stood three great barns, filled with stores of hidden wonders. But she liked best to go with mamma in early spring into the woods to gather flowers, and search for ferns and soft, green mushrooms; or in the autumn, to go into the fields where papa was at work, and make him a little visit.

One morning, in the harvest-time, Patty was alone at the door. Outside, all was bright and sunny. Through the air came the softened hum of the distant reapers. Patty thought she would like to go out and see new; and so in another moment the little feet were trodding across the fields. When she came into the wheat field she could see the men going down one side following the reaper, and leaving a shining row of bundles behind.

Patty tried to catch up, but they worked very fast; and by-and-by, growing tired, she sat down on a sheaf of wheat. By her side the uncut grain waved in the sunlight. An old beech tree cast a cool, pleasant shade—it was very beautiful there.

Suddenly a bird flew out of the wheat near by, singing a rich, clear song. Patty clapped her hands in delight.

"Perhaps there is a nest in there," thought Patty; and "in there" she went, looking with a pair of bright eyes eagerly about. And, yes, there it was surely, a nest and three of the dearest, sweetest little birds. Was there ever anything so funny as these downy little heads with the tiny bills wide open? Such a nice place for a nest, too, Patty thought. It was like



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being in a golden forest in there, for the grain was high above her head. The yellow straw laughed too, a waving, murmuring laugh, and tossed its head back and forth, but never whispered to the child of danger, nor even told to the men coming rapidly along the story of the little girl hidden in its midst. The men came on, the machine leading them, the horses drawing steadily, and the knives cutting sharp and sure.

What was it that made the farmer stop his team all at once? Did he know that his little daughter was in danger? No, indeed; he thought she was safely cared for

at home. But he was a noble man, with a large, kind heart, and he had seen a lark fluttering wildly over the grain. So, as he would not willingly hurt the least of God's creatures, he said to the man: "Here, Tom, come and hold the team. There is a nest somewhere near the old tree yonder. I'll hunt it up, and you can drive around so as not to hurt the birds."

Ah, what a cry of surprise papa uttered when he found his darling Patty sitting there! How fast his heart beat when he thought of the danger she had been in! And how it thrilled and softened as he caught her up in his arms, and covering her

face with kisses, said, "It was the bird that saved her!"

When the first excitement was over, and Patty had been carried safely home in her father's arms, and the men were going down the field again, leaving a wide uncut space around the lark's nest, somebody—it was a great, rough looking man—said, while the tears glistened in his eyes, and his voice grew husky, "God bless the birds."

DON'T TELL MOTHER.

"We had a sermon to-day on the relation of boys to their mothers," said Andrew.

"I should think we might any of us preach that sermon," Jimmy replied.

"I don't think that we could any of us preach it as well as our minister preached it. He certainly knows how to advise boys better than any minister that I have ever heard talk to them."

"What did he say that you did not know before?"

"It was not so much that he said things that I did not know before, as that he said the things I did know in a way to set me thinking more deeply and earnestly than I have ever thought before about this matter."

"Why, Andrew, I didn't know that you were a very bad boy about minding your mother. What have you got to repent of in this direction?"

"The sermon was not so much about boys' lack of obedience to their mothers as about their lack of confidence in those mothers. Our minister said that the habit of concealing, which some boys early adopt, has more to do with their ruin than any, or perhaps all other causes."

"Why, Andrew, a sin isn't made blacker or whiter by talking of it."

"No. That is true. It doesn't make sins blacker or whiter after they are committed, but it might keep boys from committing them if they knew that they could not be concealed from the mother. This was what our minister said: 'When I hear the young exclaiming, "Don't let mother see this! hide it away; don't tell mother where I am going." I tremble for their safety. The action that will not bear the kind scrutiny of a mother's love will shrink into shame at the look of God. Little feet that begin life by going where a mother does not approve will not easily learn to walk in the narrow way of the Lord's commandments. "Don't tell mother!" has been the rallying cry of Satan's best recruits for hundreds of years. From disregard of the mother's rule the home springs reckless disregard of the laws of society. "Don't tell mother!" is sure step downward, and the first seat in those easy cars of habit which glide so swiftly and so silently with their freight of souls, towards the precipice of ruin. 'The best and the safest way is always to tell