

Autumn.

BY J. MORRIS.

Like fiery cones of living gold,
Our every vale and height,
The trees are beautiful to behold
In Autumn's dreamy light

Here, where the ray of setting sun
O'er fading verdure grieves,
Northward in silence, one by one,
Flutter the dying leaves.

O Father, whose almighty hand
Poured unconsuming fire
On every tree in forest-land,
Do thou our souls attire.

In living faith, that when at last
Like withered leaves we fall,
Thy friendly care for Autumn's blast
May shield us, one and all.

And when, as Autumn's frosty breath
Cuts loose the dying leaves,
The white-winged messenger of death
Shall cut the ripened sheaves;

We may, in answer, to that call
Forsake each dread alarm,
And with unwavering courage fall
On his upholding arm

Not here, like falling leaves to die
And moulder in the ground,
But in a brighter world on high
With fadeless glory crowned.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1900.

THE COMPASS.

The compass is one of the most important things on board a vessel, for without it the captain could not tell which way to guide his ship. A passenger noticed on board a big steamer two compasses, one on deck and the other high up on the mast. He asked why the one below was not enough, and he was told that sometimes it was put a little out of order by the attraction of the great mass of iron of which the ship was built, and then the tiny needle would not point truly to the north, and very dangerous mistakes might be made. The one up on high was always true, and showed when the one down below went wrong. "We steer," the captain said, "by the compass above." Our little lives have to be steered like ships at sea. One compass is our own will, and the other is God's will. They ought to be both alike, but very often our will makes mistakes, and we must not forget to look up to the Higher Will and see that our own is not pointing wrong. Our ships will be safe if we "steer by the compass above."

THE READING HABIT.

Whoever desires to retain through life the habit of reading books and of thinking about them, says James Bryce, in The Youth's Companion, will do well never to intermit that habit, not even for a few weeks or months. This is a remark abundantly obvious to those whose experience of life has taught them how soon and how completely habit gains command of us. Its force cannot be realized by those who are just beginning

life, when an unbounded space of time seems to stretch before us, and we find a splendid confidence in the power of our will to accomplish all we desire. The critical moment is that at which one enters on a business or a profession, or the time when one marries.

Those who are fortunate enough to keep up the practice of reading, outside the range of their occupation, for two or three years after that moment, may well hope to keep it up for the rest of their life, and thereby not only to sustain their intellectual growth, but to find a resource against the worries and vexations and disappointments which few of us escape. To have some pursuit or taste by turning to which in hours of leisure one can forget the vexations, and give the mind a thorough rest from them, does a great deal to smooth the path of life.

SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS AT PRAYER.

A lady who went with her husband on a scientific expedition to Funafuti, a coral island in the South Pacific, gives this interesting testimony to the results of missionary labours.

"The natives never miss prayers. We took them away to various islets for several dredging and surveying trips, and the boatmen assembled in clean lavas regularly at six in the morning and at sundown on the beach for prayer-meeting. No matter where we were, or what the weather was like, prayers were never neglected. We were very much astonished the first time we saw them preparing for the service, getting into clean clothes, and grouping themselves round a fire. We wondered what the fire was for, as it was a hot night, and we wondered why the men had put on clothing, because they seldom wear any but the loin cloth, when working. The fire was to give light enough for Opataia to read by, and the clothes were a part of the religious ceremony, 'palenticoes,' being one of the observances that the pastors insist on.

"My husband and I were strolling on the sandy beach while these preparations were going forward, but the sudden outburst of the weird singing stopped our wanderings, and we stood still to watch these brown children of the London Missionary Society. It was a perfect night, still and balmy, with a faint light from a young moon, and the natives made an exquisite picture as they sat in their bright clothes round a wood fire, under a stately clump of palms. They sang a hymn heartily and reverently, and then Opataia's (the sub-chief) deep voice was heard reading from a Samoan Bible, after which all the men closed their eyes and sat still while Opataia offered up a short prayer. After the few still seconds which usually succeed a prayer, the men dispersed, took off their clean clothes, and got into working garb, and went to bed, or wandered off in quest of sea fowl. After the first night we always joined the group for evening prayers, and we were struck with the frequency of the word 'faafatai' (thanks) in all Opataia's prayers; they were chiefly thanksgiving, and not begging, as are many extempore prayers."—The Classmate.

DAL'S OFFERING.

BY H. MARGARET FAIRLIE.

Dal was a cripple. His poor little back was quite crooked, and sometimes the pain that seemed to run all up and down it was almost greater than he could bear. Yet it was very seldom that the tears got away and ran down his cheeks. He tried not to cry.

But one day his back got so bad—the pain made him forget everything—that he was put in one of those unkind things called ambulances and taken away to the great hospital.

When he opened his eyes he was in such a soft little white bed, in a large room full of light and sunshine. All around him were other little beds just like his, and in them were boys—some older—and some very much younger than he was. Dal thought for the first time that there were other boys like himself that must have those bad pains running up and down their backs too. He wondered if he couldn't speak to them, and wanted to tell them something that might help their pain.

When the nurse with the pretty face came up to Dal's bed and said kindly, "Well, little man, how is that poor back of yours now?" he looked up and smiled. "I feel rested now. All I would like to be able to do is to whistle. May I, nurse? Mother always said I could whistle away her pain; I wonder if I might help some of those sick boys?"

"Just try and see what you can do," said the nurse.

Such a clear, sweet note, like the warbling of a little bird, came from the thin lips of Dal that little heads in all directions were raised to hear where the strange trilling came from. That was just the beginning of Dal's whistle, or the "pain whistle," as some of the little sufferers came to call it.

"Do you know, nurse, I just put all my 'feel' into my whistle. I sometimes think it helps to let out some of the pain in my back."

One day Dal heard the doctor and one of the nurses talking together. It was about moving one of the little sufferers to another city where the right treatment for his case could only be had. "But," said the doctor, "I don't see how it can be done. His mother is poor, cannot even pay to have him with us. I am almost afraid the poor little chap will have to bear it out here."

Dal and his nurse had a great secret and no one else knew anything about it. In some way, known only to herself, she sent a special message to certain of her own friends, and one afternoon, not long after, quite a party of eager-looking ladies and gentlemen entered the ward where our little men were. Some of the little fellows were propped up in pillows, others were lying; but they all had the same look of expectancy. The nurse went up to Dal's bed and whispered a word in his ear.

Immediately, through the ward, there floated a strain, sweet and clear. It warbled and trilled and then seemed to echo and re-echo in a pathetic little ripple. At last it formed itself into the air, "There's a friend for little children."

When Dal stopped there were tears in some of the ladies' eyes, and even the gentlemen turned away and looked very sad. And then a strange thing happened. Dal held out his thin, wasted little hand and the ladies and gentlemen all went up and dropped something into it. Indeed, his hand was not big enough to hold all the bright pieces that fell. Before they turned away some of the ladies stooped down and kissed Dal's little white forehead.

He had done what he could. He had used his "pain whistle" to help to send that other little sufferer where his pain would be cured. Dal handed the money to "his nurse" with a happy smile. "Do you think that will help to cure him?"

The nurse bent low and gently stroked the child's forehead. "Yes, Dal, if Tom can be cured this will more than do it. You have been my brave little helper."

Not very long after this, "Whistling Dal" went to the "Friend for little children above the bright, blue sky," but he left behind him something that will always live, a memory. Tom is a big boy now, strong and healthy, and he never can forget the little whistler who so often made his pain easier and in the end gave him his life.

BEGGING AS A BUSINESS.

The following story, told by the New York Tribune, shows the folly of indiscriminate almsgiving:

A man who had lost both his legs seated himself in a wicker basket, and pushed himself along where people could see him. Coins came to him in small showers.

The basket was a part of his business outfit. When off duty, that is, when not soliciting alms, he wore two well-made artificial legs and walked on crutches.

One of his most fruitful fields was Coney Island in the season, and having gained the good will of a resident of the place, he used to deposit his legs at the man's house when he went abroad to touch the hearts and the purse-strings of the pleasure-seekers. One evening, when he returned from "work," he found that the closet in which his legs had been placed was locked, and the custodian of the key gone for the night.

"Never mind," said his friend. "Stay here over night, and I'll give you a shake down."

"No, I must be in New York to-night," he said, "and I've got to have my legs, too!"

"But why not stay here and save car fare, and be on time for work in the morning?" his friend asked.

Neither argument nor persuasion had any influence on the man, whose nervousness increased perceptibly, and as his friend was making ready to break down the door behind which the legs were stored, he asked: "Why must you be in New York to-night, and why do you compel me to force this closet door?"

"Well, the truth is," said the legless man, "I bought an apartment house last

week, and promised to pay ten thousand dollars on the bargain to-night, and unless I get away pretty soon I'll get there too late and forfeit the amount already paid down."

The friend was speechless with amazement, and his astonishment grew when he heard, a few weeks later, that the apartment house which the poor man spoke to him about was the third he had purchased since he went into the begging business.

THE LITTLE VOICE.

Rena was a little girl ten years old. Her mother had often said: "God has put a little voice in your heart to tell what is right. This voice is called conscience."

Rena lived in the old time of tallow candles, open fireplaces, and simple living. One night she went to bed up stairs. The door of her room was open. She could not sleep, and lay thinking for a long time. All the rest went to bed, and last of all her big brother came through the door and up the stairs. She thought she saw a light as the door opened, but soon concluded that she must have been mistaken. She still lay thinking, and all at once a voice seemed to say, "Go down and see."

Rena was afraid, and said to herself, "Of course, Carl blew out the light."

The voice said, "Go down and see."

She said, "Carl told me to-day that I was full of fancies."

The voice still said, "Go down and see."

"I would take cold, and mother would not like it."

The little voice continued to speak. At last she jumped up and crept down the stairs. She opened the door, and there stood the candle burning with double its usual light. The wick had curled around and melted the candle on one side, and it was just ready to fall. On the table was a great pile of papers, almost near enough to touch the blaze. "Mamma was right about the voice," said Rena, and she marched boldly up the stairs, so glad and happy that she had put out the light! The little voice seemed to say: "All right, all right! You did right!"—Sunday-school Evangelist.

Alga.

BY ELIZABETH CUMINGS.

Aristotle speaks of a "great weedy sea" that the Phoenicians came upon, and as the great Sargasso Sea that Columbus met with is still in the place in which he saw it, one cannot help wondering if the Phoenicians drifted into it also during stormy weather, when going up to England for tin. Algae—seaweeds—are flowerless, and without proper leaves. A green colour is characteristic of those algae native to fresh water or the shallower parts of the sea. Olive-tinted algae are common between tide marks, while the red-coloured species occur chiefly in the deeper and darker parts of the sea. Some have roots, by which they attach themselves to rocks; but these are not nourishing roots, like those of flowering plants, but only serve to fix the weed and allow it to sway in the water.

Besides furnishing food to an immense number of sea creatures, seaweeds are valuable to man. One or two varieties, under the name of "tangle," are eaten in the north of Europe. Another, one of the red seaweeds, is the "dulse" of the Scotch, and the dilkes of the Irish. Irish moss, of which blanc mange is made, is also a variety. Many varieties are used in South America, in China and Japan, for food, and the edible nests esteemed so great a delicacy in China are supposed to be formed from some alga. Seaweeds form an excellent dressing for farm land, and when burned furnish barilla, an impure carbonate of soda.

NO DICTIONARY NEEDED.

To prove that man was made for another world as well as this, give one man this whole earth and he wouldn't be happy. I was once in a beautiful castle in Europe, one of half a dozen that belonged to its owner, and when I asked how long it was since the owner had lived in it I was told ten years. You poor people say, "If only I were rich I would be happy." Don't make any such mistake. This world is not big enough to find rest and peace in. The only way is by taking your burdens to Christ. Get to him. If you can't run, walk; if you can't walk, crawl; only come. You don't need Webster's Dictionary to find out what "come" means. You say, "But I am not worthy." He knows that. He knows better than you how mean you are. But he won't slam the door in your face and say, "When I said 'all' I didn't mean you."—D. L. Moody.