

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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[No. 21.]

"Two Cents a Week, and a Prayer."

"Two cents a week and a prayer"
A tiny gift may be,
But it helps to do a wonderful work
For our sisters across the sea.

"Two cents a week and a prayer,"
From our abundant store,
It was never missed for its place was
filled
By a Father's gift of more.

"Two cents a week and a prayer,"
'Twas the prayer, perhaps, after all,
That the work has done and a blessing
bought,
The gift was so very small.

"Two cents a week and a prayer,"
Freely and heartily given,
The treasures of earth will all melt
away—
This is treasure laid up in heaven.
—Heathen Woman's Friend.

dirty drivers with their unwashed hands and unblessed food. How little regard they have for the Law. Uncle Laban would fast a lifetime rather than taste anything that had even been passed over a fire of their building. I can imagine I see him now, gathering up his skirts and walking on the tips of his sandals for fear of being touched by anything unclean."

"Your Uncle Laban is a good man," answered Phineas, "one careful not to transgress the Law."
"Yes," said the boy. "But I like your way better. You keep the fasts, and repeat the prayers, and love God and your neighbours. Uncle Laban is careful to do the first two things; I am not so sure about the others. Life is too short to be always washing one's hands."

Phineas looked at the little fellow sharply. How shrewd and old he seemed for one of his years! Such independence of thought was unusual in a child trained as he had been. He scarcely knew how to answer him, so he turned his attention to spreading out the fruits and bread he had brought for their supper.

Next morning, after the caravan had gone on without them, they started up a narrow bridle-path, that led through hill-side pastures where flocks of sheep and goats were feeding.

The dew was still on the grass, and the air was so fresh and sweet in this higher altitude that Joel walked on with a feeling of strength and vigour unknown to him before.

"Oh, look!" he cried, clasping his hands in delight, as a sudden turn brought them to the upper course of the brook whose waters falling far below had refreshed them the night before.

The poetry of the Psalms came as naturally to the lips of this beauty-loving little Israelite as the breath he drew.

Now he repeated, in a low, reverent voice, "'The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.' Oh, Rabbi Phineas, did you ever know before that there could be such green pastures and still waters?"

The man smiled at the boy's radiant, up-



ORIENTAL DONKEY BOY.

turned face. "'Yea, the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof,'" he murmured. "We have indeed a goodly heritage."

Hushed into silence by the voice of the hills and the beauty on every side, they walked on till the road turned again.

Just ahead stood a house unusually large for a country district: everything about bore an air of wealth and comfort.

"Our journey is at an end now," said Phineas. "Yonder lies the house of Nathan ben Obed. He owns all those flocks and herds we have seen in passing this last half-hour. It is with him that I have business, and we will tarry with him until after the Sabbath."

They were evidently expected, for a servant came running out to meet them. He opened the gate and conducted them into a shaded courtyard. Here another servant took off their dusty sandals, and gave them water to wash their feet.

They had barely finished, when an old man appeared in the doorway, his long beard and hair were white as the abba he wore.

Phineas would have bowed himself to the ground before him, but the old man prevented it, by hurrying to take both hands in his, and kiss him on each cheek.

"Peace be to thee, thou son of my good friend Jesse!" he said. "Thou art indeed most welcome."

Joel lagged behind. He was always sensitive about meeting strangers, but the man's cordial welcome soon put him at his ease.

He was left to himself a great deal during the few days following. The business on which the old man had summoned Phineas required long consultations.

THE BOY DISCIPLE.

BY

ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON.

CHAPTER IV.

It was nearly the close of the day when the long caravan halted, and tents were pitched for the night near a little brook that came splashing down from a cold mountain-spring.

Joel, exhausted by the long day's travel, crowded so full of new experiences, was glad to stretch his cramped limbs on a blanket that Phineas took from the camel's back.

Here, through half-shut eyes, he watched the building of the camp-fire, and the preparations for the evening meal.

"I wonder what Uncle Laban would do if he were here!" he said to Phineas, with an amused smile. "Look at those



WOMAN CHURNING IN PALESTINE.

One day they rode away together to some outlying pastures, and were gone until night-fall. Joel did not miss them. He was spending long happy hours in the country sunshine. There was something to entertain him, every way he turned. For a while he amused himself by sitting in the door and poring over a roll of parchment that Sarah, the wife of Nathan ben Obed, brought him to read.

She was an old woman, but one would have found it hard to think so, had he seen how briskly she went about her duties of caring for such a large household.

After Joel had read for some little time, he became aware that some one was singing outside, in a whining, monotonous way, and he laid down his book to listen. The voice was not loud, but so penetrating he could not shut it out, and fix his mind on his story again. So he rolled up the parchment and laid it on the chest from which it had been