

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVII.]

TORONTO, JULY 17, 1897.

No. 29.

Haying Time.

A heated sun is shining on the fields of rich July,
In blazing summer splendour from his throne of turquoise sky,
The perfume of the meadows fills the soft, sweet, morning air,
The corn blades wave a proud salute to the fields of clover fair.
The farmer is the charmer in the romance of to-day;
A story of the glory of the time of making hay.

The mowers in the dewy fields press through the yielding strand,
To music of the keen machine now humming o'er the land,
The long windrows of clover surf the rakers leave behind,
Are quickly tossed by gleaming forks in haycocks, soldier lined,
The waggon takes its jag on to the yawning big barn door,
Where tramping boys with romping noise tread down the fragrant store.

There's stubble in the shaven fields clean swept of every spear,
The big red moon comes sailing up the sky so sparkling clear,
A gentle hush has touched the scene, the weary toilers sleep,
To dream perhaps of greater fields of richer grain to reap;
The day is done, the hay is won, and grateful rest is meet;

Till morning sounds its warning ne'er disturb the slumber sweet.
Oh, clover-scented, sunny days of fragrant new-mown hay,
Your incense breathes ideal life that fills the soul for aye,
Oh, breezes, waft the blessed joys to toilers in the town,

And gladden hearts that sigh with care 'neath smoke-grimed chimneys' frown.
The pleasures and the treasures of the glowing, mowing days
Are fairer, sweeter, rarer, than a year of budding Mays.

THE SKILL OF ANTS.

When the wise king advised the slothful man to go to the ant for an example of industry, he evidently knew a good deal about the habits of that remarkable little insect, whose intelligence and skill have astonished students and mechanics in all ages. It has lately been learned that the finest engineers in the world, considering their size, are certain South American ants. Tunnels constructed by them have been traced a distance of two miles, one of them passing under a stream fifty yards wide. South African ants have also considerable mechanical skill, as in some of their subterranean homes have been found suspended bridges passing from one gallery to another, and spanning gulfs eight to ten inches wide.

AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

Some one, who believed it to be an imperative duty, recently undertook to tell a widow that her only son, who was absent from home, had become wild and dissipated, that he was in fact going

down hill very fast and would soon be at the bottom.

The widow, who was also an invalid, sent for her son to come home and make her a visit.

He braced up and came. The mother looked anxiously into her boy's face and saw there the furrows that neither time nor care had made.

"Jack," she said tenderly, holding his hand in both of hers, "we used to be chums?"

"Yes, mother."

"Are we chums yet?"

"I—I—guess so, mother—only when a fellow gets big—"

"Don't ever get too big to chum with

brought up to despise evil doing, going about with wine-bibbers? No! no!

"No, indeed, mother," whispered Jack, recording a vow under his breath.

"And, Jack," continued the mother, in her sweet, consoling tones, "do you remember how we used to say our prayers together—you and I? To-night, Jack, I have a fancy to hear our voices blend in the dear old prayer. Kneel down by my bed, Jack, as you used to when you were an innocent boy."

Jack knelt, and his bowed head came very close to that gentle heart that was throbbing with love for him.

"Our Father—which art in heaven—

in the doorway, watching for the rest of the wounded. The slope had been hard the day before; many had been wounded, and a number killed.

A few minutes later Captain John turned the corner and came up the steps, bearing in his arms a young soldier. When he reached the door, he said: "I found this young lad, on my way through the field, terribly mangled and bleeding, but still clinging to this piece of the Confederate banner. He was so young and so faithful in protecting his Southern flag that I could not bear to see the poor boy die alone; so I picked him up and brought him here. You'll surely give him shelter, if he is a Confederate flag-bearer?" said the captain, in pleading tones.

The matron, whose eyes were dimmed with tears, stretched forth her arms to receive the soldier.

"Poor little fellow!" she said, as they carried him upstairs, "how could we refuse him a place?"

He was taken to the fourth ward, and laid on one of the many white cots.

"Poor boy! I'll leave this bit of flag in his hand, for it may be a comfort to him when he opens his eyes."

"I'm afraid he's not long for this world," said the nurse, as she bent over his bed and wiped the clotted blood from off his bleeding temples.

"He has not gained consciousness yet," said the surgeon, some minutes later: "but give him all the comfort you can, and call me if he becomes restless; I will be at the other end of the ward."

Shortly after twilight the little flag-bearer began to moan and rave in a high fever. The doctor came and stayed beside his bed all night, giving him cooling drinks and trying to soothe the hot head.

By six o'clock the next morning the fever had subsided, and the little fellow opened his eyes, for the first time, in consciousness. On asking where he was, they told him that he was in a nice hospital, where they were going to help him to get well.

"But," he said, opening his big blue eyes, "I shall never get well; I shall go to heaven, where there is no war, but peace."

The nurse and doctor looked down and smiled at the pale face on the pillow. Some mother would miss this dear face. She would never again smooth the golden ringlets back from the white brow.

"Oh! he seems so young to die," thought the nurse.

He put out his thin white hand to hers, and, bending

over him, she caught these broken sentences:

"When I am gone," he whispered, "cut off one curl—send it to mother—my mother in Kentucky; tell her how I loved her—tell mother her boy died a Christian—my little Bible—is in—my pocket. Now give me one kiss and—I go to sleep."

She kissed his forehead, and the eyelids closed. "Thanks—good-night," he murmured.

The little flag-bearer was at rest.

Among the noblest in the land,
Though he may count himself the least,
That man I honour and revere
Who, without favour, without fear,
In the great city dares to stand,
The friend of every friendless beast.
—Longfellow.



HAYING TIME.

your mother, Jack. We used to tell each other everything. Have you any secrets from your mother now, Jack?"

"Now, you see, when—a—fellow—"

"Yes, yes, Jack, but you are not a fellow, you are just my Jack—my boy who used to tell me all his troubles and naughtiness, and whose father when he died said to him, 'Take care of your mother, Jack.' How will it be when I see him—shall I tell him you are a good boy, as he wanted you to be?"

"I—I hope so, mother," with a sob.

"And, Jack, there's something I've heard—it's too ridiculous. I know you'll laugh, because there isn't a word of truth in it. Why, nobody could make me believe it. They tried to tell me that my boy Jack had fallen into bad company."

"Oh, mother—"

"I know it isn't true. You, a boy

hallowed be thy name—thy kingdom come—thy will be done on earth—as it is in heaven—"

Jack stopped, for the voice that had accompanied his was silent.

"Mother," he called in a frightened tone, and he bent over the pale lips that opened to repeat softly:

"As it is in heaven. Amen."

Then Jack was alone, to begin the life he would henceforth live.—Detroit Free Press.

THE LITTLE FLAG-BEARER.

BY LILIAN TORREY GLEN.

During the Civil War there was, in the village of Mendon, Maryland, a large soldiers' hospital. On the morning of our story, the great wooden doors had been thrown open, and the matron stood