

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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The Building of the Ship.

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"Build me straight, O worthy Master!
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind
wrestle!"

The merchant's word
Delighted the Master heard;
For his heart was in his work, and the
heart

Giveth grace unto every art.
A quiet smile played round his lips,
As the eddies and dimples of the tide
Play round the bows of ships
That steadily at anchor ride,
And with a voice that was full of glee,
He answered, "Ere long we will launch
A vessel as goodly, and strong, and
staunch,

As ever weathered a wintry sea!"
And first with keen skill and art
Perfect and finished in every part,
A little model the Master wrought
Which should be to the larger plan
What the child is to the man.
Its counterpart in miniature:
That with a hand more swift and sure
The greater labour might be brought
To answer to his inward thought.

In the shipyard stood the Master,
With the model of the vessel,
That should laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!

Covering many a rood of ground,
Lay the timber piled around:
Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,
And scattered here and there, with these,
The knarred and crooked cedar knees,
Brought from regions far away,
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke:
Ah! what a wondrous thing it is
To note how many wheels of toil
One thought, one word, can set in
motion!

There's not a ship that sails the ocean
But every climate, every soil,
Must bring its tribute, great or small,
And help to build the wooden wall!
Thus with the rising of the sun
Was the noble task begun,
And soon throughout the shipyard's
bounds

Were heard the intermingled sounds
Of axes and of mallets, piled
With vigorous arms on every side;
Plied so deftly and so well,
That, ere the shadows of evening fell,
The keel of oak for a noble ship,
Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,
Was lying ready, and stretched along
The blocks, well placed upon the slip.
Happy, thrice happy every one
Who sees his labour well begun,
And not perplexed and multiplied,
By idly waiting for time and tide!

Day by day, the vessel grew,
With timbers fashioned strong and true,
Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,
Till, framed with perfect symmetry,
A skeleton ship rose up to view!
And around the bows and along the side
The heavy hammers and mallets plied.
Till after many a week, at length,
Wonderful for form and strength,
Sublime in its enormous bulk,
Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk!

And around it columns of smoke, up-
wreathing,
Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething
Caldron that glowed,
And overflowed
With the black tar, heated for the
sheathing.

And amid the clamours
Of clattering hammers,
He who listened heard now and then
The song of the Master and his men.

"Build me straight, O worthy Master,
Staunch and strong, a worthy vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind
wrestle!"

With oaken bracc and copper band,
Lay the rudder on the sand,
That, like a thought, should have control
Over the movement of the whole;

And near it the anchor, whose giant
hand
Would reach down and grapple with the
land,
And immovable and fast
Hold the great ship against the bellow-
ing blast!

And at the bows an image stood
By a cunning artist carved in wood,
With robes of white, that far behind
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.
It was not shaped in a classic mould,
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,
Or Naiad rising from the water,
But modelled from the Master's daughter!
On many a dreary and misty night,
"Twill be seen by the rays of the signal
light,

Speeding along through the rain and the
dark,
Like a ghost in its snow-white sark.

Of the wind and the reeling main,
Whose roar
Would remind them forevermore
Of their native forests they should not
see again.

All is finished! and at length
Has come the bridal day
Of beauty and of strength.
To day the vessel shall be launched!
With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,
And o'er the bay,
Slowly, in his splendours dight,
The great sun rises to behold the sight.

The ocean old,
Centuries old,
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
Paces restless to and fro
Up and down the sands of gold.
His beating heart is not at rest;



SHIP-BUILDERS.

The pilot of some phantom barque,
Guiding the vessel in its flight,
By a path none other knows aright!
Behold at last,
Each tall and tapering mast
Is swung into its place;
Shrouds and stays
Holding it firm and fast!

Long ago,
In the deer-hunted forests of Maine,
When upon mountain and plain,
Lay the snow,
They fell—those lordly pines!
Those grand, majestic pines!
Mid shouts and cheers
The jaded steers,
Panting beneath the goad,
Dragged down the weary, winding road
Those captive kings so straight and tall,
To be shorn of their streaming hair,
And, naked and bare,
To feel the stress and the strain

And far and wide,
With ceaseless flow,
His beard of snow
Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
He waits impatient for his bride.
There she stands,
With her foot upon the sands,
Decked with flags and streamers gay,
In honour of her marriage-day,
Her snow-white signals fluttering, blend-
ing,
Round her like a veil descending,
Ready to be
The bride of the gray, old sea.

Then the Master,
With a gesture of command,
Waved his hand;
And at the word,
Loud and sullen there was heard,
All around them and below,
The sound of hammers, blow on blow,
Knocking away the shores and spurs,

And soon! she stirs!
She starts, she moves, she seems to feel
The thrill of life along her keel.
And, spurning with her foot the ground,
With one exulting, joyous bound,
She leaps into the ocean's arms!

A NEW USE FOR IDOLS.

A missionary in Travancore, India, ob-
served one morning, some years ago,
a native approaching his house with a
heavy burden. On reaching it, he laid
on the ground a sack. Unfastening it,
he emptied it of its contents—a number
of idols.

"What have you brought these here
for?" said the missionary; "I do not
want them."

"You have taught us that we do not
want them, sir," said the native; "but
we think they might be put to some
good use. Could they not be melted
down and formed into a bell to call us
to church?"

The hint was taken; they were sent to
a bell founder in Cochin, and by him
made into a bell, which now summons
the native converts to praise and prayers.

A RICH INVESTMENT.

A very poor old lady, who had been
placed in a charitable institution, through
the generosity of friends, was sometimes
heard to say that there was "just one
thing she did want to enjoy before she
died."

This one thing was a visit to her
native town. Although it was but
seventy-five miles from the city in which
she lived, the old lady had not been in
her native town for nearly forty years.

"I've lived several hundred miles away
most of the time and never had any
money for the trip," she said, "and
since I've lived nigher I've been poorer
still and ain't never seen the time when
I could spare the seven dollars and forty
cents—that's just what it'd cost—for the
trip. I've got some cousins there, all
the kin folks I've got on earth, who'd be
glad to see me, and I could put in a
dreadful happy week if I could once get
there."

Now there was in the city, near the
institution in which this old lady lived,
a circle of the King's Daughters. One
of them happened to visit the institution
and hear the old lady's often expressed
wish, and at the next meeting of the
circle this young girl had something to
say.

"We are all going away on our vaca-
tions soon," she said, "and it occurred
to me that if we could send old Hannah
Barton away for a couple of weeks the
thought of the intense enjoyment she
would derive from the trip to her old
home would make our own vacation
pleasure greater, and give her a joy that
would last all her life. Why can't we
do it?"

"We can," promptly replied another
member of the circle. "There are six
of us. Supposing we earn a dollar and
a half each and carry it to old Hannah.
That will be nine dollars. Let's do it."

It was unanimously voted to carry out
this plan, and one day, a week or two
later, poor old Hannah received a visit
from the six young girls, who left a roll
of crisp new one-dollar bills in the old
lady's fingers for her to alternately laugh
and cry over.

"I'd a beautiful time, a beautiful
time," old Hannah says to this day,
every time she speaks of her visit. "I'll
never forget it—never. And I'll never
forget the dear girls who made it pos-
sible for me to go. I pray every night
for God's blessing to be on them. I
had pleasure enough out of that visit to
last me all my life."

But it will not have to last old Hannah
all her life, for this particular circle of
the King's Daughters, at its last meet-
ing, resolved to make it a part of its
charitable and benevolent work to send
old Hannah to her old home for two
weeks every summer as long as she lives.

He who takes note of all our good
deeds and blesses them will surely bless
these six young girls.