

way. Be alive! Work hard! Play hard! Some one has said of idleness that it is "the burial of a living man." In one of their proverbs our grandmothers used to tell of a dog that was so lazy that it used to lean against a wall to bark. When you are lazy at your lessons or your work think of that "lazy dog."

People who are left to themselves and fall into careless ways go on thinking more of the poppies in the field than of the corn. It is the wise who care most for the corn, that is, for useful, enduring, wholesome, and noble things. The poppies in the field of life are what we call temptations. We need the grace of God to guard us against having these. It is much as it is with Chinese opium smokers. When once the habit of taking the opium is formed it is not enough to take away the opium. The craving for it still remains. What is needed is that the craving should be destroyed. In our sinful hearts there are hot cravings and desires, and the Spirit of Christ can cure these, and fill us with desire for and love of all that is pure and true and lovely and of good report.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO SEPTEMBER 14 1895

HOME, SWEET HOME.

BY E. S. GORDON.

It was a cold, raw evening in mid-winter. The wind which had been blowing all day in fitful gusts had by this time increased to a gale. It roared and howled in the chimneys, rattled at the doors and window-shutters, whistled through the key-holes and shrieked and moaned among the leafless branches of the trees; and not content with wreaking its fury on inanimate objects, it sent the sleet with stinging force into the faces of those unlucky pedestrians whose duty or business called them abroad on that night. But while the storm raged outside in all its fury, there was one house in the village of Belmont where warmth and comfort reigned supreme, that was the "bar" of the "Green Man." A bright fire burned in the polished grate, the gas-light gleamed from the pendant chandeliers, which shone and sparkled, while heavy crimson curtains hung before the window, shutting out the sight and sound of the pitiless storm and helping to give an air of warmth and home-likeness to the place. Outside, by the door of the "Green Man" stood a little boy of about twelve, evidently watching for some one. Crowds of people were passing into the bar-room; there were the thriving tradesmen and the well-to-do mechanics who only went in to have a glass with a friend, "just in the way of business, you know," or to talk over the times of "Auld Lang Syne." Side by side with them passed the drunkard and the debauchee, young men and women on pleasure bent, mothers with babies in their arms, and even little children, sent perhaps to fetch father's beer or mother's gin.

Still, no one appeared to gladden the eyes of the weary watcher outside. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, peeped out from the belfry of a neighbouring church.

"Nine o'clock," said the lad, "and still no sign of father coming home, and poor mother does so want him to come home." Noiselessly pushing open the spring door, he made his way to where his father sat with his pipe in his hand and his pot of beer on the table before him. "Father," he said, in a weak, trembling voice, "mother sent me to ask you to come home. She is dying, and she wishes to see you before she dies. Please, father, do come home."

"Dying is she?" said the man. "Well, she has been a precious long time about it; three months ago she asked me to stay at home with her for she was dying, and she is not dead yet. Be off home with you and tell her that I'll come when I'm ready and not a moment sooner. And take that for disobeying your father's orders," and so saying he dealt the little boy a stinging blow in the face, which sent him staggering against the door.

Billy hurried home as fast as his legs could carry him, longing, yet fearing, to appear before his dying mother without his father. As he made his way cautiously up the ricketty stairs he paused and listened. Was that someone speaking? Then mother is not alone; perhaps the good minister is with her. She must be better, said he to himself, for she is speaking nice and loud. Hark! she is singing.

"In the Christian's home of glory,
There remains a land of rest,
Where my Saviour's gone before me
To fulfil my soul's request.
On the other side of Jordan,
In the sweet fields of Eden,
Where the tree of life is blooming
There is rest for you."

There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for you."

"Yes, mother is getting better," said Billy, "she will soon be well again. But what was his astonishment to find on opening the door that his mother was alone in the dark. "Why, mother, I thought you had some one with you," he said, going up to the straw pallet on which lay his mother. "I heard you speaking and singing as I came upstairs."

"Yes, Billy," said his mother, "I was talking to my mother. She came in and I said my hymn to her before I went to sleep, but then it grew dark and I could not see her, but I know she is not far away; she said she was come to take me home again to the bonnie home far away in the country where the roses and the honeysuckle climb over the roof and the birds sing all day in the old elm tree. Oh, that will be nice to be at home again!"

"Mother, mother, don't go away and leave your Billy," sobbed the lad, as he threw his arms round his mother's wasted frame and laid his cold cheek to hers. "Oh, mother, take me with you. I cannot stay behind you." The sobs of her boy seemed to rouse the poor woman; she opened her eyes and looked round the miserable attic she called home and saw her boy kneeling beside her.

"Oh, Billy, my boy, is that you?" she said, "you have been gone a long time; have you brought your father?"

"No, mother," said the boy, "he would not come."

"Did you tell him I was dying and wished to see him once more?" asked the dying wife.

"Yes, mother, but he would not come."

"Oh, Jack," she murmured, "once you were a loving husband and father, but drink has closed your heart against your wife and son but I pray God that he may give you a new heart and that when I am gone you may learn to love my Jesus. And I want you to promise me before I go that you will never touch a drop of drink. Will you promise me this, my boy?"

"Yes, mother, I will."

"And I want you, for your mother's sake, to be good and patient with your poor father, for oh, my boy, he once loved us dearly; look after him and do not leave him as long as he is alive. Will you do this, Billy?"

"Yes, mother, I will."

"And now, my darling, I am going; I shall never see father again, but tell him

that I forgave him with my dying breath. Kiss me, Billy, and be a good boy and meet me in heaven."

"But, mother, I do not know the way," said Billy.

"God forgive me for my neglect," said the dying woman. "I thought you were too young to understand these things, and now it is too late. I am going to leave you. Oh, Lord, teach my Billy the way!" And with this prayer on her lips she passed away to her home on high to receive a welcome.

Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be.

CHORUS.

They'll sing their welcome home to me,
They'll sing me a "welcome home,"
The angels that stand on the hallelujah strand,
And sing me a welcome home.

RECIT.

Welcome, welcome home,
Welcome, welcome home.

FULL CHORUS.

The angels shall stand on the hallelujah strand
And sing me a welcome home.

The shades of evening were softly falling, and night was covering the earth with her mantle of darkness, when a long one of the busy thoroughfares of a busy seaport town came Billy Lewis, foot-sore and weary, the dust of the wayside clinging to his tattered garments. Poor boy! Since we saw him last, ten months ago, the world had gone hardly with him. True, his father had managed to keep sober for a whole week after his wife's funeral, but, alas, alas! after this he only went faster and faster down the road that leads to death and destruction. Billy tried his best to keep him straight, but his efforts were unavailing. Eight months after his wife's death he fell down a chalk pit and was taken up dead. He died as he had lived, without a hope and without a God in the world.

JACK'S OPINION.

AN earnest Jack Tar was once called upon to address an audience composed of sailors and soldiers, when he used the following illustration:

"My friends, the drinker is, as it were, on the Niagara river. The river is bright and attractive. Down the stream he glides, all in full trim. But hark! a voice is heard from the shore. What is it? 'Young man, ahoy! Beware, the rapids are below you!' 'What care I for the rapids? Time enough yet to steer ashore!' 'Young man, ahoy! ahoy! ahoy! You are nearing the rapids!' 'I'm not such a fool as to get there—time enough yet. I'll steer out of danger when danger comes. I cannot give up my pleasure.' See now, he persists in his so-called pleasure; he has passed the point—his bark is now on the current of danger—he cannot escape. See how fast he goes now! Up with the helm! Now turn! Pull hard! Quick! quick! Set the mast in the socket! Hoist sails! Ah! ah! it is too late! He would have it so!

"Now, my friends, thousands of drunkards go over the rapids. Hoist your sail in time, boys! Catch the breeze while it is high. Steer for Temperance Port. Give your hearts to Christ. Out of danger, out of trouble. Soldiers and brother sailors, prevention is better than cure!"

A wise and holy rule for our neighbour's faults is this: To speak of them to God, and forget them before men.

THE women do well to watch legislation, and they can watch nothing more profitably than liquor legislation. Fifty women were present when the Delaware house of representatives voted to repeal the act allowing saloonkeepers to sell liquor by the glass; and we do not wonder, even if it was unparliamentary, that they started up the doxology, led by the wife of Chancellor Wolcott. Nor is it strange that the legislators were so taken by surprise that they did not rebuke the violation of the rules. Let the women keep up this crusade and shame the men into joining it.

En Voyage.

BY G. A. M.

WITCHYWAY way the wind doth blow,
Some heart is glad to have it so;
Then blow it east or blow it west,
The wind that blows, that wind is best.

My little craft sails not alone;
A thousand fleets from every zone
Are out upon a thousand seas;
And what for me were favouring breeze
Might dash another with the shock
Of doom, upon some hidden rock.
And so I do not dare to pray
For winds to wait me on my way,
But leave it to a Higher Will
To stay or spend me, trusting still
That all is well, and sure that He
Who launched my barque will sail with me
Thro' storm and calm, and will not fail,
Whatever breezes may prevail,
To land me, every peril past,
Within His sheltering haven at last.

Then whatsoever wind doth blow,
Some heart is glad to have it so;
And blow it east, or blow it west,
The wind that blows, that wind is best.



JUNIOR LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

September 22, 1895.

SERVE HIM ALONE.—Exodus 20. 3.

There seems to be an idea in man wherever found that he must perform worship to some God. No nation has been discovered, no matter how barbarous and degraded, but had some form of worship. Altars, no matter how rude, are found among all nations, whether civilized or pagan. The Israelites, like the nations by which they were surrounded, were much addicted to the worship of idols. It seems amazing how prevalent idolatry has become and how shocking are some of the practices which exist in certain nations where there are thousands of strange gods. India, Africa, and China may be mentioned in illustration.

God here commands his people not to have any other god but himself. A good reason is assigned in the preceding verse. "I am the Lord thy God," etc. The word Lord you will perceive is in small capitals, which means Jehovah, the most august word by which the Maker of the universe is known. The people, too, were under obligation to him. He brought them out of the house of bondage. Verse 2.

We have not been born in pagan lands, but we had our birth in a land of religious privileges and Gospel ordinances, where the true Gospel light shines. No nation has been so highly favoured, hence surely we should serve him who has done such great things for us, and should serve him alone, not serve ourselves, but him to whom our more than all is due.

THE JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

THE Junior League should be more generally introduced into our churches. After organizing three Junior Leagues in as many different churches successively, we have reason to believe that the society is adapted to all our churches, large and small, in city or country.

Many Junior Leagues have not prospered because they have run out of work. In meetings once a month for missions or temperance the whole League can be instructed together, but in literary work there should be a division of the League according to age; the divisions containing boys and girls from eight to ten, ten to twelve, twelve to fourteen or sixteen, according to the decision of the cabinet concerning age of graduation into the Senior League. These divisions are numbered "one," "two," "three," beginning with the youngest. Work in the catechism and Bible can then be graded, and interest will not be lacking. A Junior League that holds only a prayer-meeting for children of all ages for a short hour once a week has made a good beginning toward a real Junior League, but only a beginning. Boys and girls from twelve to sixteen can be found to take charge of the lower divisions; the pastor or superintendent should take the advanced division.