

THE PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IX.]

TORONTO, OCTOBER 12, 1889.

[No. 21.]

BURIAL IN THE CATACOMBS.

OUR picture gives us a very vivid illustration of a scene which must have been very common in the early Christian centuries. Possibly the dead man may have been a Christian martyr whose body was brought by stealth, at dead of night, from the place of martyrdom to the quiet resting-place of the holy dead in the underground catacombs.

These were vast excavations, consisting of long corridors and chambers, sometimes three or four stories, one beneath the other, and lined on either side with the graves of the dead in Christ. Here the early Christians gathered for worship and for prayer, and sometimes for refuge; but even here they were often followed by their persecutors, and their place of refuge became their sepulchre. The present writer has told the story of those early days in a couple of volumes to which he refers those who wish to know more about these strange structures. They are entitled "The Testimony of the Catacombs," and "Valeria, the Martyr of the Catacombs." Both are for sale at the Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

SELF-CONCEITED JOE.

"If I were a man I'd buy that horse, you'd see! I'd make him mind!" And little Joe threw up his hands and nodded his head, as if he thought himself wiser than everybody else. What a silly little fellow he was, to be sure! Father ought to know best, but Joe thought he knew better than father.

You see, a horse-jockey had a very vicious horse for sale, and he went out among the farmers to try and find a purchaser. Joe's father knew enough about horses to see at once that the horse had a bad temper, and was vicious and unmanageable. Joe was such a self-conceited little chap that he thought even if no one else could manage the horse he could. The horse-jockey thought that if he could get Joe to mount the horse and ride him once or twice through the street, perhaps he might induce some one to think that the animal was gentle. He

therefore beckoned Joe to follow him; and when out of his father's sight, he said: "You are a brave lad. Wouldn't you like to have a ride?" Of course Joe would like nothing better. "Now sit still. Don't jerk on the lines. Don't keep kicking against his sides with your heel. Just sit perfectly quiet, and go once or twice up and down the street, and don't try to make him go fast."

screamed, "Whoa! whoa! whoa!" It was of no use. He held on with both arms around the horse's neck: the farther he went, the faster. Poor Joe! You could not help pitying him, to hear how he screamed. All his vain-boasting, his bragging, wilful ways, his self-conceit, could not help him now. He cried again like a baby. Poor Joe! poor Joe! poor Joe!

The horse ran for nearly three miles, and then turned into the stable of his owner and halted there. One of the stable-boys ran and lifted Joe down, but he was weak from fright and exhaustion, and he could scarcely walk. He was dreadfully bruised, and felt sick and weak, so that he was obliged to lie down on the straw. The stable-boy said he was "real plucky;" but he did not feel elated at the remark, for he felt that it was hard-earned praise.

Do you know what the Bible says about such conceited people? "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Proverbs xxvi. 12). "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Proverbs xii. 15).—*Children's Friend.*

A STRANGE MIRROR.

THE old city of Rouen, in France, has a pretty sight that is worth describing to your crowd of young folk. The little men and maids are fond of looking-glasses, I know; but I doubt if they all have heard of the queer one of which I shall now tell them. Near the west

door of the church of St. Ouen, in this city of Rouen, is a marble basin filled with water. It is so placed that the water acts as a mirror, and in the face of it one sees all the inside of the church. Look down into the water, and you see pillars, and the ceiling, and pictures and statuary, and nearly all the interior ornamentation of the building.

The stately basin seems to take pride in holding its beautiful picture of the church. I wish you and all your hearers could see it.



EARLY CHRISTIAN BURIAL IN THE CATACOMBS.

That was the instruction the horse-trader gave.

When the boys saw Joe on horseback they began to hurrah. This pleased the vain boy, and he thought that if he could get the horse to go a little faster they would see how smart he was. He therefore began to kick the horse and to whip him with the end of the lines.

That was enough. Away went the horse. Joe could hardly catch his breath. Over the rough pavement, over the bridge, beyond the factories, past the railroad station. On, on, on. Joe