

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVI.]

TORONTO, AUGUST 8, 1896.

No. 32.

The Fireman.

BY CHARLES UMERS.

Hark! 'tis the clang of the bell!
And the fireman springs to his feet

(Like a faithful hound at his master's word)

At the very second the bell is heard,
In jacket and belt complete.

And away, like the rush of the wind,

With ladder and rope and reel,
Mid the shriek of the whistle and hurrying beat

Of sparkling hoofs through the ruddy street,
And the ring of brass and steel.

Up, now, through the raging fire

He clambers, with panting breath—

Through the shifting smoke and the furnace glow,

And falters his foot for a moment?—ho!

What terror has he of death?

Flashes the axe in his hand,
And his blows fall fast and true;

In a second the shattered wall gives way.

And, quick as a tiger after his prey,

With a bound he dashes through.

And bearing a drooping form
From the tottering rooms he flies;—

But if in vain is a last retreat,
And he comes no more from the ruthless

beat,
Like a fireman hero he dies.

Fireman, give me your hand!

You with the brawny breast,
With the iron arm and the sinews of

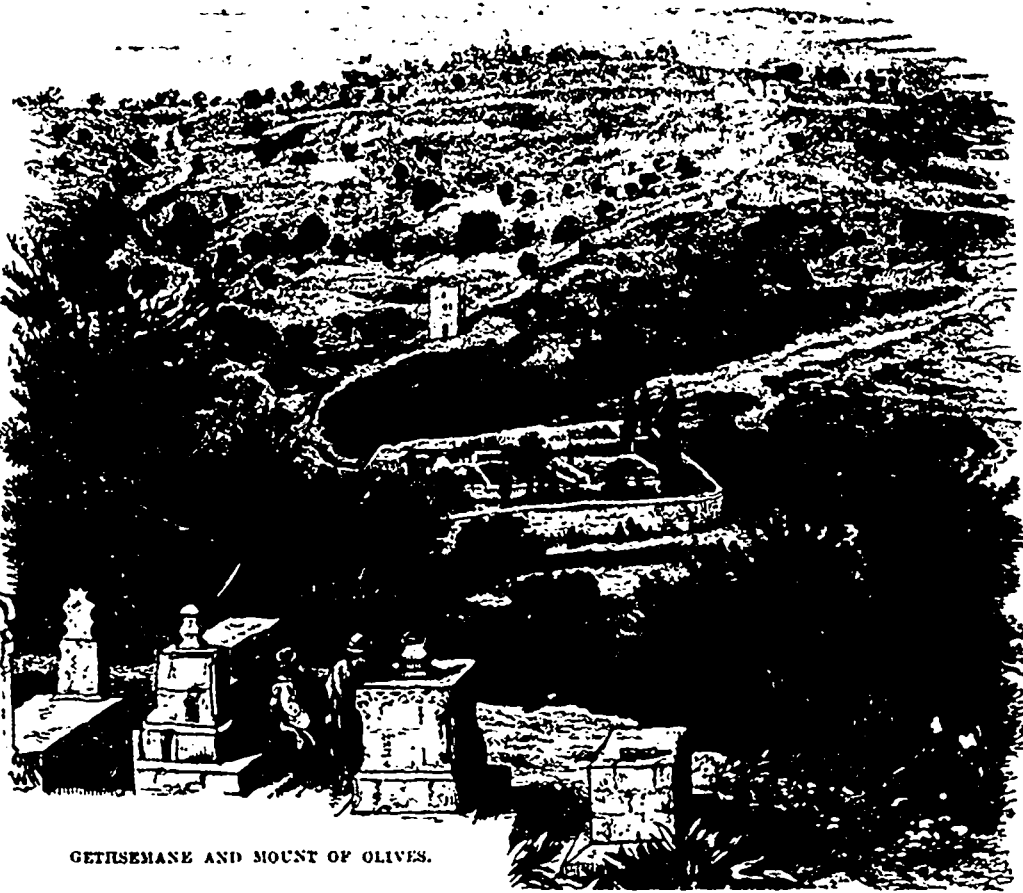
steel,
And the big bold heart that the world

shall feel
Its manifest heart and best!

For out of the deeds of men,
The valour of human strife,

Where is the hand with a prouder claim
To the grasp of a king and the kiss of

fame,
Than the hand that saves a life!



GETSEMANE AND MOUNT OF OLIVES.

THE BOY DISCIPLE.

BY

ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON.

CHAPTER XV.

Ruth went every day to ask for her sick friend, sometimes with a bunch of grapes, sometimes with only a flower in her warm little hand.

But there came a time when Martha met her, with eyes all swollen and red from crying, and told her they had sent to the city for a skillful physician.

In the night there came a loud knocking at the door, and a call from Rabbi Reuben to come quickly, that Lazarus was worse. At day-break a messenger was sent clattering away to hurry over the Jordan in hot haste, and bring back from Perea the only One who could help them.

The noise awakened Ruth; she sat up in surprise to see her mother dressed so early. The outer door was ajar, and she heard the message that the anxious Martha bade the man deliver: "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick."

"He will come right away and make him well, won't he, mother?" she asked anxiously.

"Surely, my child," answered Abigail. "He loves him too well to let him suffer so."

But the day wore on, and the next: still another, and he did not come.

Ruth stole around like a frightened shadow, because of the anxious looks on every face.

"Why doesn't he come?" she wondered; and on many another lip was the same question.

She was so quiet, no one noticed when she stole into the room where her friend lay dying. Mary knelt on one side of the bed, Martha on the other, watching the breath come slower and slower, and clinging to the unresponsive hands as if their love could draw him back to life.

Neither shed a tear, but seemed to watch with their souls in their eyes, for one more word, one more look of recognition.

Abigail sat by the window, weeping softly. Ruth had never seen her mother cry before, and it frightened her. She glanced at her grandfather, standing by the foot of the bed; two great tears rolled slowly down his cheeks, and dropped on his long beard.

A sudden cry from Mary, as she fell fainting to the floor, called her attention to the bed again. Martha was silently rocking herself to and fro, in an agony of grief.

Still the child did not understand. Those in the room were so busy trying to bring Mary back to consciousness, that no one noticed Ruth.

Drawn by some impulse she could not understand, the child drew nearer and nearer. Then she laid her soft little hand on his, thinking the touch would surely make him open his eyes and smile at her again; it had often done so before.

But what was it that made her start back terrified, and shrink away trembling? It was not Lazarus she had touched, but the awful mystery of death.

"I did not know that a little child could feel so deeply," said Abigail to her mother, when she found that Ruth neither ate nor played, but wandered aimlessly around.

"I shall keep her away from the funeral."

But all her care could not keep from the little one's ears the mournful music of the funeral dirge, or the wailing of the mourners, who gathered to do honour to the young man whom all Bethany knew and loved.

Many friends came out from Jerusalem to follow the long procession to the tomb. There was a long eulogy at the grave; but the most impressive ceremony was over at last, and the great stone had to be rolled into the opening that formed the doorway.

Then the two desolate sisters went back to their lonely home and empty life, wondering how they could go on without the presence that had been such a daily benediction.

The fourth day after his death, as Martha sat listlessly looking out of the green arbor with unseeing eyes, Ruth ran in with a radiant face.

"He's come!" she cried. "He's come, and so has my father. Hurry! He is waiting for you!"

Martha drew her veil about her, and mechanically followed the eager child to the gate, where Phineas met her with the same message.

"Oh, why did He not come sooner?" she thought bitterly, as she pressed on after her guide.

Once outside of the village, she drew aside her veil. There stood the Master, with such a look of untold sympathy on His worn face, that Martha cried out, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died!"

"Thy brother shall rise again," he said gently.

"Yes, I know he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day," she said brokenly.

"That brings hope for the future; but what comfort is there for the lonely years we must live without him?" The tears streamed down her face again.

Then for the first time came those words that have brought balm into thousands of broken hearts, and hope into countless tear-blind eyes.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Martha looked up reverently. "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

A great peace came over her troubled spirit as she hurried to her home, where the many friends still sat who had come to comfort them. A number of them were from Jerusalem, and she knew that among them were some who were unfriendly to her brother's friend.



WAGON-CARRIER.



CARRYING PROVISIONS.