

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. III.

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## BETHANY.

**B**ETHANY is not known for its size, magnificence, or influence in general history. In the times of Christ it was one of the smallest cities of Judah, and at the present time it only comprises about twenty families. It is very probable that its name would never have been heard beyond a very limited circle but for the hospitality of a few of the citizens. The good deeds of the humble may immortalize both them and the obscure hamlet which gave them birth. Thus Eisleben is made famous by being the birth-place of Luther, Gifford rendered notorious as the first home of John Knox, and Elstow invested with more than ordinary interest because it was the place of Buyan's nativity. Bethany owes its immortality to the generosity of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. Bethany is on the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho, about two miles E. S. E., and situated on the eastern slope of mount Olivet. Three things are noted of this place: Here Christ had a temporary home with his three friends, one of whom he raised from the dead. Here a Mary anointed the Lord against the day of his burying. And from one of the hill-tops near unto Bethany, Christ ascended from his disciples into glory.

The superstitious and degraded inhabitants of this place are always ready to show travellers the House and Tomb of Lazarus. An account of the exploration of which, is taken from the graphic descriptions of Dr. Robinson's "Textual Helps from Bible Lands:" "The inhabitants huddled around us, emulous for the remunerative privilege of piloting our credulous footsteps down into a hole within a hole, where local tradition had asserted Lazarus was once buried. We dis-

mounted, of course, and went into the tomb.

One deep, narrow excavation, under the surface of a rise of ground, leads the descending way into another beneath it; a sort of subcellar arrangement, like a two-storied subterranean

When we emerged, our fingers dripping with tallow from the nowise over-generous candles we were compelled to carry, the guides made free offer to condole our manifest disappointment, with an immediate exhibition of the mansion where Mary and Martha

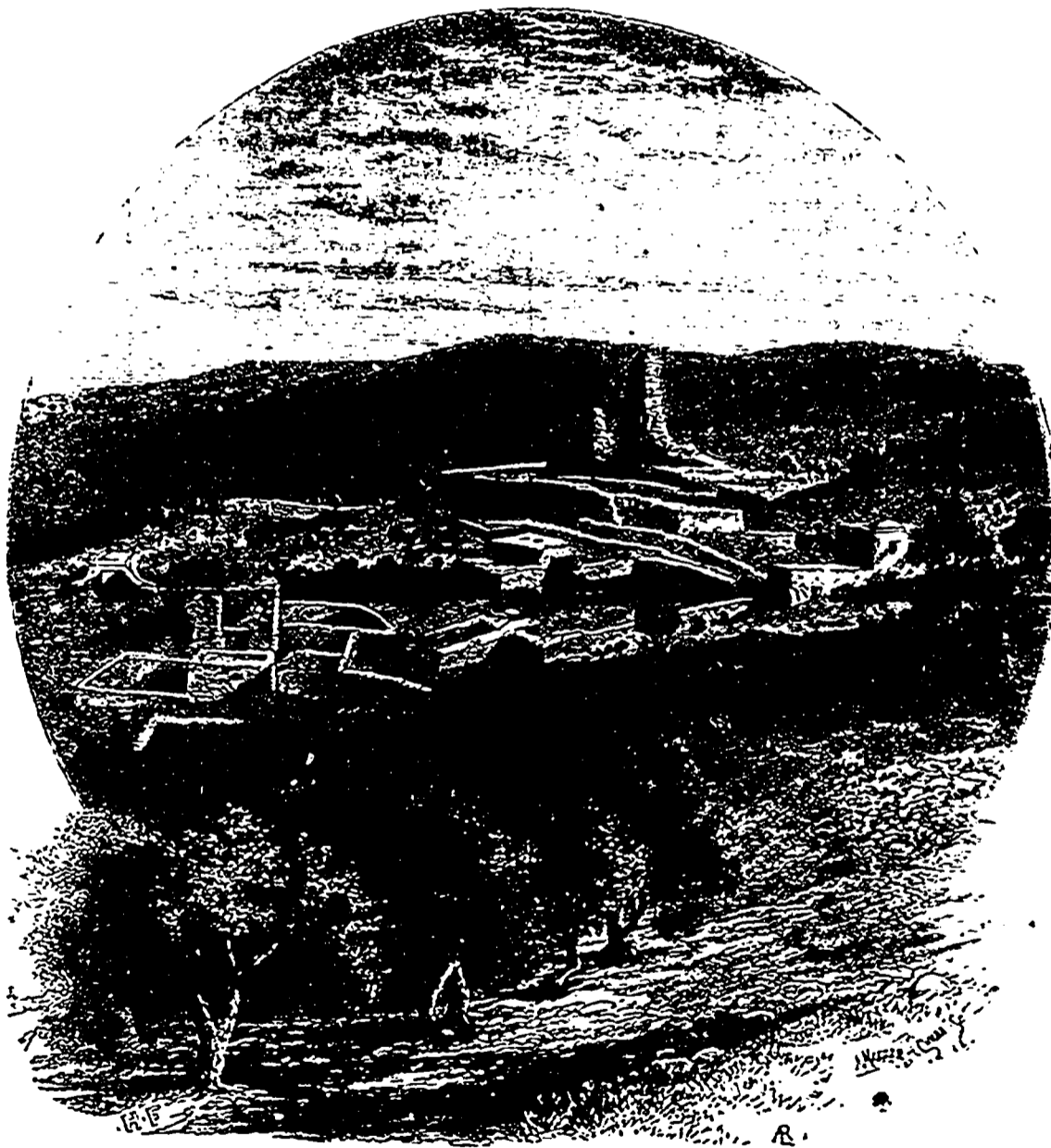
irresistible disposition for sarcasm, is all one is able to make room for in his heart, under the exhibition of paltry perpetrations of sham like this. All his reverent emotions are checked, when even plain historic incidents are thus travestied. All his imaginations are rushed down into beggarly meanness.

I put it to my own candor—as I gazed on these two scenes with ineffable disdain and disgust—as I tumbled with the rest along down back from the house to the sepulchre, picking my perilous way among offences most execrable could this ever have been the track over which this funeral train wound its way, or was it even in this atmosphere 'Jesus wept'?"

## W AT A BOY DID.

**PERCY LAPEY**, a young lad about eleven years of age, was visiting Elmira at the home of Professor J. R. Monks. Prof. Monks is a regular lecturer at the State Reformatory there, delivering two addresses each week to the inmates of the institution. He also visits the institution on Sunday afternoons, when regular religious services always are held. (On a Sunday afternoon, recently, Prof. Monks was accompanied by his youthful Buffalo visitor. Young Lapey is a fine musician, singing exceedingly well for one of his years. During the course of the exercises, Superintendent Brockway, who had been told of the lad's vocal abilities, asked him to sing. Like a

brave little boy he consented, and sang several pieces. The prisoners are very fond of singing, and are about as appreciative an audience as one often sees. They were greatly delighted with Master Lapey, and cheered him loud and long. Among the selections that he sang were, "Where is my wandering boy to-night!" One night during the week,



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cistern, which finally ushered us into a dark, odorous department. I shall not attempt to pronounce upon this selection of a locality for the scene of an incident so august, I only wish faithfully to reproduce the experience of a sensitive mind, when one passes, thus outraged, along through the neighbourhoods over the sites of New Testament history.

We therefore clambered up to the actual summit of the village, where there is needed an ancient building, on the pinnacle of the hill. We certainly saw a ruin there. And if the dirty walls were not picturesque, the splendid view from them was. The homestead evidently ran behindhand after Lazarus died the second time. A horrible sense of outrage, an