

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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[No. 1.

Amateur Photography.

BY MARGARET SEYMOUR HALL.

We bought a camera, for we meant
To take the country round;
But when our work was ended up,
What do you think we found?
Why, this—on every single plate
Was baby's picture, sure as fate!

Whatever else we tried to do,
We ended so, somehow.
We had a lovely clover-field,
With Farmer Thompson's cow.
"Why take a stupid cow," said Kate,
"When Pet's so sweet to contemplate?"

A waterfall our next attempt,
We rose at break of day;
The horses both were harnessed up,
To bear us on our way;
But Baby shook her dimpled fist—
A thing we simply can't resist.

Well, now our films are gone at last,
To take the journey back,
And anxiously we look for them
Upon the homeward track.
Ye' folks will laugh to see, I fear,
Twelve dozen views of Baby dear!

ON BOARD A MAN-OF-WAR.

A man-of-war, now-a-days, is a sort of floating fort and great fighting machine combined. The giant ironclads with their stumpy masts, huge funnels and turrets are not nearly so picturesque as the old "Hearts of Oak," with their towering masts and immense spread of snowy canvas—one of the most beautiful sights in the world. On the new ships almost everything is made of iron or steel, hollow masts and yards, etc., and almost every kind of work is done by machinery, raising the anchors, moving the guns, steering the ship, reefing the sails, and the like. Our cut shows the view of the "forward" part of one of these floating forts. It is a winter view, as may be seen by the snow on houses on the shore. Very strict discipline is observed, and the sentries pace their rounds, day and night, as if in the tented field.

While Great Britain has fewer soldiers than any other of the great powers, she has a much more powerful navy. This seems to be a necessity on account of her many colonies and commercial interests in the remotest parts of the globe. It is, however, maintained at an immense cost, and we trust that under the influence of Christian civilization the disarmament of the great war powers may take place, which will lessen the necessity for the expenditure of such enormous sums on British forts and fleets by land and sea. We are reminded of Longfellow's fine poem on "The Arsenal at Springfield," and its prophecy of the reign of peace, part of which we quote:

This is the arsenal, From floor to ceiling,
Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;
But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing,
Startles the villagers with strange alarms.
Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
When the death angel touches those swift keys!
What loud lament and dismal miserere
Will mingle with their awful symphonies.

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
The cries of agony, the endless groan,
Which through the ages that have gone
Before us,
In long reverberations reach their own.

Is it O man with such discordant noises,
With such accursed instruments as these,
Thou drownest nature's sweet and kindly voices,
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power that fills the earth
With terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on
camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need for arsenals nor forts;

The warrior's name would be a name
abhorred!
And every nation, that should lift
again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear for evermore the curse of
Cain!

Down the dark future, through long
generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and
then cease;

vesting is carefully but brilliantly described by Lieut.-Col. Knollys. Fifteen hundred white men at £1 a day, and 12,000 natives at five shillings for twelve hours' labour, find constant employment at the diamond mines. They work in the diamondiferous region, which is enclosed and screened by means of high barbed-wire fencing and lofty corrugated-iron hoarding, as skillfully guarded as one of the Vauban's fortresses, and is further safe-guarded externally at night by numerous armed patrols, and by powerful electric lights casting a glare on every spot otherwise favourable to intending marauders.

At the bottom of a long incline nearly 800 feet below the surface of the earth the mine runs through the very heart of the diamond-bearing stratum. The mine is sloppy and dirty, and every now and then a deafening roar announces that dynamite blasting is going on in a neighbouring chamber.

"Almost the only fatal accident of magnitude recorded in the annals of these mines occurred eleven years ago, when some timber caught fire and over three hundred imprisoned natives were choked to death. The ruling passion for gain then proved strong up to the last, many bodies were found in attitudes which showed that their dying gasps had been expended in efforts to plunder their comrades of the little

precautions taken to prevent natives removing the diamonds are most elaborate.

THE PRISONS IN THEIR COMPOUND.

Lieut.-Col. Knollys' account of the native compound, covering an area of one acre and a half, surrounded by a corrugated iron wall ten feet high and guarded by warders, bolts, and bars like a prison, is very interesting. Beer, spirits, and alcohol in any form are rigidly excluded. Gambling goes on without check, but there is not the slightest difficulty experienced in maintaining order. A certain number of tribal princelets, who receive wages, but never do a stroke of work, contribute materially to maintaining the peace. The different tribes have different quarters assigned to them. Each native binds himself to remain a prisoner for three months at least, and during that period they are not allowed to quit the enclosure on any pretext whatever. They seem to be very happy, and have adopted a fashion of smoking their cigars with the lighted ends in their mouths, a method which is said to be warm, comforting, delicious, and far superior to the usual mode.

THE "GOLIATH" BOYS.

Listen while I tell you a story of some heroic boys in our day. Five hundred boys from different workhouses in London were put to school to be trained as sailors on board the training-ship Goliath. This great ship suddenly caught fire about eight o'clock one winter morning. It was hardly daylight. In three minutes the ship was on fire from one end to the other, and the fire bell rang to call the boys each to his post. What did they do? Did they cry, or scream, or fly about in confusion? No; each ran to his proper place. The boys had been trained to do it, and no one forgot himself, none lost his presence of mind, but all behaved like men. Then, when it was found impossible to save the ship, those who could swim (at the command of the captain) jumped into the water and swam for their lives. Some, at the captain's command, got into a boat, and when the sheets of flame and clouds of smoke came out of the ship at them, the smaller

boys for a moment were frightened and wanted to push away. But there was one among them, the little mate, his name was William Bolton (a quiet boy, loved by his comrades), who had the sense and courage to say: "No; we must stay and help those who are still in the ship." He kept the barge alongside the Goliath as long as possible, and was thus the means of saving more than one hundred lives. And there were others that were still in the ship while the flames went on spreading, and they were standing by the captain who had been so kind to them all, and whom they all loved so much. In that dreadful moment they thought more of him than of themselves; and one threw his arms around his neck, and said, "You'll be burnt, captain," and another said, "Save yourself, captain!" But the captain said, "No, boys! that is not the way at sea." He meant that the way at sea is to prepare for danger beforehand, to meet it manfully when it comes, and to look at the safety not of oneself only, but of others. The captain had not only learned that good way himself, but had known how to teach it to the boys.



ON GUARD ABOARD A MAN-OF-WAR.

And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
'The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as song of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

DIAMOND DIGGING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A bright and most interesting account of diamond digging in South Africa is given by Lieut.-Col. Knollys, in Blackwood's Magazine. A more vivid picture of that extraordinary treasure-trove, the possession of which enabled the De Beers Company in 1887 to produce over £4,000,000 sterling worth of diamonds from four mines of a total area of one hundred and eleven and a half acres, has never been written. Such a crop was never before harvested from so small an area. The whole process of the har-

leather purses which most of them wear suspended round their waist."

Lieut.-Col. Knollys found members of well-known English country families working as day labourers, and there is a tradition in the mines of a tallyman who employed the interval between counting trucks by reading an elaborate treatise on conic sections. The blue diamondiferous earth is sent up to the top in trucks each of which holds 1,600 pounds, from which in due course of time one and a half carat weight of diamonds will be extracted. The diamondiferous earth is distributed over the open country to the depth of two and a half feet, where in six months the weather disintegrates the earth with the assistance of constant harrowing and watering. Then the disintegrated soil is taken to the washing machine and the smallest diamonds are extracted with the most absolute certainty by an ingenious machine which Lieut.-Col. Knollys describes as clearly as he knows how. Ten pounds' worth of diamonds are said to be stolen, chiefly by the white labourers, for every £100 worth discovered. Every visitor is watched carefully and constantly. The