

# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## Foresplendours.

BY MARY L. W. TOWLER.

In the deep stillness of the early morning,  
When darkness flees and shadows pass  
away.

My soul awakes into the perfect dawning,  
In the foresplendours which around me  
play.

Refreshed and strengthened by a night of  
resting.

My spirit poises for a nobler flight,  
Like as a bird now fledged from out her nesting  
Mounts ever skyward in the quick'ning  
light.

So the new year, awakened from the sleeping  
Of the old year, now passed beyond our  
sight,

Will in the morning of its precious reaping  
Bring in the sheaves it gathered in the  
night.

The glad new year forecasts the life immortal,  
Where thou, O Father, bid'st the shadows  
flee!

When passing it behind the shining portal,  
We shall awake and find ourselves with  
thee.

## COREA.

All the grown-up people are talking and reading about Corea, and we think the young folk should know something about it, too. Corea is a large country at the eastern end of China, and on the map it looks like a part of China, but it is really a separate country with its own king, and a very queer country it is. Till lately very little was known of it, but the war between China and Japan has been all about Corea; so that we hear a great deal about it now. The people are very lazy and down-hearted. Their country is in a bad way, and they are nearly all very poor. Besides this, they are dirty as a rule, and they are heathen.

The chief city of Corea is Seoul. It has walls all around it, and gates which let people in and out. These gates are open only from sunrise to sunset, so that people who want to get in have to be very careful to be on time, or they will have to stay outside the city all night! The picture on this page is of one of these gates—the south gate, and the big house on top is where the gate-keepers live. One writer about Corea says that after the sun sets every good man retires to his house, and only a leopard now and then crawls over the wall and wanders about the city in the dark. What a nice place to live in!

The little children are very quaint and pretty. When New Year comes they are all dressed up in brand new frocks, but though, of course, they think them very pretty, I wonder what our friends would say if we dressed our little ones in green frocks, and over them bright red jackets with yellow sleeves! Their faces are covered with white chalk, and their hair is oiled and parted in the middle, plastered down and tied into one or two short pig-tails. What funny little things they must be!

When any of their friends die, the Coreans, instead of wearing black, dress themselves in white.

Altogether, Corea is a very strange country, and has peculiar people in it. There are some good men and women who are working as missionaries amongst the people, and teaching them all sorts of ways of improving themselves, and the Coreans, though lazy, are far from stupid, so that they pick things up quite quickly and easily.

## A JAPANESE MEAL.

Here is what a missionary in Japan says about the food of the people.

"The principal article of Japanese food is rice, also for breakfast, rice for dinner, and rice for supper. Indeed, the names for the three meals in Japan are 'morning rice,' 'midday rice,' and 'evening rice.' Workmen and poor people have often nothing but rice, though they try to have at least vegetables with it. If, in addition they can get a little fish, they think they have made a splendid meal. The Japanese never used beef or mutton (at least they have never done so hitherto, though now they are beginning to use it a little), and they seldom eat fowl. The Buddhist religion, which prevails in Japan, forbids the taking of animal life, even for food; and the Japanese have obeyed it so far as

this strong composition out of cups like ours, which to them seem almost as large as bowls. Instead of doing this, they sip the tea by itself out of tiny and often very beautiful little cups, and thus enjoy to the full its excellent flavour.

"You eat your food with a spoon, or knife or fork, but the Japanese have none. They do not, however, eat with their fingers, as the ancient Jews did, and as many nations still do. They eat with chopsticks. These are simply a pair of sticks, a little longer than ordinary school pencils, though not quite so thick. They are held in the right hand, between the thumb and fore and middle fingers, and are used so cleverly that not only solid pieces of fish and vegetable, but even particles of rice are taken up between them. When the rice is hot this is a little difficult, but when

on a painting which he hoped would win the prize. The woman decided that the best revenge she could have would be to spoil his picture. And how do you think she went to work? She did not touch the painting, but every day she mixed a small white powder in a cup of coffee and carried it to the artist to drink. That was all, but now listen to the rest of the story. The artist worked on, becoming every day more enthusiastic over his work. The painting grew under his skillful fingers, and at last it was finished. He took it to the gallery and it was hung in place. He walked about and examined the other paintings. He could not help laughing at them, they were such daubs. The colour in every one was wretched he thought. He was so sure that his own picture far excelled any of the others that he hung a curtain before it, and would not take it away until the last moment—just before the judges came to give their decision.

At last he drew aside the curtain which covered his treasure, and to his delight everybody in the room crowded around it. But they spoke no word of praise or commendation, and to his amazement every body burst out laughing. Such a droll sight they said. He could not understand them; what did they mean? At last his friends pointed out to him that his picture was entirely blue. The grass was a deep blue, the trees were a lighter shade; what he meant to be flesh colour was pale blue. Everyone in the room laughed and made fun. He could not believe that there was anything wrong, but his friends assured him that what they had said was true. His eyes had been poisoned by the white powder so that all the time he was working on the picture he had seen the colours in a distorted light. He stopped taking the coffee for a few days, his sight was restored, and then he could see that his friends were right, and what he had been working on for so many hours was nothing but a crazy looking daub.

The story may not be true, but I often see boys and girls who make me think of it. I see boys and girls who are continually looking at things with poisoned eyes. They see faults and sins in everybody else, but they see none in themselves. They notice a great deal of selfishness in another girl and are blind to the meanness in their own character. They think another boy is a coward and fail to see that they are not brave themselves. They think other people are disagreeable and unkind, when, if their eyes were not poisoned, they would see that those faults existed in themselves. Perhaps, like the artist, they will be surprised some day to find that they have been terribly mistaken, and other people will receive the approval which they had been so sure of winning.



SOUTH GATE OF SEOUL, COREA.

not to eat flesh or fowl. To be consistent they should have given up fish too, but I suppose the Buddhist priests thought this would be asking rather too much from the people, especially as their rivers, lakes, and seas swarm with most excellent fish. It is not, however, very cheap, and it is not always that poor people can afford to buy it.

"I dare say, however, you will think that when they have neither vegetables nor fish, they have at least milk to their rice, but this is not so. Hitherto they had no cows and had never used milk. But they are great tea drinkers. They drink tea not only at every meal, but all through the day. They use what is called green tea, and they drink this tea out of delightful little cups without handles. They do not mix sugar and milk with it, as we do. They think it a very coarse and barbarous practice to take strong-tasted articles like milk and sugar, and mix them up with delicately flavoured tea, and then drink

it is cold there is no difficulty at all. It is considered polite always to offer a guest a pair of fresh chopsticks, and to assure him that his chopsticks have not been used, it is usual to place before him a pair made of split wood, still joined together at one end. As the two chopsticks have never been completely separated they cannot of course have been used."

## A STRANGE STORY.

MANY years ago I read a very strange story that I have never forgotten. An artist had in some way offended a woman, and she was so angry that she determined to be revenged. She thought about it a long time, and at last hit upon a plan to injure the artist. There was to be a great exhibition of paintings at a famous art gallery, and a prize was offered for the best picture. The artist was hard at work

## A LITTLE MISSIONARY SERMON.

Who would have believed that such a mite of a boy as Fritz could understand about missions? He was only a baby, so mamma was surprised one day after the girls went to their mission band meeting, to hear her little boy giving a sermon to old Whiskers, the family cat. "Whiskers, 'tain't bein' a missionary boy drust to put money in a junk botel. It's thinkin' 'bout o' peop'le 'at doesn't know 'ere is a happy land. It's bein' sorry for 'em and losin' 'e mans and ladies 'at tells 'em 'bout it. It's puttin' 'em yight netel to papa and mamma when you say year p'ayers. My Bettie says some fotst sink j'e on'y puttin' pennies in 'e botel. When I see a mission band boy, I'll know better."