

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Luck and Pluck.

You will find that luck
Is only pluck
To try things over and over;
Patience and skill,
Courage and will,
Are the four leaves of luck's clover.

THE LAND OF PLUCK.

BY MARY MAPES DOBGE.

Far over the sea is a famous little country generally known as Holland; but that name, even if it mean Hollow land, or How land? does not describe it half so well as this—The Funny Land of Pluck.

Verily, a queerer bit of earth was never shone upon by the sun nor washed by the tide. It is the oddest, funniest country that ever raised its head from the waves (and, between ourselves, it does not quite do that), the most topsyturvy landscape, the most amphibious spot in the universe—as the Man in the Moon can't deny—the chosen butt of the elements, and good-naturedly the laughing-stock of mankind. Its people are the queerest and drollest of all the nations; and yet so plucky, so wise and resolute and strong, that "beating the Dutch" has become a by-word for expressing the limits of mortal performance.

As for the country, for centuries it was not exactly anywhere; at least, it objected to staying long just the same, in any one place. It may be said to have lain around loose on the waters of a certain portion of Europe, playing peek-a-boo with its inhabitants; now coming to the surface here and there to attend to matters, then taking a dive for change of scene—and a most disastrous dive it often proved.

Rip Van Winkle himself changed less between his great sleeping and waking, than Holland has altered many a time between sunset and dawn. All its permanence and resoluteness seems to have been soaked out of it, or rather to have filtered from the land into the people. Every field hesitates whether to turn into a pond or not, and the ponds are always trying to leave the country by the shortest cut. One would suppose that under this condition of things the only untroubled creatures would be turtles and ducks; but no, strangest and most mysterious of all, every living thing in Holland appears to be thoroughly placid and content. The Dutch mind, so to speak, is at once anti-dry and waterproof. Little children run about in fields where once their grandfathers sailed over the billows; and youths and maidens row their pleasure-boats where their ancestors played "tag" among the haystacks. When the tide sweeps unceremoniously over Mynheer's garden, he lights his pipe, takes his fishing-rod, and sits down on his back porch to try his luck. If his pet pond breaks loose and slips away, he whistles, puts up a dam so that it cannot come back, and decides what crop shall be raised in its vacant place. None but the Dutch could live so tranquilly in Holland; though, for that matter, if it had not been for the Dutch, we may be sure there would have been, by this time, no Holland at all.

And yet this very Holland, besides holding its own place, has managed to gain a foothold in almost every quarter of the globe. An account of its colonies is a history in itself. In the East Indies alone it commands twenty-four millions of persons.

NOT TO BE CAUGHT TWICE.

A collier in Scotland, whom I know well, is in the habit of fetching from his master's room slippers, cap, keys, or anything he is sent for. One day, sent on the usual errand, he did not reappear. His master followed, and found that the door of the bed-room had blown to, and that the dog was a prisoner.

Some days later he was again told to fetch something; and as the wind was high, his master, after a few minutes' delay, followed him. He found him in the act of fixing the door firmly back with the door-mat, which he had rolled up for the purpose, and having taken this precaution, the prudent animal proceeded to look for the slippers.

It is known that ignorant persons use such expressions as "Him and me went uptown," or, "You and me was seen." People learning that such expressions are incorrect, somehow get the notion that it is never correct to use such a form as, "you and me," or "him and her," or "them and me." Doubtless if they heard a person say, "They asked him and me to come to the dinner," which is correct, they would have a sense that an error had been made. They seem to feel that the conjunction "and" has a kind of double-action control, governing the nominative case at both ends. A little reflection would remind them that this word has nothing at all to do with the cases.

A cure for this habit is to drop the "and" and use each of the pronouns alone. What person, for instance, who would say, "They asked you and I to come," would also say, "They asked I to come"? or what person who would without hesitation say, "Let you and I go," could be caught saying, "Let I go"?

OUR GIRLS.

Can we not help our girls to feel and to know that to become strong, helpful women they must be, in their measure, strong, helpful girls? That, if they are to be earnest and true women, they must be earnest and true girls? Can we not lead them to see that every gift and grace of mind or body is better and more beautiful if kept for the Master's use? Can we not show them that their refinement and culture are never so resplendent as when they shine in the darkened homes of the poor and the sorrowful? that the knowledge of "tongues" that won the language medal of school is never so well employed as when it interprets to dull ears the precious truth that God loves the world? that the voice which charmed the gay crowd at Commencement is sweeter and truer when it swells the chorus of praise at the prayer-meeting, or leads the children in glad songs at the mission Sunday-school?

Do we not too often in our schools

shut our girls out from the real world with its real needs, and shut them in to the narrow ways of self and selfish aims? St. Paul says; "Be ye transformed from the world." Do we not too often say to the bright young daughters, fresh from college with honours and diplomas, "Be ye conformed to the world"? The human heart is all on our side, and self triumphs, and the blessed Jesus, who beholding them loves them, turns sorrowfully away.

Dear girls, do not wait longer for us. Say to the Master to-day—

"Take my hands and let them be at the impulse of thy love.

"Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.

"Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee."



A SCHOOL IN CHINA.

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Look at all the little Chinese boys sitting at their desks and so attentively reading their lessons. They all seem to be reading at once, or perhaps they are having a singing lesson, for some of them certainly are opening their mouths too wide for ordinary reading. Round the walls are maps, pictures, and some of the strange signs used in the Chinese language, and on the table, by the master's side, we can see the familiar form of a tea-pot and two little cups; for what Chinaman can get through the day without his cup of tea? The funniest thing is that the boy reading stands with his back to the master. There can be no "looking on" in his case.

YOU AND I.

There is one extremely common mistake in English, says an authority on English—the use of such expressions as "Between you and I," "They asked you and I to come," or "Let you and I go," or, worse still, "They saw he and I uptown." In other words, it is the use of the nominative form of the pronoun as the object of a preposition or a verb. The reason for this is obvious. It

is a point to which it would be well for "you and me" to give our attention.

QUAINT VEHICLES IN NORWAY.

Norway is noted for its characteristic vehicles. For instance, there is the "cariole," which is described as a most comfortable little car on two wheels, for one passenger. The seat is shaped like a shell and nicely padded, and the traveller goes along with his feet resting in fixed stirrups at the side, unless he likes to tuck them up in front of him, or dispose of them elsewhere on the framework of the carriage. The driver sits behind on a box. A "stolkjaerre" is intended for two persons and a driver. It is a rough cart, and again the driver sits behind. Very often these drivers are tiny lads. As the little yellow ponies know the routes inch by inch, and as it is the custom when numbers of conveyances are going the same way for them to form a very long procession, there is not much need for a crack whip. A "trille" is rarely seen. It carries four persons and is more or less like a small English barouche. As for the driver, the way in which he manages to stow his person away in a luggage-crowded vehicle is one of the wonders of Norway.

Begin with the little duties, very humble, very homely though they be, that are nearest to you. As daughter and sister and friend be faithful and true to every opportunity for service, and by the doing of noble deeds day after day, make life one glad, sweet song. Your work cannot be in vain, though the world give no medals. If you serve the Lord Christ, "of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance." He said, "Let him that would be greatest among you be servant of all." "I am among you as one that serves."

The Rev. Dr. R. F. Horton tells of a visit he once paid a poor sufferer who kept a little shop, just after Mr. Gladstone had been staying at Dollis Hill, Lord Aberdeen's place, near Willesden. She lay bedridden, selling to any chance customers. Beside the bed was a box, and as she talked she pulled out of it a book, and, passing it to her visitor, said, "Mr. Gladstone gave me that." Dr. Horton opened it, and on the title-page was the woman's name in Mr. Gladstone's handwriting, and the words, "From her friend, W. E. Gladstone." Mr. Gladstone had gone in again and again and read and prayed with her, and had given her the little book of devotion as a memorial of their friendship.