

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## WINTER.

BY ELSIE WARWICK.

**Q** THE snow! the snow! Dear me! how I do hate the winter!" said Mary Leslie, as she entered the cheerful breakfast-room.

"Sister, I just think winter is the jollie of all the seasons. Spring will do for girls and May-parties, but we boys like snow, and cold, and sleighing, and skating; give me winter every time," said Frank.

"O yes," admitted Mary, "all that does very well, and I like the evenings around the fire, and the games, and nuts, and apples; but dear me, Frank, what will you do with all the wet, sloppy days? and even when it is fair, and you are sleighing, what will become of the poor who have little food and less warmth? Yonder goes little Susan Miller and her father now home to a cheerless fireside, I am afraid, for Mrs. Miller is sick, and it takes every spare dollar to buy medicine and food. I say give me the spring."

"My daughter, may be one of the uses of winter is to teach us to share our comforts with the less fortunate. I think it will be a real pleasure for you to go over after breakfast to see Mrs. Miller, and take her a nice lunch."

"Yes, certainly, mother; and I think if there is one blessing my mother covets above all others, it is the blessing promised the generous hand."

"I am quite sure one of the uses of winter is to make us thankful for the many comforts we are able to share with each other," said Mrs. Leslie, smiling.

"But, father, tell us really and truly what winter was made for?"

"Winter is nature's night—her season for recuperation—the time for

treasuring up her reserve forces. Spring comes with its buds and summer with its blossoms, and then autumn with its golden fruits, after which great outlay of beauty and wealth, mother earth gathers back to her bosom the sap of the vegetable world, and says to winter, Close the windows,

grain and rich fruitage. Frank, what would you think of a man who spent his strength continuously, without ever resting, or one who would deal out his money day after day without ever gathering in."

"Surely he would be a foolish spendthrift," answered Frank.

of seed-life, and lo! in a few short days the world puts on a robe of a thousand hues. Summer continues the work, and the buds develop into gorgeous flowers of exquisite proportions; then autumn comes and fills barn and store-house with rich provender and luscious fruits; and then

again in turn comes winter to recall the wandering energies of nature into the world's treasure-house in safe keeping for another revolution of seasons."

"I suppose we must simply endure winter and live in hope of the coming spring," said Mary.

"Yes, dear, the spring is a certainty after the winter, and it has been generally conceded that the harder the winter the more luxuriant the spring, and a heavy snow is called the poor man's fertilizer. The winter is a stern necessity, and is a forcible type of our night of death before the joyous resurrection. How can the grain of corn live except it first die? Frank, go to the library and bring me Thomson's Seasons. Lord Lytton said of Thomson's poems,

He wrote  
No line which, dying, he  
could wish to blot.

Surely he is worth a hearing, and we will read what he says about these seasons being a picture of life:

Behold, fond man,  
See here thy pictured life:  
Pass some few years  
Thy flowering spring, the  
summer's ardent  
strength,  
Thy sober autumn fading  
into age,  
And pale concluding win-  
ter comes at last  
And shuts the scene . . .  
Virtue sole survives.

Immortal, never-failing friend to man,  
His guide to happiness on high. And see,  
'Tis come, the glorious morn! the second  
birth

Of heaven and earth . . .  
The storm of wintry time with quick pass,  
And one unbounded spring encircle all."

"O dear me! well, the winter is



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lock all the doors, and we will work within. Then while all this upper world is locked in an icy embrace, the silent, hidden forces are at work in nature's laboratory, under the supervision of the great Alchemist, perfecting the processes by which the dull earth is to be transmuted into golden

"Just so, my Mary, would it be if our dear old mother earth were to give us spring and summer always. There is great wisdom in the economy of God's universe. Winter's frost and snows mellow the ground and hoard up a supply of gases which 'neath the genial spring's sunshine swell the germ