

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

V. L. XIX.]

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[No. 11.]

Origin of the Opal.

A dewdrop came, with a spark of flame
He had from the sun's last ray,
To a violet's breast, where he lay at rest
Till the hours brought back the day.

The rose looked down, with a blush and frown;
But she smiled at once to view
Her own bright form, with its colouring warm,
Reflected back by the dew.

Then the stranger took a stolen look
At the sky so soft and blue;
And a leaflet green, with its silver sheen,
Was seen by the idler, too.

A cold north wind, as he thus reclined,
Of a sudden raged around;
And a maiden fair, who was walking there,
Next morning an opal found.

PALM SUNDAY ON MOUNT OLIVET.

BY THE EDITOR.

On the afternoon of Palm Sunday, 1892, after witnessing the pomp and pride and pageantry of the rival Christian communions in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as a truer commemoration of the sacred events of the day, I went forth with my fellow-pilgrims to the sites and scenes of Palestine, from the Holy City to the Mount of Olives. We traversed the Via Dolorosa, the "Sorrowful Way," trodden by the feet of the Saviour on his way to Calvary. Emerging from St. Stephen's Gate we passed the scene of the death of the forerunner of the noble army of martyrs. Beneath our eyes lay the storied vale of Kedron, and on its opposite side rose the long slopes of Olivet.

Leaving the cypress-studded Garden of Gethsemane, with its ancient, gray-leaved olives, to the right, we climbed the hill to the beautiful new church, erected by the Russians in honour of the reigning Empress. Its many bulbous domes give it an exceedingly picturesque appearance, and its exquisite mosaic pictures have cost a prince's ransom.

ON THE SLOPES OF OLIVET

are the so-called tombs of the prophets, into which we scrambled through a broken shaft and found a splendid example of an ancient rock tomb. Three passages, varying from thirteen to nineteen yards in length are intersected by transverse passages. The large-domed rotunda, lighted from above, and many other chambers completely honeycomb the ground.

The great number of tombs in the vicinity of the city cannot fail to strike the imagination. All around the wall extends the vast encampment of death. Moslem and Jew for many generations have alike sought burial here, as securing special privileges on the Resurrection Day. "Thousands," says Dr. Macleod, "possibly millions, of most bigoted and superstitious Israelites, from every part of the world, have in the evening of life flocked to this, the old 'city of their solemnities,' that after death they might be gathered to their fathers beneath the shadow of its walls."

But the supreme interest centres in that lone olive-crowned hill,

WHERE OUR SAVIOUR WEPT

over the stony-hearted city of Jerusalem. Near by is the peaceful village of Bethany, where he often found rest and safety and sympathy in the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Up that steep hillside walked many a time and oft—

"Those blessed feet,
Which eighteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage to the bitter cross."

Upon this very landscape rested his eye, along this very road thronged the multitude and the children to greet him with shouts of "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." There still winds the Kedron, and there is

"Siloam's brook,
Which flowed fast by the oracle of God."

These "mountains round about Jerusalem" are the very hills on which the Saviour so often gazed, and over all is the deep blue sky through which, from the summit of yonder mount, he ascended up into heaven.

About half-way up the slope is shown the traditional place where our Lord wept over the city, and would fain have gathered its children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her

temple area. Beyond rise the twin domes of the Holy Sepulchre, and the cupolas and flat roofs of the modern city, and in the background the Hill of Zion and Tower of David. Surely in no place on earth can we come into more living touch with the environments of the earthly life of our Lord.

Then we followed the footsteps of Jesus along the memorable route through which he rode, meek and lowly, into Jerusalem, down through the Vale of Kedron, past the Garden of Gethsemane, and with our eye traced the steep slopes by which he climbed to the Golden Gate, now walled up, and entered the temple amid the shouts of the fickle multitude, "Hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" soon to be changed into execrations, "Away with him! away with him! crucify him, crucify him!" Then we wended our way beneath the walls of the Holy City in the deepening twilight, our minds filled with sacred memories and our hearts touched with deep feelings of our Lord's infinite love and pity for mankind.

A TROUBLESOME ANIMAL.

The South African colonists have got

ostriches just to terrify them. The panic among them is so great that they often break their legs in their wild rushes. This is a pastime which the monkey seems to enjoy hugely. A broken leg for an ostrich means a death sentence.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OXYGEN.

BY DR. DACRE.

Physicians know the great importance of oxygen to life. Sometimes it is a remedy of great value to the sick. In a crowded hall or railroad car the oxygen is soon used up by the breathing occupants, and its place is filled with carbonic acid, that is thrown out of the lungs and returned to the air in breathing. In this carbonic acid men and animals soon die. You have heard the story of the famous Black Hole of Calcutta, where an Indian nabob confined one hundred and forty-six Englishmen in a cell twenty feet square, with two small obstructed windows. Only twenty-three survived the night, and they were the most ghastly objects ever seen. Want of oxygen, and the necessity of breathing the carbonic acid, together with the heat, destroyed

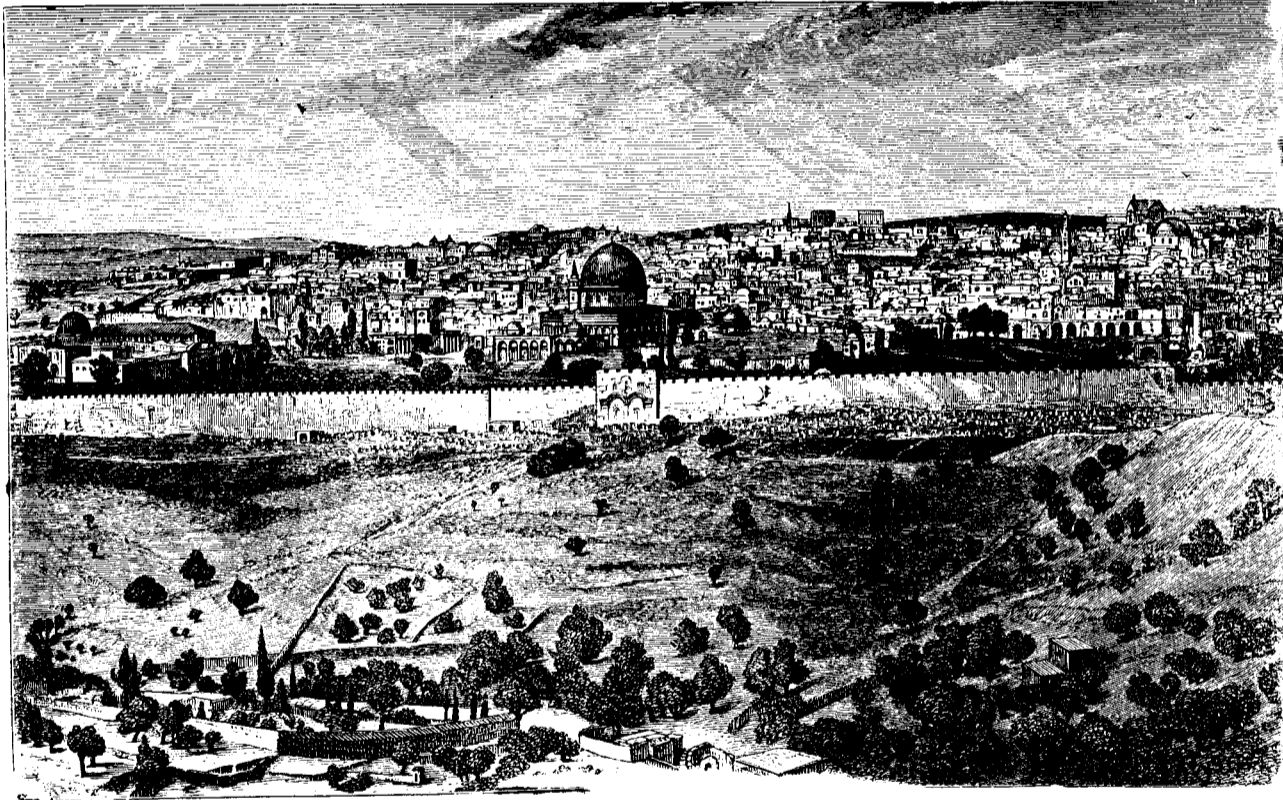
their lives. With plants the same necessity for oxygen exists. Animals live upon organic matter, grass, fruit, grain, or flesh of other animals, but plants live upon inorganic matter. That is, plants are fed only by substances undergoing decomposition; that is, separating into their elements. Carbonic acid, water, and ammonia are necessary to their life, and they get carbon and oxygen from the decomposition, or separating, of carbonic acid, hydrogen, and oxygen from water, and hydrogen and the frisky nitrogen from ammonia—each article of nourishment, by this decomposition or falling apart of something else.

Now, when that carbonic acid, the deadly poison that killed the prisoners in the Black Hole of Calcutta, is absorbed from the air by the leaves, it is decomposed by the action of the sun's rays, and the carbon is kept to nourish the plant, while the oxygen is thrown off for men and

animals to breathe. But oxygen is taken in other ways into the plants, for it makes up a large proportion of their substance.

Curious as it is that busy oxygen colours the rose and the green leaves of the forest, and gives the dazzling brightness to the calcium light, it is perhaps more curious that it gives the red hue to our lips and cheeks, and that when it leaves us we grow pallid and weak, and soon die.

Every time we draw air into our lungs, one-fifth of the quantity breathed in is oxygen, and it remains in the lungs when everything else is sent out, before we draw in another breath. All the little blood-vessels that are about the little chambers of the lungs that the oxygen is in, are like little rivers, and bring up little boats, 1-2800th of an inch in size, to the thin membrane that covers the air chambers. Oxygen, like a true fairy, can go through the membrane without a door or a hole to pass through, and he immediately jumps into the little corpuscles, as the boats are called, and away they float, to carry the oxygen to colour the lip, cheek, eye, feed the brain, and do all the other work that keeps him so busy.



JERUSALEM, FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. GETHSEMANE IN THE FOREGROUND.

wings, but they would not. Here upon a grassy spot we sat down and read with deep emotion from our Bibles the narrative of these sacred events.

SACRED MEMORIES.

Most interesting of all is the view from the traditional spot, which we again revisit, where our Lord yearned over the city, "and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

The buildings before us, indeed, are not those which met the eyes of our Lord, but the general outline of the long and battlemented wall and the stony slopes of the surrounding Vale of Kedron, Jehosaphat and Hinnom are still the same. Before us rises the Golden Gate, and behind it the Mosque of Omar. To the left the Mosque of El-Aksa, and around them the green, cypress-studded

rid of their lions and elephants, but they have not yet been able to get the better of the baboons. A baboon, although somewhat like a dog, has all the mischievousness of a man. He is the ugliest animal in all creation. The Boers call him Ad nis, and never designate him under the official name that has been given to him by science. Now, this creature is the curse of Cape Colony. He commits depredations for the love of the thing. Any imprudent cat that ventures too far away from home is sure to be captured and strangled for fun by a baboon. Nearly all the Angoras, the choicest and most costly animals imported by the colonists, have been destroyed by these huge monkeys.

Even the dogs share the same fate. The bravest and most pugnacious of the English canine breeds are unable to cope with adversaries armed with just as powerful jaws and with the immense advantage of having four hands instead of four paws. With a dexterity that conspicuously exhibits his surgical aptitude, the baboon bleeds his enemy in the throat, and in less than a minute the duel ends in the death of the dog. One of the principal amusements of these big monkeys is to gambol around the wire fences that protect the tame