

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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SCENES IN JAPAN.*

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(Abridged from Article in METHODIST MAGAZINE for April.)

THE lover of the novel and striking, and likewise of the romantic and picturesque, should visit Japan. The great cities of the empire, the interior of the country with its teeming masses still under the sway of old superstitions and customs, will gratify the thirst for the strange; while the opportunities for beholding the beautiful and magnificent are met with on every hand.

The castles of Japan well deserve a

armed with Snyder and Sharpe rifles. These soldiers come from the provinces. They are small men, but very plucky and hardy. They are kept under excellent discipline. It is a rare thing to find one of them drunk."

HABITS OF WILD CREATURES.

It is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free, though secret, in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighbourhood of towns, suspected by hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here!

under a spreading white-pine, there was yet a clean, firm sward to sit on. I had dug out the spring and made a well of clear-gray water, where I could dip up a pailful without soiling it; and thither I went for this purpose almost every day in midsummer, when the pond was warmest. Thither too the woodcock led her brood to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath; but at last, spying me, she would leave her young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer, till within four or five

THE CAMEL AND THE MERCHANT.

THE story is an old one, but good for all that. Said the camel, "It is cold out here; may I put my head within your door?" The merchant could not find it in his heart to refuse. Before long the camel's neck as well as his head was within the little room; then his shoulders; then his whole body. So the merchant was crowded out entirely, for the room was not big enough for both of them.

We sometimes think it no great harm if we permit the beginning of a



A QUIET CORNER IN A BUDDHIST CEMETERY.—(NATIVE PHOTOGRAPH.)

visit. Writing under date of July 10, 1874, from Hirosaki, of one of these castles, Mr Maclay says:

"There is something very inspiring in the lively notes of the bugle that make the entire place vocal in the morning, at noon, and at sundown. It contains a garrison of about a thousand men. They are dressed in blue uniform trimmed with yellow, and are

*A Budget of Letters from Japan. Reminiscences of Work and Travel in Japan. By ARTHUR COLLINS MACLAY, A.M., LL.B., formerly Instructor of English in the Ko-Gakko-Rio, Tokio. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. 391 pages. Illustrated.

He grows to be four feet long,—as big as a small boy,—perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably their whinnering is still heard at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from a hill half a mile from my field. The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows full of pitch-pines into a larger wood about the swamp. Here, in a very secluded and shaded spot,

feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention, and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint, wiry peep, single file through the swamp as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There, too, the turtle-doves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white-pines over my head; or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns—*Thoreau*.

bad habit to enter our bosom. If it would stop there, it might not do so much evil. It is quite as likely as not to crowd out everything good.

A MAN?

At one time at Applington, Iowa, I saw a farmer and his wife bring into Swan's store, and sell, four chickens, at twelve cents apiece, which the wife had sat up and dressed the night before, after putting seven children to bed. The husband took the money and went to the saloon a few minutes after and treated fifty cents' worth.—JAMES MCGUIRE.