

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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OUR PET PIGEONS.

WHAT boy—orgirl either—who does not love pigeons? Happy is the boy who has his pigeon-loft where he raises his little broods of pets, who become so tame that they will light upon his shoulder and peck grain from his hand. How proud he is to take his friends out to see his fan-tails strutting up and down, as proud as he, with their tails spread out like a peacock. He blows up his pouters till they look, for all the world, like worthy aldermen. High up in the air his tumblers can be seen rolling over and over again as they fall toward the ground. They catch their balance again, however, before they fall too far, and soar off again to repeat their gymnastic tumbling. How happy these gentle pigeons must be flying so high in the clear air, and looking down upon the village where is their home. And how faithful they are too, always returning to their own loft. Yet even these faithful pigeons, like some good boys, may fall into bad company. Unless they shun the company of these "coaxers," they are lead away by them to some treacherous neighbour's loft, where they may be secretly killed and made up into a stew or pigeon pie.

But the most useful of all are the faithful "homing" pigeons, which, though carried hundreds of miles away, when once set free will circle around once or twice, then fly straight and swiftly home again.

We read over and over again in history, how great cities have been besieged by hostile armies for many months, so that when people were starving and ready to give them to their cruel foes, news of relief has been brought in by "homing" pigeons, which had been taken out of the city before the siege began. A little piece of paper would be found fastened to the pigeon's neck, on which the poor starved people would read that a friendly army was coming to their relief, and that if they would hold out for a short while longer, they would be saved and have plenty to eat once more. How the thankful people must have loved and cared for the faithful pigeon that brought such good news.



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LIFE ON A LIGHT-SHIP.

BY GUSTAV KOBBE.

THE routine of work on a light-ship is quite simple. At sunrise the watch lowers the lights. At 6 a. m., the captain or the mate stands in the doorway leading from the cabin into the berth deck, and shouts, "All hands!" The men tumble out of

their bunks and dress, breakfast being served at twenty minutes past six. At half-past seven the lamps are removed from the lanterns, and are taken below to be cleaned and filled. In smooth weather this duty can be performed in about two hours; but if the vessel is rolling and pitching, the task may be prolonged an hour or two. When the lamps have been

engaged. It has absolutely no respect for the statutes of the land, and none for its oath to obey them. Whenever it dares to do so it sells its death-dealing fluid to minors; it keeps open its doors—in front or rear—on the Lord's Day; and it "cuts" gambling-table annexes. To reason with it is an impossibility. There is nothing to do but to crush it.

returned to the lanterns there remains nothing for the crew to do except to clean the ship and to go on watch until sundown, when the lamps are lighted and the lanterns hoisted. The crew is divided into the captain's watch and the mate's watch of five each. Twice between spring and winter each watch goes ashore two months, so that each member of the crew is aboard the light-ship eight months in the year. It is not believed that they could stand the life longer than this. In fact, many men throw up their work as soon as they can get ashore. Three members of the "South Shoal" crew have, however, seen unusually long terms of service—twenty-one, nineteen, and seventeen years respectively; and others have served on her a remarkably long time when the desolate character of the service is considered. This is probably due to the fact that the dangers of this exposed station warn off all but those inured to the hardships of a seafaring life.

The pay aboard the "South Shoal" is somewhat higher than on other lightships. The captain receives \$1,000, the mate \$700, and the crew \$600. These sums may not seem large; but it must be borne in mind that even the prodigal son would have found it impossible to make away with his patrimony on the "South Shoal" light-ship, especially as the Government furnishes all supplies. Opportunities for extravagance are absolutely wanting. Occasionally a member of the crew may remark in a sadly jocose tone that he is going around the corner to order a case of wine, or to be measured for a dress suit; but there is no corner.

THE whiskey traffic shelters itself under the protection of law; and yet it is the most lawless business in which men ever