

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Going! Going! Gone!

Going! going! gone! Is this an auction here, Where nobody bids, and nobody buys, and there is no auctioneer? No hammer, no crowd, no noise, no push of women and men— And yet the chance that is passing now will never come back again!

Going! going! gone! Here is a morn of June— Dew, and fragrance, and colour, and light, and a million sounds a-tune. Oh, look! Oh, listen! Be wise, and take this wonderful thing— A jewel such as you will not find in the treasury of a king!

Going! going! gone! What is next on the list? An afternoon of purple and gold, fair as an amethyst, And large enough to hold all good things under the sun. Bid it in now, and crowd it full with lessons, and work, and fun!

Going! going! gone! Here is a year to be had! A whole magnificent year held out to every lass and lad! Days, and weeks, and months! Joys and labours, and pains! Take it, spend it, buy with it, lend it, and presently count your gains.

Going! going! gone! The largest lot comes last; Here, with its infinite unknown wealth, is offered a life-time vast! Out of it may be wrought the deeds of hero and sage— Come, bid! Come, bid! lest a bright youth fade out to a useless age! —St. Nicholas.

EGYPTIAN DONKEY BOYS.

One of the most characteristic features of life in Cairo is the hundreds of donkey boys that throng the streets. At almost every corner, near every hotel they abound. A tourist can scarcely appear on the street but half a dozen will swarm around him, all shouting at once and urging the merits of their respective donkeys—"Mine very good donkey, him name 'Prince of Wales,'" or, if he thinks you are an American, "him name 'Yankee Doodle,'" or, perhaps, "him name 'Grand Old Man,'" or, "him name 'Lily Langtry.'" In Upper Egypt the donkeys have more aristocratic names, and I often had the pleasure of riding on the back of Rameses the Great, or, Tothmes III., namesakes of some of the mightiest of the Pharaohs.

The boys are bright-witted, wide-awake, handsome fellows, who speak a little English and a smattering of perhaps half a dozen other languages besides. The donkeys are generally shaven or branded in fantastic designs, and the donkey boy will run behind whacking the poor beast with his staff, and the more you ask them to "go easy," the more they beat him and make him go the harder. A gallant Irish major in our party used to say that "he was the heaviest man in the company and always got the smallest donkey," and sometimes, he would declare that "his donkey was a hundred years old," so slow and crippled was its gait. The picture of the boys and donkey and the handsome architecture in the background are all very admirable reproductions of life in Cairo.

We can all be servants of God wherever our lot is cast; but he gives us different sorts of work, according as he fits us for it and calls us to it.

A MARKED COURTESY.

Some time ago the attention of a Philadelphia mother was attracted to her little boy by the fact that he lay at full length on the library floor, evidently deeply involved in the intricacies of letter writing. At last the missive ended with a scrawling superscription and an immense sigh of relief, and it was proudly borne to the father and mother. Imagine their surprise when their eyes fell upon the following.

Dear Czar.—Since the death of your father you must have received a great deal of foreign postage stamps on letters from your friends who were sorry for you. I am collecting postage stamps, and if you will send me a good lot of yours,

This little Kansas boy had learned enough of the religion of Jesus to know that a Christian must be sound and right clear through

A HORSE WITH A HABIT.

There was once a horse that used to pull around a sweep which lifted dirt from the depths of the earth. He was kept at the business for nearly twenty years, until he became old, blind, and too stiff in the joints to be of further use. So he was turned into a pasture, and left to crop the grass without any one to disturb or bother him.

A TALK WITH THE BOYS AND GIRLS.

Dear young friends. I will talk with you a little on intemperance. But do I hear the girls say, "You do not need to talk with girls about that, for girls and women never drink." You are mistaken, girls. There are many women who drink, and who go just as low down in the ditch as any drunkard you ever saw; and many of these are mothers with little children who need their love and care. Strong drink turns a once kind parent into a selfish, brutal one, and very often little children are made to suffer from blows, hunger, cold and neglect by the ones who should provide and tenderly care for them.

The children of such parents often learn to drink by seeing father and mother do so. They send their children to the saloon to get their beer, and the children begin to taste of it as they carry it home. They soon learn to drink it, and that first taste is the beginning of a drunken life. A gentleman in New York saw two little girls, six and eight years of age, who had been sent to a saloon for a pint of beer. They scarcely got outside of the door before they each took a taste of the beer. The man watched, and before they got out of sight they each took another sip. The bartender who sold them the beer said that a great many boys and girls were sent there by their parents for beer, and more than half of them had learned to drink. Now, boys and girls, I think you begin to feel as I do that this is a very important subject. But you say, "What can we do about it? We are sorry these things are so. We have seen some of the misery which drunkenness causes, but we are but boys and girls, and can do nothing." Oh yes, you can do something. In the first place, you can sign the temperance pledge and faithfully keep it. This is a long step towards doing something, for if you keep your pledge you will never make a drunkard. Get as many others to sign the pledge as you can, and watch for an opportunity to do something else. If you are very much in earnest you will find something to do. I read of three brothers and their cousins who had formed themselves into a temperance society, and were very anxious for something to do, when a man called them to help hunt for a man, who, while drunk, had wandered into the woods. He was apt to have fits, and his friends had become very anxious about him. The boys were delighted to think they now had a chance to do something for a drunkard. They ran into the woods and hunted until they were very tired, and it seemed as though they had been everywhere. At last they found him, stretched out on the ground, looking as though dead; but he was not dead, and

men came and carried him home to his poor old mother, who tenderly cared for him and nursed him back to health. He signed the pledge, and by the grace of God he was enabled to control that terrible appetite which before had control of him. What shame and suffering would have been avoided if he had signed the pledge when a boy. It is with this as it is in doing anything else, you must not only begin with a great deal of interest and courage but you must be persevering if you would succeed. Do not be discouraged if you fall once, but try, try again.



EGYPTIAN DONKEY BOYS.

I will send you some American ones in return."

The parents at first laughed at the idea, but the little man was so evidently pleased with this creation of his young brain that they finally determined to allow him to mail it, never imagining that it would really fall beneath the royal gaze. Greatly to their surprise, the mail of a few mornings ago brought the young fellow a bulky envelope, bearing upon it the seal and arms of the royal house of Russia. To the little fellow's delight, he found, on opening it, that it was packed with stamps of all nationalities. The laboured missive had evidently reached its destination, and had spelled out to the heart of the man, in all the excitement of his coronation ceremonies, such a message of childish innocence as made refusal impossible.

NOT A CHRISTIAN POTATO.

A certain little boy in Kansas, only seven years old, who was trying hard to be a Christian, was watching the servant Maggie as she was paring the potatoes for dinner. Soon she pared an extra large one, which was very white and nice on the outside, but when cut into pieces, it showed itself to be hollow and black inside with dry rot. Instantly Willie exclaimed, "Why, Maggie, that potato isn't a Christian."

"What do you mean?" asked Maggie. "Don't you see it isn't good clear through?" was Willie's reply.

But the funny thing about the old horse was that every morning, after grazing a while, he would start on a tramp, going round and round in a circle, just as he had been accustomed to do for so many years. He would keep it up for hours, and people often stopped to look and wonder what had got into the head of the venerable animal to make him walk around in such a solemn way when there was no earthly need of it. But it was the force of habit. So the boy who forms bad or good habits in his youth will be led by them when he becomes old, and will be miserable or happy accordingly.