

PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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LEADING THE BLIND.

Few things appeal more strongly to our sympathies than the condition of the blind. To see no sun, no moon, nor the sweet face of nature—and worse still, never to behold the faces we love—is one of the saddest afflictions of earth. Yet many who are blind are happy and cheerful, notwithstanding their affliction. It is surely the duty of those who can see to help those who cannot. The young girl in our picture is doing this. Amid the crowded streets she is carefully guiding the poor boy, who is probably an utter stranger, across the road. If he could only see the look of sympathy on her face, he would be still more thankful than he is.

A LITTLE BOY'S PLAN.

BY E. P. ALLAN.

"AND then, mother," continued Esther, using her feminine privilege of doing the talking, "there was the deaf man and his pigeons; oh! so many. He fed them for us, and they were just as tame as children: they came flying—"

"It was queer," interrupted Jack, who grew tired waiting for his turn at the conversation, "and gave me a queer sensation to have the other old soldiers tell us this deaf man's story, right before him."

"It wasn't before him at all, Jack," exclaimed Essie; "didn't you notice how careful they were to stand behind him? I suppose he could have told something of what they were saying from the movement of their lips."

"And what was the old man's story?" asked mother.

"He wasn't old, mother," corrected the little girl again; "he was the only man in the Soldiers' Home who didn't look about a hundred and fifty. But he was only a boy when he went into the army, they said; and in some battle the roar of cannon, or the shock, or something, made him entirely deaf. He has never heard a sound since."

"But the worst part of it was that losing his hearing made him morose and melancholy, until he was thought to be crazy; he seemed to hate everybody—thought everybody meant to do him harm; and as he had no family, he was taken to the Home."

"There they happened to set him to taking care of the pigeons, and that made a different sort of man of him. He loves them dearly, and they evidently love him, and now he is no longer cross and sulky."

"That is a sweet story," said mother, "and it is worth all the rest of your visit, I think, to learn how love works miracles; even love to dumb things that have no souls. It is no wonder that love to God can make us even like him, divine. But what did Horace see of all this? You haven't told me anything about your visit, Horace."

"I've been thinking about Dick Norden," said Horace soberly. Jack and Esther laughed at the little boy, but mother said quite earnestly, "I wouldn't let Dick's bad temper bother me so much, if I were you, my son; don't think about him. Don't you know the old



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saying, 'Never trouble trouble, till trouble troubles you?'"

"But how about a pigeon?" suggested Horace; and it took all mother's wit to put two and two together and make four—that is, to find out that little Holly was thinking that if loving and taking care of pigeons made a cross man pleasant, it might do as much for a cross boy.

Dick Norden was a great torment to our Holly; he lived on the corner just below us, and he was always knocking Holly's books out of his hands, or whisking off his hat, or shaking his can when he was carrying milk, or doing some such mean thing. He wouldn't do it while Jack was around, for fear of getting thrashed, but he picked his opportunities.

"Well, Horace was quite taken up with this pigeon plan, and stuck to it, until he persuaded father to take him again to the Soldiers' Home.

The deaf man wouldn't sell a single

pigeon, but when father made him understand that Holly wanted it for a sort of peace offering, he gave him a pair of beauties.

I'm sure Horace wanted to keep them for himself, but he didn't say so; he struck right out for Dick's, with the rest of us children following him.

"Hello, Dick!" said Holly, his little face red with running, and with excitement, "I've brought you something; they're jolly, aren't they, Jack? But you mustn't ask me what I brought 'em to you for; it's a secret, isn't it, Jack? I'll tell you about it when—when—" Horace stopped and looked bothered; he didn't know how to get through with his sentence, without telling the secret.

But Dick was more interested in the covered basket than in the secret, fortunately, and when the top was taken off, and the beautiful white-winged creatures stepped out, arching their violet-coloured

necks, and turning their heads from side to side, Dick was as wildly delighted as Horace could have wished.

It was amusing to see our little boy's interest in his experiment; he would strut past Dick's corner on purpose, and stop to chat, and ask how Flip and Flap were getting on, and swing his milk-can from hand to hand, but the pigeon plan worked without a break.

I don't know whether or not Dick thought he had been bought off; perhaps he did; but our little boy had no such thought; he believed that he had proved beyond a doubt that the way to deal with cross and disagreeable people was to get them to take a dose of love for somebody, or something, even if it was only a pigeon!

A HOUSE-BUILDING SPIDER.

BY BETH DAY.

Few people can look at a spider without a feeling of disgust, if not of fear; yet, if they would but learn the curious ways of this odd creature, they would look upon it with different feelings, and the habits of the different members of the family would become an interesting study.

There are in this family spinners and weavers; house builders, kite makers, kite fliers, cave diggers, hunters, balloonists, bridge builders, and even divers, who make homes under the water and there live and rear their little ones.

Nearly all spiders are spinners and weavers. They spin the fine thread of which their snare or web is made; and from similar threads they weave a lining that looks like gray felt, for the walls of their homes or dens, in front of which the snare is spread, usually in some crevice or corner. Some of the female spiders weave a strong bag or sack, in which they deposit their eggs, and carry them about until the young spiders are hatched.

Perhaps the most interesting member of the family is the turret spider, who makes a burrow or tube-shaped cave in the earth from six to eight inches deep, and builds at the top a curbing or tower or turret two inches high. She builds her tower around the edge of the hole just as a child would build a corn-cob house; and the materials are bits of straw or sticks or tiny roots, and she stops the crevices with earth brought out of the cave beneath. As she puts each stick in place, she fastens it at the corners with a fine thread that she spins as she needs it. When the tower is high enough she makes the inside of that, and spins and weaves a fine silken fabric with which to line the burrow or cave. Then she takes a position just inside the tower and sits peeping over the edge, waiting for such insects as may fall into it, or alight upon the edge.

The burrow serves as her winter home; here her young ones are hatched, and here they stay until they are able to take care of themselves, which is in about a month from the time they are first hatched from the egg.

At first she carries her numerous family