

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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THE SISTERS.

This is a pretty picture in itself, is it not? But it is still more pretty in that which it suggests—the love of two sisters for each other. For I think it must be that these two girls are very fond of each other. Their love for one another makes them happy, more happy than they could be alone.

It is very delightful when children are happy together. It is very sad when a family, where peace and love ought to reign, is made unhappy by quarrels and unkindness.

A while ago I spent a Sabbath at a friend's house where there was quite a family of children. What pleased me very much was that during all the time that I was there I did not hear any cross tones or any disputes between these brothers and sisters. They enjoyed each other's company, but there was not the suspicion of a quarrel. Perhaps you say there ought not to have been anything like disputing on Sunday anyway. That is true enough. The Sabbath ought to be a day of peace. But I judged from the manner of these children towards each other that they were never quarrelsome.

That is as it should be in families.

There is no reason in the world why brothers and sisters should not live together in harmony and peace. But sometimes we do not find this to be the case. In some homes there seems to be nothing but contention from morning to night. There is perpetual quarrelling. John will not let Jane look at his new geography, and so Jane tries to snatch the book. It is as likely as not that the book will be torn before they are through. That is no way for a brother and sister to act towards each other. By-and-bye John wants some stitching done on the sails of a boat he is making. But he was disobliging about his geography, and so Jane retaliates by refusing to do anything to "his old sails." Of course both are unhappy. Having our own way and being disobliging does not make us happy. Any boy or girl guilty of such conduct feels at heart the wrongfulness of it. When we know in our conscience that we are wrong we cannot be happy.

Now, the way to correct this evil when it exists in any family is for each one to firmly resolve to do all that he can to keep the peace. It always takes two persons to quarrel. So, John, you can make up your mind that no matter how disobliging Jane may be inclined to be, you will not retaliate by being ugly in return. You may be sure that when she comes to think of it she will be uncomfortable over it, and she will be all the more uncomfortable if you are not cross and resentful because of her conduct.

In the same way, Jane, if John teases you—and you know that boys are, as you girls say, "horrid teasers,"—the best way for you is not to mind it. Take the teasing good-naturedly. There is nothing that makes teasing fall so flat as to find that it don't tease. No boy will care to keep it up when he finds that you don't mind him. He will vote you "real jolly," and let you alone. So you see, boys and girls, that you have this matter in your own hands. So far as each one of you is concerned yours may be a happy and harmonious family. You can be kind and loving towards the others, no matter how they may be towards you. If you are found to be thus kind it will help to make the others kind too. At any rate, you will be far happier than if you yielded to the impulse to quarrel. Perhaps your example will work through the whole family, just as leaven works through the dough when bread is being made. The experiment is worth trying. And that you may not fail, you need the strength that God only can give. Ask

him for that strength every day; yes, ask him for it whenever the temptation comes to be disobliging or quarrelsome or unloving.

FIGHTING A GOOD FIGHT.

A preacher of the Gospel was resting in the house of a friend, when a man came to him and took his girdle or belt. The stranger bound himself about with the belt and then said, "Thus shall they do to the man whose girdle this is." The preacher knew that this meant that he would have a great many things to suffer if he went on preaching the Gospel. He had studied law, and was also a skilled mechanic. He might have made money and lived at ease, but he chose to do his duty if he had to give up all these things.

He was going up to the Capitol City for the fifth time since he became a preacher. Usually in this country it was considered

away as a prisoner. But this was better, the preacher thought, than not to go at all. For everywhere he went, even as a prisoner, he might find somebody to teach and to help.

He did not go very far at first, only over on the coast of his own country. Here he spoke before a Governor and a King, and though he was asked to do this so that they might judge whether he was really teaching things against their law, he contrived to say some things that made them wish to believe as he did, and he almost persuaded them to listen to him further, and to do as he wanted them to do. He saw though, that after all, because they were more desirous to please the people than to do right these men would do nothing for him. So, he said, I will go to Rome, where, if they do not let me go free, I shall at once meet with more people and be able to preach to those who have never heard of the new

THE RELIEF OF LEYDEN.

It was in 1574," writes Rev. E. P. Hammond, in his latest book, entitled, 'Roger's Travels,' that the Spanish forces, led by Vaser, held the town in siege for four months. During all that time the inhabitants of Leyden resisted these cruel invaders. At last, when summoned to surrender, Vanderdoce sent back word that when provisions failed they would devour their left hands, reserving their right hands to defend their rights and liberties. They were forced to eat all the cats and dogs to keep from starving. And, according to Motley, green leaves were stripped from the trees and shrubs, and every herb was used for food, but even then many died of starvation. Mothers dropped dead in the streets, with their infants in their arms, while in many houses the watchmen on their rounds found whole families—father, mother, and children—dead,

for a plague went hand in hand with the famine. The inhabitants fall like grass beneath the scythe. Motley says that 'from six to eight thousand sunk beneath this scourge alone, and yet the people held out,' men and women mutually encouraging each other to prevent the entrance of their enemies, as being far more horrible than pestilence or famine. Some of the more faint-hearted were anxious to surrender. While Adrian Vanderwert (the Burgomaster) passed through the streets, crowds gathered around him, and there he stood on yonder spot, tall, with haggard visage, yet beautiful and commanding, and, as he waved his broad felt hat for silence, in a loud voice he said, 'My friends, why do you murmur that we do not forget our vows and surrender the city to the Spaniards? I have vowed to keep the city. I can die but once, whether by your hands, the enemy's, or the hand of God. My own fate is indifferent to me, not that of the city intrusted to me. I know we shall starve if not soon relieved, but I would rather starve than die a dishonourable death. Your threats do not affect me. Take my life, if you will, here is my sword, plunge it into my heart, and divide my flesh among you to satisfy your hunger, but surrender I will not so long as I live.' With these bold words he touched the hearts of the people, and they shouted to the enemy when they returned to the battlements of the city, 'You call us rat-eaters and dog-eaters; and it is true. So long as you hear the dog bark and the cat mew within the walls, you may know that the city holds out, and when all our resources are exhausted we will set fire to the city, and perish with the women and children in the flames rather than suffer our liberties to be crushed.'

"The Spaniards shouted in reply, 'As well could the Prince of Orange pluck the stars from the sky as bring the ocean to Leyden to their relief.' But they little knew that God was fighting against them, and that he could and would do this, as we shall soon see.

"Finally, a carrier pigeon flew over the heads of their enemies, and brought the glad news that the Prince of Orange was coming, with two hundred boats loaded with provisions, that he had cut his way through the dykes, and, as Leyden was lower than the ocean, they would soon be floated to the gates of the city. But the water did not rise high enough. Away in the distance, beyond the walls, they saw bread and food in abundance, but this only maddened the starving multitude. Many cried to the Lord for help, and their prayers were answered. A wind rose, a storm from the ocean drove the water faster and faster through the broken dykes, on and on it rushed till it reached the haughty Spaniards, and drowned many of them in an unexpected moment. The flotilla of boats glided over them and carried food to the people."



THE SISTERS.

a great event in the life of a man to go to this city. But his friends begged him not to go, and the preacher himself was sad. He knew it was his duty to go, though, and he would go on even though he knew he might never return.

You would have thought that when he knew what was likely to happen he could have watched, or his friends could have, and prevented it.

He did not stop to think of his danger when once he was there. He went right on teaching, even though coarse men ran after him and stoned him, and he would have been killed had it not been for the police. Then he had word brought to him that more than forty men had agreed to plot to kill him. They had promised to eat nothing until they had killed him. I cannot tell you whether they all starved to death or not. The man who was at the head of the police force arranged to have the persecuted preacher taken away by night.

The chief of police could only send him

way of life that Christ taught. And if I can get but one man to believe in that great city where all the world comes, I shall be sure that the truth will spread.

He was shipwrecked, and was a long time reaching Rome. But in the meantime he had all the men who were with him to teach, and he was able to help them very much. When they arrived at the place where they left the boat no man among them all was so beloved as was this prisoner from the land of the Jews.

For two years in Rome Paul (for that was the preacher's name), lived in his own hired house, and many came to learn of him. He must have done a great deal of good, though he was all the while chained to a soldier, as he was still a prisoner.

We do not know just where he died or when, but it is quite sure that after six years he was put to death in a most cruel manner. Among the last words he wrote were those, "I have fought a good fight."