

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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What Made the Difference?

BY L. A. OBEAR.

"DEAR child, you can't go to the picnic;
Your toes are all out of your shoes,
And your dress is faded and poor and thin;
We can't have whatever we choose."

"But, mamma, there's Maggie Jones over
way,
Has stockings, and shoes, and a gown
Whenever she needs them, and so does her
ma,
The smartest-dressed woman in town.

"And you are a much nicer woman than she,
And Mr. Jones hasn't a trade;
So papa must earn much more money than he,
And I am sure he is always well paid."

"Tis the beer that takes your father's spare
dimes—
The beer bought at Jones' store;
So the Jones' are growing richer each day,
While each day we keep on growing poor."

The father seemed asleep in his chair,
But he heard every word that was said,
Though he gave no sign that they reached his
ear
By a movement of hand or head.

Put down in his heart was a silent vow
That, instead of Sam Jones' beer,
There should come to his child, and wife, and
home,
For the future, Sam Jones' cheer.

BLUE THUNDER.

BY JESS.

It was a wild-looking country, with dried
grass, bunches of grease-root, and knots of
prickly cacti covering the ground. Occa-
sionally a scrubby oak appeared that looked
as though it had never drunk its fill since
it fell an acorn from the stunted mother
branch into the dry mother earth.

There were no herds here, only skin
tents scattered among scraggy oaks about
a low adobe schoolhouse.

How small it looked with its thick white
sides and low flat roof! Many of the chil-
dren, who now sat upon the rough board
bench filling the little room to overflowing,
could remember when the schoolhouse was
built, and how, with their own hands, they
had helped to shape the rude blocks and
place them in the summer sun to dry.
How strange they thought the white people
were to concern themselves so much about
crooked lines and odd marks in books when
there was game to be found in the mountains
and hunting on the plains.

But slowly, one by one, the tents of the
more progressive Indians were moved
nearer the adobe schoolhouse, that their
sons and daughters might learn the wisdom
of the white man, and one day appear at
the congress of the nation to represent
their own people.

As bright as these prospects were in the
minds of the young, there were times when
they realized only the heaviness of their
burden and the impossibility of learning
crooked S and queer-looking T. At such
times the copper-coloured faces looked at
each other with a sorrowful, hopeless ex-
pression painful to see.

One, two, three, rang the bell on the
teacher's desk. Each pupil looked from
his own rough-board desk to the larger one
before him. Who would first be called
upon to recite a lesson they knew so little
about?

"Blue Thunder," the teacher called,
"you may come to the desk!"

"Me no know lesson."

"Come to me and learn it."

"Me learn it here, me big Injun, me
learn meself."

"Blue Thunder, will you obey me?"

"Ugh, white teacher baby, Blue Thunder
big Injun."

For a moment stillness reigned at the
little mission school, while forty eyes looked
wonderingly at the little teacher whom
Blue Thunder had dared disobey. Could
such a disobedience be passed by unnoticed?
Alas! none knew better than the teacher
the advantage her little flock could take
from such a course.

"Come to me!" The voice had changed
to severer tones and the blue eyes looked
threateningly.

"Ugh!" Slowly Blue Thunder rose,
gathering his buckskin clothes about him,

to these wild children of the desert. Did
she not deserve their love?

"Ugh, white teacher baby, Blue Thunder
big Injun. Blue Thunder no love, women
love, Blue Thunder take care of little pale-
face teacher." This last was said in a lower
tone, while a defiant glance was cast at his
companions.

For a moment he stood there, straight
and tall, looking into the faces of his com-
panions. Did he know of their premeditated
wrong?

Soon a low cry, such as the nighthawks
often make while calling to their com-
panions, sounded throughout the little

Silently the brave teacher sank into a
chair to wait for the angry blows to fall
and crush out the life she had so willingly
given for their use. She heard footsteps
on the platform surrounding her desk and
parted her lips in one last prayer. As she
did so she felt a strong hand laid upon her
shoulder and the breath of Blue Thunder
touched her cheek.

"Me big Injun, blows no hurt Blue
Thunder. Little teacher heap baby, love,
cry. Blue Thunder no cry, no love. Big
Injun keep little teacher."

Down came the blows. Harder and
harder they fell staggering Blue Thunder as
he bent to protect her form. Once she
looked up at the face above her; the
features were set with a fixed expression
as though ready to bear all the blows
heaped upon him and bear them silently
and without complaint.

Not a cry escaped his lips; he only bent
lower if an exceptionally hard blow was
aimed at the little white teacher who was
a "baby" and who loved and cried.

And so they found him when the cries
of the angry crowd attracted some passers-
by. Tenderly they bore the poor beaten
form to a place of safety. In vain did they
bathe his wounds and nourish his taxed
strength; he could not survive the blows
of the angry mob.

One beautiful day when the sun was
setting, Blue Thunder closed his eyes upon
the skin tents and the adobe schoolhouse.
The teacher was near, stroking his hands
and soothing his aching brow. His lips
moved and the teacher bowed to listen.

"Blue Thunder no love, no cry."
A tear from the pale-faced teacher
glistened upon his blanched cheek while
her lips murmured softly:

"Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friend."

Over a grave in the little mission church-
yard native wild roses bloom and die, and
dusky little people, long since grown
peaceful, will point it out to you in a
hushed tone of voice as the grave of brave
Blue Thunder.

LITTLE WIDOWS OF INDIA.

AMONG the many sad things connected
with the lives of women in India, nothing
is more pitiable than the state of the poor
little widows. A child wife only six or
seven years old, is regarded by all her hus-
band's family as the cause, more or less
direct, of his death.

She is treated at best with dislike, and
often with great harshness and severity.
Therefore the death of a young wife before
her husband is a cause of great rejoicing
among her friends that she has thus escaped
widowhood.

They are convinced that the gods have
favoured her, and that she has been ad-
vanced a degree in the great series of births
and deaths through which every Hindu
passes on his way to final perfection. The
prayer of every little girl before marriage
and of every little girl and woman after
marriage is, that she may never become a
widow.

The preservation of the husband's health
is a matter of the greatest importance, and
on a certain day of the year a special relig-
ious ceremony is observed with this end in
view. It is emphatically the "Women's
Day," and occurs about the middle of Jan-
uary, when the sun is believed to turn
northward.

Offerings are made at the temples, money
is given to the priests, pilgrimages are un-
dertaken, fastings undergone, and vows
performed for the preservation of a hus-
band's health and life. When he is ill, the
wife removes her jewels, puts on coarse
clothing, and devotes herself to prayer and
austerities. If he dies, her woe begins.



THE MISSION SCHOOL.

and walked to the teacher's desk. A sullen
look played upon his features while he
stumbled through the first rudimentary
lessons in the English language.

"Blue Thunder." The teacher's hand still
held the book, but her eyes were downcast,
fastened upon the brown hands before her.
"Can I never touch your heart? Will you
never obey me because you love me and
not through fear? Have I not proven my
love for you?" Her voice grew lower and
a pale face rested itself on a small, hard-
worked hand. But her mind was not with
her flock at this time; it wandered away
to her own home, to the father and mother,
the sisters and brothers, and comfortable
home, left behind become a missionary

room. It grew louder and louder and
seemed to come from many throats. The
teacher had heard this cry before and knew
it to be a cry of distress and unity. Did
these poor simple minds, then, think they
were distressed and were to demand relief
from the duties she had placed upon them
and the labours of the schoolroom?

One moment she stood looking pityingly
at them with the words "my children" on
her lips, then she closed her eyes to keep
out the sight of the enraged little ones
pressing toward her. On and on came the
hurrying feet, and louder and louder grew
their cries. The rough desks that only an
hour before had held their books were now
broken in pieces to be used as weapons.