

# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XV.]

TORONTO, AUGUST 10, 1895.

[No. 32.]

## MOHAMMEDANS AT PRAYER.

THE Mohammedans are, in their way, a deeply religious people. They have frequent hours of prayer which they devoutly observe, no matter where they may be—on sea or shore—in the desert or in the city. It is very impressive in the early hours of the morning to hear the muezzins cry from the lofty minaret, "Rise to prayer. Prayer is better than sleep. There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet."

Though a very corrupt form of religion, Mohammedanism is a great improvement on the degrading worship of idols which it superseded, and it may be a preparation of vast portions of the race for the purer religion of Jesus.

## JAPANESE POLITENESS.

A VISITOR to Japan furnishes a lively description of what he calls the native "custom of everlasting bowing." One cannot help wondering what our American shopkeepers would say if they were expected to waste time in such nonsense. A golden mean is best, no doubt, in this as in other matters, but some Yankees might do well to take a hint from their celestial brethren.

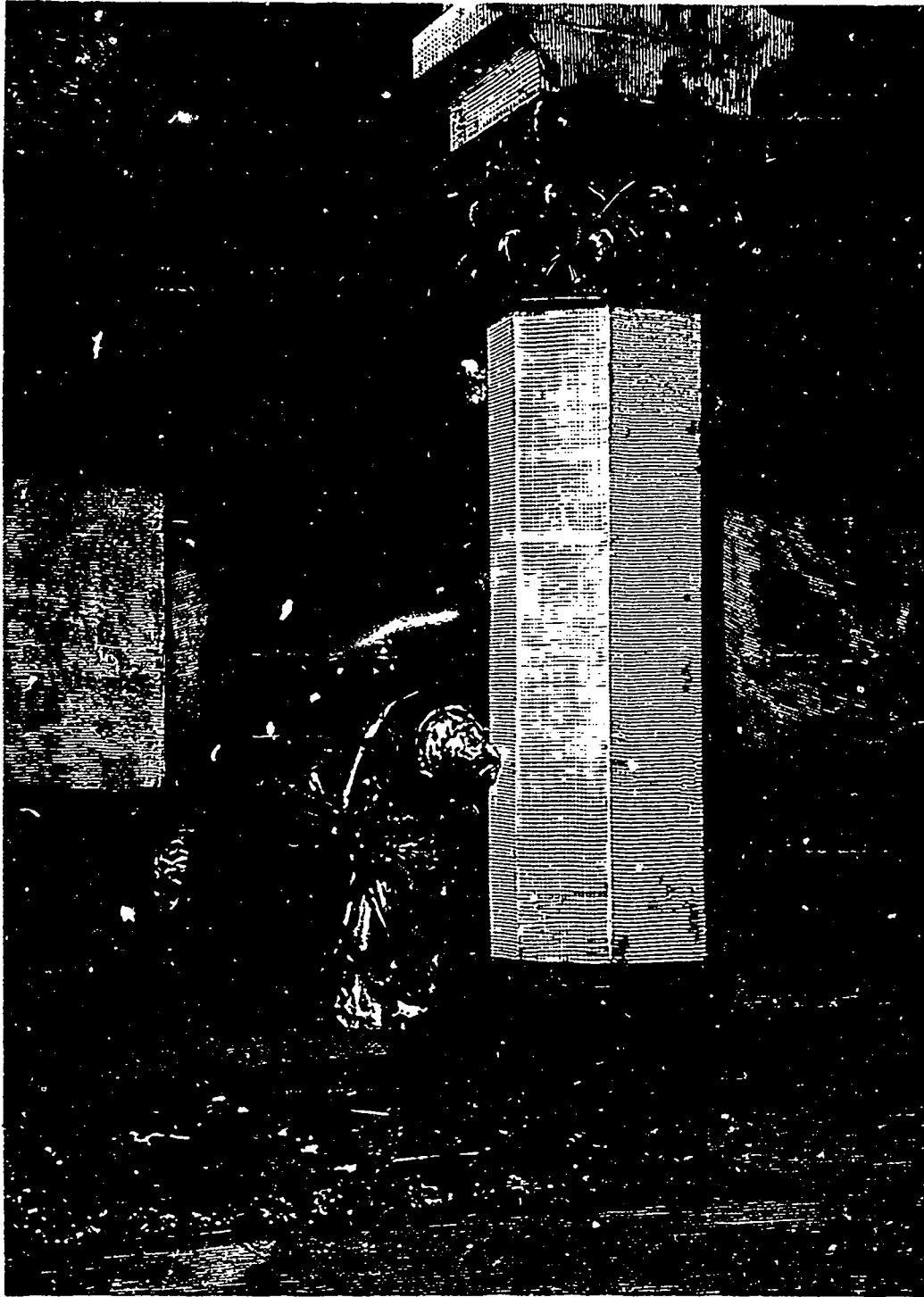
"The petty tradesman whose shop you enter carries on the process for about two minutes before he can be induced to begin business; the rickshaw coolie to which you pay a mere trifle for a toilsome drive stands at the railway station, dripping from heat, mopping and bowing, until, if you be a new comer, you rush away in convulsions of laughter.

"On leaving the hotel I distributed backsheesh through the landlord to the various employees. One after another they came trotting up, smiling and flopping down on the floor, thumping their heads repeatedly against the ground, mumbling their gratitude; while as for beggars—who, by the way are not numerous—they sprawl on the earth, and in an extremity of self-abasement literally rub their heads in the dirt.

"Again, on arriving at a tea-house, the landlady first brings in tea, which she delivers crouching on the floor, and then the entire family come in succession, and kneeling at your feet, go through the process of bumping their foreheads.

"Nor is the bowing restricted to inferiors or to the lower classes. Many a time have I watched the ceremonial of two friends, from among the upper orders, parting in the street. Backward and forward they sway their bodies at right angles, as if they worked on pivots, until one wonders when they will cease. Over at last, I think. Not a bit of it. They separate for a few paces, and then, as if a sudden omission had struck them, they rush back and go through the whole ridiculous business again, and really seem to enjoy it."

It is the saloon that is the greatest obstacle to all public reforms.



MOHAMMEDANS AT PRAYER.

## CAUGHT BY A LION.

THERE is a firm in Hamburg, Germany, which supplies menageries in all parts of the world with captured animals. In order to do this the Hamburg house sends out the most brave and skilful hunters to be found, and in the business of capturing these animals alive the hunters often meet with adventures and perils more startling than those of the wildest romance. A man who has been in this business for many years relates as follows some of his experiences with lions:

While trapping lions in the Hottentot country for the Hamburg animal house I had opportunities for seeing the king of beasts at his best, and for making close observations of his character.

No two lions are alike, except in a few leading traits, any more than two men are alike. Every lion is supposed to roar at night when abroad after prey, but not half

of them do so. When you read of one charging into a camp you praise his courage, but for every one such case I can show you ten where the lion skulked about like a dog. You never find him twice alike.

There are plenty of instances where men have been seized by lions and lived to relate the particulars, though no two agree as to sensations. I had been out one afternoon with some of the natives to prepare a bait in a rocky ravine. The sun was nearly down as we started for camp, and no one had the least suspicion of the presence of danger until a lion which had been crouched beside a bush sprang out and knocked me down. In springing upon his prey the lion or tiger strikes as he seizes. This blow of the paw, if it falls on the right spot, disables the victim at once. I was so near this fellow that he simply reared up, seized me by the shoulder, and pulled me down, and I was flat on the earth before I realized

what happened. I was on my back, and he stood with both paws on my waist, facing the natives and growling savagely.

The men ran off about three hundred feet and then halted, which was doubtless the reason why I was not carried off at once.

I can say without conceit that I was fairly cool. It had come so suddenly that I had not had time to get "rattled." I had been told by an old Boer hunter, if I ever found myself in this fix, to appeal to the lion's fears. Had I moved my arm to get my pistol the beast would have lowered his head and seized my throat. So long as I lay quiet he would reason that I was dead and give his attention to the natives. All of a sudden I barked out like a dog, followed by a growl, and that beast jumped twenty feet in his surprise. He came down between me and the natives, and I turned enough to see that his tail was down and he was scared. I uttered more barks and growls, but without moving a hand, and, after making a circle clear around me, the lion suddenly bolted and went off with a scare which would last him a week. If you had picked up a stick and discovered it to be a snake you would do just as the lion did. He supposed he had pulled down a man. The man turned into a dog. He could not understand it and it frightened him.

## A SPIDER'S SKILL.

A VERY curious and interesting spectacle was to be seen on a recent afternoon in the office of a livery-stable in the city. Against the wall of the room stands a tolerably tall desk, and under this a small spider, not larger than a common pea, had constructed an extensive web reaching to the floor. About half-past eleven o'clock in the forenoon it was observed that the spider had ensnared a young mouse by passing filaments of her web around its tail. When first seen the mouse had its fore feet on the floor, and could barely touch the floor with its hind feet. The spider was full of business, running up and down the line and occasionally biting the mouse's tail, making it struggle desperately. Its efforts to escape were all unavailing, as the slender filaments about its tail were too strong for it to break. In a short time it was seen that the spider was slowly hoisting its victim into the air. By two o'clock in the afternoon the mouse could barely touch the floor with its fore feet; by dark its nose was an inch above the floor. At nine o'clock at night the mouse was still alive, but made no sign, except when the spider descended and bit its tail. At this time it was an inch and a half from the floor. The next morning the mouse was dead, and hung three inches from the floor. The news of the novel sight soon became circulated, and hundreds of people visited the stable to witness it. The mouse was a small one, measuring about an inch and a half from the point of its nose to the root of its tail.—*The Popular Science Monthly.*