

PLEASANT HOURS

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SIR WALTER'S HONOUR.

By Margaret T. Preston.



*Loyal, conscience clear,
and true—
What need have I to go?*

"Quick, father! catch thy doublet up,
Without a moment's stay;
Before they drain their latest cup,
We must be far away.

"Outside the bar a galley lies,
And ere the sun doth glance
Its earliest beams across the skies,
We shall be safe in France."

"Ah, boy—my boy—my brave Carew!
Why tempt thy father so?
I—loyal, conscience-clear, and true—
What need have I to go?"

"My trait'rous foes, once trusted friends,
Would be the first to say
I flout the laws, and flee, because
I am as false as they."

"Yct, father, come! Foul threats they bring,
Dark counsels they have planned;
And justice thou shalt never wring
From cold King James' hand!"

"My mother, at the water's brink,
Waits, all her fears awake;
And if escape should fall, I think—
I think her heart will break!"

Too much! His bravery shrank to meet
The weight of such a blow;
And springing instant to his feet,
He answered, "I will go!"

They thrid the narrow, stony hall;
They found the door unbarred;
And in the shadow of the wall,
They crossed the prison yard.

With stealthy steps they reached the shore,
And on its rapid way,
The boat, with softly dipping oar,
Dropped down the silent bay.

IV.

Across the star-lit stream they steal,
The waters gurgling at the keel
Was all the sound they heard.

Without one uttered word,
The waters gurgling at the keel
Was all the sound they heard.

The good French barque, that soon would bear
Them hence, lay full in view;
An oar's length more, and we are there!"
Whispered the boy Carew.

They rocked within its shadow. Then,
Sir Walter, under breath,
First spoke, and kissed, and kissed again
Lady Elizabeth.

"Nay, Bess! It must not, shall not be,
Whatever others can,
That I should like a dastard flee
For fear of mortal man!"

All Orinoco's mines of gold
All virgin realms I claim,
Are less to me a thousandfold,
Than my untarnished name.

"Put back the boat! Nay, sweet, no moan!
Thy love is so divine,
That thou wouldst rather die than own
A craven heart were mine!"

"My purse, good oarsman! Pull thy best,
And we may make the shore
Before the latest trencher-guest
Hath left the warder's door.

"Hist! Not one other pleading word
Life were not worth a groat
If breath of shame could blur my name;
Put back! put back the boat!"

"Ah, Bess"—(she is too stunned to speak!)
"But, thou, my boy, Carew,
Shalt pledge thy vow, even here, and now,
That—faithful, tried, and true—

"Thou'lt choose, whatever stress may rise,
Whilst thou hast life and breath,
Before temptation—sacrifice!
Before dishonour—death!"

V.

The boatman turned, he dared not bide,
Nor say Sir Walter nay;
And with his oars against the tide,
He laboured up the bay.

And when beside the water-stair,
With grief no words can tell,
They braced themselves at length to bear
The wrench of the farewell—

The boy, with proud, yet tear-dimmed eyes,
Kept murmuring, under breath:
"—Before temptation—sacrifice!
Before dishonour—death!"

FANS.

Fans, ever since the early days of their history—and their use is almost as old as history itself—have been emblems of royalty and ceremony. In China and India especially, they had great significance, and high officials were attended on state occasions by bearers carrying fans of curious designs and great size.

Many of these royal emblems were made of feathers, and in the great Egyptian museum at Bou-lak, there is a wooden handle studded with holes, from which long feathers once waved. This dates back to a reign nearly seventeen hundred years before Christ, while in Greece, the wings of birds fastened to slender handles were in use as early as 500 B.C.

The fan had also a sacred use, both in heathen and in early Christian worship. These sacred fans were round in form, were often hung with gold or silver bells, and served to protect the offerings from flies and other insects. In the ancient records of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, such fans are mentioned, and to this day they are seen in Rome on occasions of great public ceremony, when the Pope is attended by two

bearers, carrying fans with ivory handles. Very often, ancient fans were costly affairs, made of the feathers of rare birds set on rods of gold, and five such articles are mentioned among the treasures of Mexico which were presented to Cortes by King Montezuma.

To the minds of most of us, however, China and Japan seem the real home of the fan, and it was the latter nation which invented those with folding sticks. In Japan it is not uncommon to see a labourer busily at work with one hand and using a fan as vigorously with the other, and fans are often used to shield the eyes from the sun in place of the gay paper umbrella. A wave of the fan is the courteous gesture which a Japanese gentleman uses where an Englishman or an American would raise his hat.

To-day, France rivals China and Japan in the production of fans, her factories employing thousands of workmen; and it is said that a common fan, selling for a few cents, requires almost the same handling as the most expensive variety, passing through at least twenty processes before it is complete.

Soap was first manufactured in Britain in 1524.



*And in the shadow of
the water-stair
They crossed
The prison yard.*

III.
'Twas midnight; but in Plymouth yet
Went on the wassail-bout;
The early moon was just a-set,
And all the stars were out,

When at Sir Walter's prison bars
A muffled tap was heard,
And as his ear was bent to hear,
He caught the whispered word:

"Haste, father, haste! The way is clear;
I've bribed the seneschal;
The warder o'er the henchmen's beer,
Keeps riot in the hall.

"I hold the key that opes the gate,
And at the water-stair
In the moored barge my mother waits—
She waits to meet thee there.