

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Holiness.

"Once in Persia reigned a king, who upon his signet ring
Graved a maxim true and wise, which, if held before his eyes,
Gave him counsel at a glance fit for every change and chance,
Solemn words, and these are they, " Even this shall pass away."

"Trains of camels through the sand brought him gems from Samarcand;
Fleets of galleys through the seas brought him pearls to match with these,
But he counted not his gain, treasures of the mine or main;
"What is wealth?" the king would say, " Even this shall pass away."

"In the revels of his court at the zenith of his sport,
When the palms of all his guests burned with clapping at his jests,
He, amid his figs and wine, cried: " Oh, loving friends of mine!
Pleasures comes, but not to stay; even this shall pass away."

"Fighting on a furious field, once a javelin pierced his shield,
Soldiers with a loud lament bore him bleeding to his tent;
Groaning from his tortured side, " Pain is hard to bear," he cried,
" But with patience, day by day—even this shall pass away."

"Towering in the public square, twenty cubits in the air,
Rose his statue carved in stone. Then the king, disguised, unknown,
Stood before his sculptured name, musing meekly, " What is fame?
Fame is but a slow decay—Even this shall pass away."

"Struck with palsy, sear and old, waiting at the gates of gold,
Said he, with his dying breath, " Life is done, but what is death?"
Then in answer to the king fell a sun-beam on his ring,
Showing, by a heavenly ray,—" Even this shall pass away."

THE RIGHT SORT OF A BOY.

Robert dropped a fine, red apple out of the front window, which rolled very near the iron railing between the grass-plot and the street. Robert forgot to pick it up. Shortly afterward two boys came along.

" Oh," cried one, " see that bouncing apple! Let's hook it out!"

The other boy nudged him, with a whispered, " Oh, don't; there's somebody looking;" and on they went.

A little girl next passed. She spied the apple, and stopped, looking very hard at it, then put her hands through the rails, and tried to reach it. Her fingers just touched it. She looked around; a man was coming down the street. The girl withdrew her hand and went away. A ragged little fellow came by soon after.

" That boy will steal the apple," I said to myself, peeping through the blinds. His bright eyes at once caught sight of it, and he stopped. After looking at it a moment, he ran across the street and picked up a stick. He poked it through the rails, and drew the apple near enough to pick it up. Turning it over in his grimy hands, I could not help seeing how he longed to eat it. Did he pocket it and run? No. He came up the steps and rang the bell. I went to the door to meet him.

" I found this big apple in your front garden," said the boy, " and I thought maybe you had dropped it out, and didn't know it was there; so I picked it up, and have brought it to you."

" Why did you not eat the apple?"

" Oh," said he, " it is not mine."

" It was almost in the street," said I, " where it would have been hard to find its owner."

" Almost is not quite," replied the boy, " which, Mr. Curtis says, makes all the difference in the world."



GIRL OF BORNEO.

" Will you tell me who this Mr. Curtis is of whom you speak?"

" My Sunday-school teacher. He has explained the eighth commandment to me, and I know it," and he handed me the apple.

" Will you accept the apple?" said I. " I am glad you brought it in, for I like to know honest boys. What is your name?"

He told me. I need not tell you, however, only I think you will agree with me that he is the right sort of a Sunday-school scholar. He squares his conduct by the faithful Christian instruction which he gets there.—Presbyterian Banner.

CHRISTIAN WORK IN BORNEO.

BY A NATIVE OF BORNEO.

The Island of Borneo, Pulo Kahamtan, as it is called by the natives, is, even in this nineteenth century, almost a terra incognita.

Little is known of its interior and people, though from its position it has an equatorial climate, very moist, and with a small range of temperature. The island is rich in gold, antimony, and diamonds, the soil fertile, products many and varied, while its dense forests contain many strange birds, and is the home of the large orang-outang.

The coast inhabitants are Malays,

speaking the Malayan language, Mohammedans in faith, treacherous, vindictive, cruel, and pirates at sea. The aborigines are Dyaks, of whom there are many tribes, oppressed to a painful degree by the Malays.

At Pontianak, situated on the river of the same name and six miles from the coast, was founded, in 1839, an American mission. Four missionaries and their wives have been sent to Java, but, by the exclusive policy of the Dutch Government, Borneo was the only portion of the Netherlands India in which they were allowed to settle. A second station at Karangan, 150 miles in the interior, was commenced by these brave pioneers, who with their own hands cleared away the jungle, felled trees, and built the mission premises of bark, roofed with thatch. Then came the task of reducing the Dyak language to print, translating and preparing elementary and other works, all of which it was necessary to send to Singapore to print; and with this, preaching, teaching, and itinerant tours among the native villages.

Sickness and death made sad inroads upon the mission families, until finally the work was suspended, temporarily it was hoped, but has not since been resumed.

Mr. Steele is still living, busy and active as his strength will allow; Messrs. Thompson and Youngblood are at rest, one sleeps on the shores of Lake Geneva, where the tall Jung Frau shadows his grave, the other amid the green hills of the Empire State. At Sarawak, the settlement of Sir James Brooke, the mission work is prospering.

It is impossible in this short sketch to do justice to the Christian work on this island, almost continental in size; sufficient has been done, however, to glorify " the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea."

THE BOYS' BRIGADE.

BY W. H. WITHROW, D.D.

I am glad to learn that a company of boys for Christian service and Christian culture has been organized in Cobourg. I wrote Mr. Shaver that I was not sure that military drill was the best way of promoting this. I feared that it might cultivate too much military spirit, but wise men and good men, among them Lord Aberdeen, have found the Boys' Brigade very helpful in promoting Christian manliness. Firm discipline, obedience to orders and physical control will do much to develop true manhood. Let your ideal be the noble Christian knight, Sir Galahad, described by Tennyson, " Whose strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure."

At this holy Christmas-tide, when the song of the angels, " Peace on earth, good will to men," seems again to sound in our ears, it is particularly sad that battle and bloodshed and strife between sons of the same heavenly Father, men who profess to follow the same Saviour, are desolating such vast regions in South Africa. Let us all hope and pray that the time may soon come when the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and shall learn war no more.

" For, lo! the days are hastening on
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold,
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole earth give back the song
Which now the angels sing."
—Boys' Brigade Budget.



A VILLAGE IN BORNEO.

The Presbyterian Board (United States) has a unique experience. It closed last year with a surplus in the treasury, and is sending out over fifty new missionaries, to Africa, South America, China, Japan, India, etc. The Twentieth Century Movement should put the Methodist Church in a position to " go and do likewise." " A word to the wise is"—ought to be—" sufficient."