

# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## THE TEMPERANCE GOAT.

THE picture shows how these wicked men were trying to impose on the good nature of a goat. The pet followed them into a saloon, and thinking they would have some fun, offered the goat some "bock beer." He got a taste of it, and to their surprise, he broke for the door as fast as he could run, not thanking them for such stuff as that. They tried to catch him back, but his dignity was so shocked at the bitter stuff they wanted to give him, that he turned away in disgust. Does not this goat show good sense, and does he not teach a good lesson for boys and young men when they are tempted to drink? All can afford to be goat-like in this respect, and a boy had better be a goat than a drunkard. Indeed, if I knew one of my boys would be a drunkard, I would prefer to see him a goat.

You know there are many temptations for boys to become smokers, chowers and drunkards in one day. Let these boys make up their minds that they will have as much sense as the goat, anyhow. Turn your back to the "bock beer" and keep it in your rear, and never let it get to your mouth.

## POPPIES AND CORN.

BY SAMUEL GREGORY.

"Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley."—Job xxi. 40.

ONE day I was walking with a Cornish farmer. There was a field on a hill-side in front of us, and yellow corn stood there in the sunshine. Great red spots dotted the field. In one place the red spots were so many and so close together that they made an unbroken patch of scarlet. I said, "How lovely that patch of red is!" "Lovely?" said the farmer, "I don't like to see the field so red."

What were the red spots? Poppies! The farmer did not want them. It would have been very spiteful if any one had said of his fields: "Let poppies grow instead of corn!" That would have been much the same as to say, "Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley."

This world which we live in is like a field where corn and poppies grow together. Some people are attracted by the poppies, and some prefer the corn. It is like going through the world,—that walk among Cornish cornfields.

## I.—POPPIES ARE SHOWY.

The poppy is very pretty. Its usual colour is not the favourite colour in nature. Nature likes yellow things. There is more yellow in the fields than any other colour. Green is but yellow with blue in it. But red colour is very showy. It "strikes the eye," we say. Lamps at the fire-engine station are red, and danger signals on the railway are red because these "hit" the eye like a stone. A red flag shows a long way off. Soldiers' coats are red, because red is imposing and grand. If a painter wants people to fix their eyes on one spot in his picture, he contrives to put a red thing there. You are forced to look at the red. The field poppy is red. It will be seen. It makes you look at it.

Now there are poppies that talk and walk about. There are people who always will make you look at them. They are always "showing off"—acting. It is as unpleasant to see "affected" people as it

is to a farmer to see poppies. The farmer says "You poppies think something of yourselves, but I wish you knew how little I think of you." Burns once said he wished we had the gift to see ourselves as others see us. We should then leave off playing at being poppies.

A curious poppy once grew in England. It was able to talk and change its clothes. It lived at the beginning of this century,

is another boy with Macaulay's *History* in his hand. That book contains some poppies, but corn as well as poppies. Don't read books that are all poppies.

In the same way learn to dislike a character that is all poppies. Smart, showy people are very pleasant, but these who are always taking people off or talking nonsense tire you, just as red tires your eyes. They are like some tumblers I saw in a

people making a display of what they gave away. He told us to be simple, and to remember that God sees us, and not to think much of others seeing us. That is what Lady Jane Grey thought of when she said, "O God, make others great, but make me good!" That is what Charles Kingsley thought of when he wrote: "Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever!"

## II.—POPPIES DO NOT LAST LONG.

How long is it before a poppy begins to droop? Burns says: "Pleasures are like poppies spread; you seize the flower, its bloom is shed."

In our National Gallery there is a picture called "Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm." It is the picture of a boatful of people who care for nothing but pleasure. But that sort of boat lasts but little longer than one of the paper boats you make and put on the sea.

You cannot make the voyage of life in a pleasure-boat. The storm will soon smash and sink it. Of course we like pleasure, but we must not be so fond of it as to care for nothing else. Pleasure is like a bath, it refreshes you, but you cannot live in water like a fish. Pleasure is a poppy that soon fades.

Some kinds of ambition are poppies too. Napoleon Bonaparte's life was full of poppy-gathering. He called his poppies "glory." French people were fond of "glory." As you enter the Palace of Versailles there is an inscription which tells you that the rooms are a museum of the glories of France. What do you think the glories of France are? Well, the museum is full of battle pictures. War is what they called glory. Napoleon was a great hunter of glory of that sort. But he died at last on a lonely rock in the sea. His poppies withered away. The true ambition is to be good and useful.

There are many other things of the world that are perishable things. The Book of Ecclesiastes is about a man who loved the world too much, and he said: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." His poppies withered.

In the life of Jesus, who went about doing good, and in the life of Paul, who said, "I have fought a good fight," we see what the lasting things are,—a good conscience and the good we can do while we live. The world passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

## III.—POPPIES ARE POISONOUS.

The pretty poppy is poisonous. Opium is taken from the head of that flower. One nation—the Chinese—is so fond of opium that it is a great curse to that people. Chinese

men who drug themselves with opium are worse than Englishmen who drink strong drink. Solomon said: "Look not on the wine when it is red, for it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Better keep away from things that bite like serpents. I took some boys and girls to look at an animal and bird shop, and the man opened a cage and took out a snake. He had some monkeys, and he held the tail of the snake, and let the monkeys pull it. He said, "You need not be afraid of this snake!" But I kept away. Don't touch even the tail of a snake—let the monkeys do that if they like.

Poppies are emblems of idleness. A poppy is the drowsy flower. Poppy-juice makes people sleep, and if much of it is taken, people who take it never wake again. Drowsy, lazy people are in a bad



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and was named George Brummell. This man poppy had plenty of money and nothing to do, and he determined to make everybody talk about his clothes. Beau Brummell they called him, and no peacock ever spread out his tail to be seen as this man walked about in London. I think Brummell is one of the most pitiful of all characters of history. He died in France as poor as a beggar. I have a book which tells the story of his life, and at the end there is a little picture of a burning candle, and beside it on the table is a pretty spotted moth lying on its side. No doubt you could guess what the picture means.

Some of you like books with poppies in them. So do I. But a book full of poppies is a poor thing. Here is a boy with a book full of poppies. It is a book of wonderful adventures or comic cuts. But here

poor street in the "East-end" of Paris. They had a carpet laid down, and wore wonderful spotted and spangled clothes, and a crowd gathered and gazed. But when the show was over we walked away and forgot the tumblers and their spangled clothes. Showy things tire you. Red poppies tire your eyes. It would be awful to live in a world full of poppies. The planet Mars is red, as if its vegetation were poppy-colour, but God has made a green world for us to look at, because green is quiet and restful.

Poppies: Jesus warned us against acting and making a show. You know what he said about people taking so much thought about raiment. You know what he said about people saying their very prayers to be looked at while they were praying. You know what he said about