

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

The Wine of Paradise.

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

Would ye have cheeks like flowers?
Would ye have sparkling eyes?
Roses drink from the showers,
And so do all the flowers;
And every bird that flies
Drinks wine of Paradise.

Would ye have voices clear
As the blithe bird that flies?
In the bright fountain near,
Reflecting the soft skies,
It dips its bill. We hear
Its praise of Paradise.

Would ye be loved by all,
And true to honour rise,
And be sun-crowned and tall,
In knowledge just and wise?
Drink crystal drops that fall,
The wine of Paradise.

THE TALE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.*

In this volume Major Henty takes up another of the great historical epochs of European history. He weaves into the world-shaking events of that period the personal story of a sturdy English lad, and thus brings the human and personal interest of the event home to the hearts of his readers. The young hero crosses the channel to take part in the splendid struggle for freedom known as the Huguenot wars. He, of course, sides with the Protestants, and receives rapid promotion for his zeal and daring. He is entrapped in Paris with others on that fearful St. Bartholomew's eve when the assassin gave the signal for the massacre to begin. It is a thrilling story, and the chapter which deals with the adventures of the young hero in making his escape is one which all boys will read with intense fascination. Numerous excellent engravings are given and a map of France of the period.

No historic record presents features of more tragic and pathetic interest than that of French Protestantism. Its chief incidents may be thus summarized:

In 1521, the very year of Luther's trial at Worms, the New Testament was published in French, but the new doctrines fell under the ban of the Catholic clergy. The persecution spread throughout the "infected" provinces, and some of the fairest regions of France were turned into a desert. But like the Israelites in Egypt, the Reformed, "the more they were vexed, the more they multiplied and grew." Before the death of Francis I it was estimated that one-sixth of the population of France, and these its most intelligent artisans and craftsmen, were adherents of "the religion."

Colligny was a scion of one of the greatest families in France. While prisoner at Antwerp he lay ill with a fever for many weeks, and profoundly studied the Scriptures. He boldly cast in his lot with this despised and hated Protestant party, choosing, like Moses, rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Civil war for thirty long years rent the unhappy kingdom. As Colligny pondered in his bed by night the awful issue before him, he heard his wife sobbing by his side. "Sound your conscience," he said, "are you prepared to face confiscation, exile, shame, nakedness, hunger, for yourself and children, and death at the hands of the headsman after

*"St. Bartholomew's Eve: A Tale of the Huguenot Wars." Crown 8vo. By G. A. Henty. With twelve full-page illustrations by H. J. Draper. Blackie & Son, London, and Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. Price, \$2.00.



ASSASSINATION OF COLIGNY.

that of your husband, I give you three weeks to decide." "They are gone already," the brave soul replied. "Do not delay, or I myself will bear witness against you before the bar of God."

Domestic bereavements one after another now befell Colligny. His two brothers—"his right and left hand," he said—died, not without a suspicion of poison; and in swift succession, his wife, his first-born son, and his beloved daughter Renee; and his chateau was pillaged.

Still he waged, though with heavy heart, the unequal conflict with his foes. At Moncontour a pistol shot shattered his jaw, yet he kept his saddle and brought off his army, although with the loss of six thousand men. Still his high courage faltered not, and by a decisive victory he won a full toleration for the long-persecuted Huguenots. The perfidious Catharine plied her subtlest craft, and fawned and smiled, and "murdered while she smiled."

On the eve of the blackest crime of the age "all went merry as a marriage bell." Under the plea of protection the Huguenots were lodged in one quarter of Paris, around which was drawn a cordon of guards. The awful eve of St. Bartholomew, August 24th, 1572, arrived. The king sat late in the Louvre, pale, trembling, and agitated, his unwomanly mother urging him to give the signal of death. "Craven," she hissed, as the cold sweat broke out on his brow. "Begin, then," he cried, and a pistol shot rang out on the still night air. He would have recalled the signal, but the "royal tigress" reminded him it was too late; and "even as they spoke the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois tolled heavy and booming through the darkness," and the tocsin of death was caught up and echoed from belfry to belfry over the sleeping town. Then the narrow streets became filled with armed men, shouting, "For God and the king." The chief of the assassins, with three hundred soldiers, rushed to the lodgings of the Admiral. Its doors were forced. Colligny, wakeful from a recent wound, had heard the tumult and was at prayer with his chaplain. "I have long been prepared to die," said the brave old man. "I commend my soul to God." "Art thou Colligny?" demanded a bravo of Guise's, bursting in. "I am," said the hero soul. The soldiers rushing in despatched him with daggers. "Is it done?" demanded Guise, from the courtyard below. "It is done, my lord," was the answer, and they threw the dead body from the window to the stone pavement. By the fitful light of a torch, Guise wiped the blood from the venerable face. "I know it," he cried joyfully, "it is he," and he spurned the dead body with his foot, and ordered the hoary head to be smitten off, that the unsexed Medicis might gloat upon it in her boudoir. The dishonoured body, after being dragged for two days through the streets, was hung on a gibbet.

Through the narrow streets rushed the midnight assassins, shouting, "Kill! kill! Blood-letting is good in August. Death to the Huguenots. Let not one escape." Candles burned in all the windows of the Catholic houses, lighting the human hyenas to the work of slaughter. The sign of peace, the holy cross, was made the assassin's badge of recognition. The Huguenot houses were marked, and their inmates, men and women, maids and matrons, old age and infancy, were given up to indiscriminate massacre. For a week the carnival of death continued.

The scenes of slaughter were repeated till France had immolated, in the name of religion, 100,000 of her noblest sons.

Throughout Protestant Christendom a thrill of horror curdled the blood about men's hearts. They looked at their wives and babes, then clasped them closer to their breasts, and swore eternal enmity to Rome. For once the cold language of diplomacy caught fire and glowed with the white heat of indignation. At London, Elizabeth, robed in deepest mourning, and in a chamber draped with black, received the French ambassador and sternly rebuked this outrage on humanity. Her minister at Paris, in the very focus of guilt and danger, fearlessly denounced the crime.

Ere long a dreadful doom overtook the wretched Charles, the guilty author, or at least instrument, of this crime. Within twenty months he lay tossing upon his death couch at Paris. His midnight chambers were haunted by hideous dreams. "The darkness" we quote from Frodoe—"was peopled with ghosts, which were mocking and mowing at him, and he would start out of his sleep to find himself in a pool of blood, blood—ever blood." The night he died, his nurse, a Huguenot, heard his self-accusations. "I am lost," he muttered; "I know



MARTYRDOM OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.