

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE.

THE land of Egypt is a strange blending of the present and the past. Overhead stretches the telegraph wire, along the river lies the railway and on its bosom "walks the water like a thing of life" the well-equipped steamboat—the products of the latest civilization—while on either side stand, in bold relief against the sky, ruins of ancient temples which date back many of them four thousand years. It is a land of wonderful interest and has very striking illustrations of the fulfilment of Holy Scripture. I saw at Karnak an obelisk erected to the memory of Queen Hatasu by her father, which was 108 feet high, cut out of a single shaft. This Queen Hatasu was the daughter of Pharaoh who drew Moses out of the bulrushes of the Nile.

No monuments in Egypt are more common or more striking than those of Rameses the Great, the Pharaoh of the oppression. He is almost always represented sitting like the large figure on the upper right-hand side of the cut with his hands upon his knees, and with an expression of peace, yet of power and confidence, on his face.

The strange and fluffy-looking plants in the foreground are the famous papyrus plants from whose name comes our word "paper," because from its pith-like substance a sort of paper was manufactured. One of those papyrus rolls has been discovered containing the oldest manuscript of the Book of Jeremiah that is known to exist. The strange-looking, long-legged, long-necked birds in the foreground are a characteristic feature of Egyptian landscape.

## LITTLE GENERAL ANTOINE.

A SMALL general was Antoine, with his short legs and round rosy cheeks! If you could see his picture, just as he looked when he drove the enemy from their hard-won position, you would say, "O, that is only a little boy! How could he be a general?"

Wait until you have heard my story.

Antoine lived more than 300 years ago. His home was in one of the lovely valleys of the Alps. It was a happy home, though Antoine lived in unhappy times, when men were very cruel, and thought nothing of killing one another.

Antoine's people were not like this. They were good and kind, for they read the Holy Bible and tried to live according to its teachings.

And because they did this wicked men hated them, and tried to drive them from the face of the earth.

They said—the wicked men—that these good men were heretics; that they did not believe and teach the right things about God and the Church and holy things. And then they tried to show how good their own belief was by doing wicked and cruel deeds,

sent into the mountains to force them to go to the mass like good Catholics, and to own the Pope of Rome as their lord and master. This they could not do, for they had to be true to their heavenly Lord and Master.

So all the old and sick, with the women and children, were taken to the safe places in the mountains—great dens and caves, which did not always prove safe places, to

they were but few, while the soldiers were many.

But they had brave hearts, and fought nobly, going all the time higher and higher up among the lofty mountains.

Night came on, and, tired out, both armies stopped to rest, the Waldenses on the heights above their enemies.

All at once great shouts of laughter rose on the air. What could it mean?

The good Waldenses, on their knees, were praying to God to help them drive their enemies away. Looking up from below the wicked soldiers saw and mocked them for their faith in God.

Does God hear, and will he help? Hark! the laughter dies away. Loud and clear on the still air sounds the rub-a-dub-dub of a drum! The soldiers look up. No; it is not from above, where the Waldenses are still on their knees, asking help from God. The sound comes from one of the side valleys, and the frightened soldiers fancy that a band of men are ready to rush upon them from some hidden path on that side.

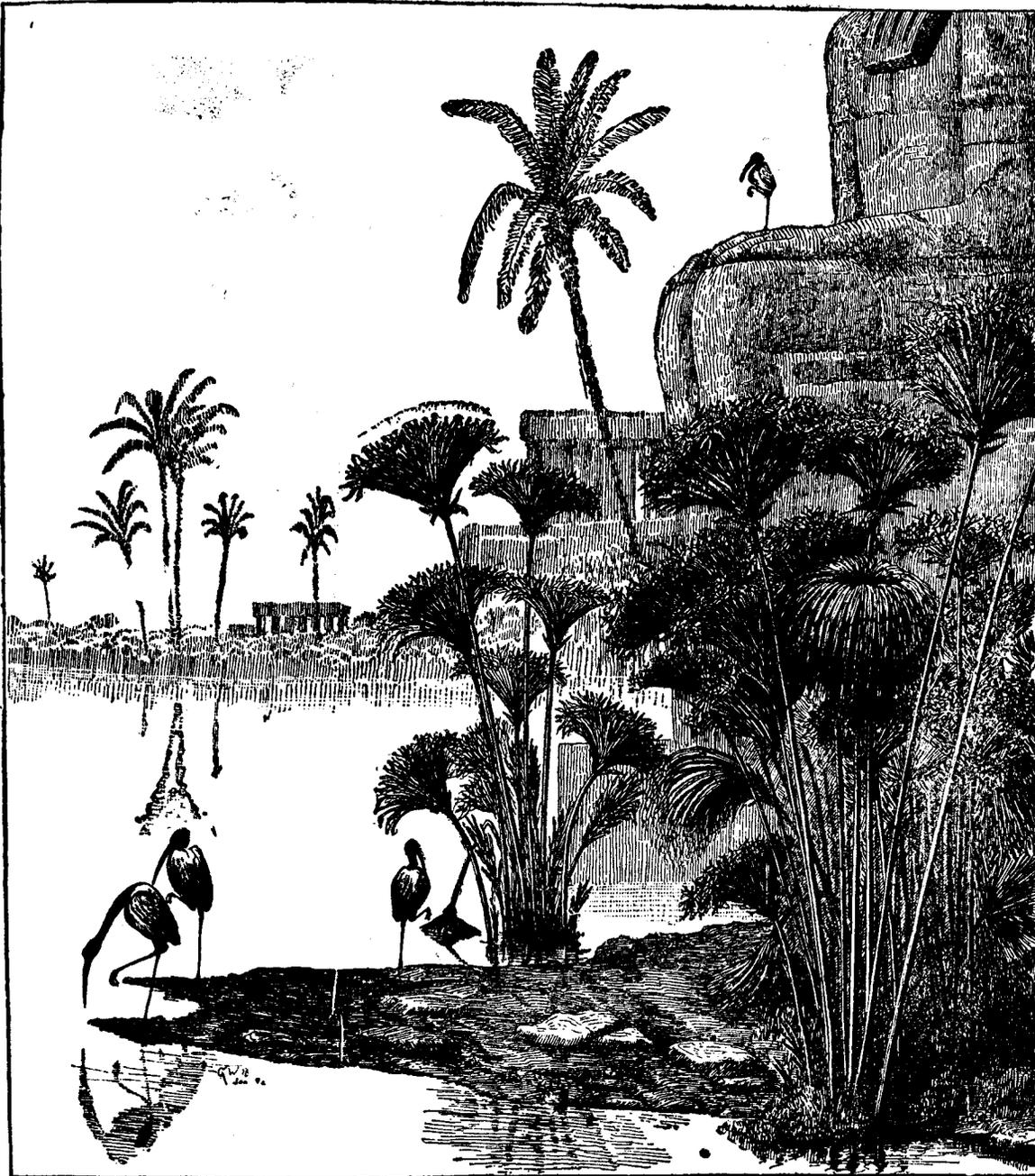
Quickly they seized their arms to meet the new foe. The Waldenses above heard the stir, and hastily seized their arms and rushed down the hill, thinking the soldiers were coming up to attack them. But these brave soldiers, too brave to pray to the God of battles, frightened by the noise of a single drum, threw away their arms and ran, chased by the Waldenses, and losing in a half-hour the good position it had cost them a whole day's fighting to gain.

But where was the little general all this time?

Antoine knew little of the horrors of war. But, just like any other boy, he did like a big noise. So when he saw a drum standing idle, he stole softly away, and, seizing the drum-sticks, began to pound with all his might. It was Antoine's drum that the soldiers heard, and which sent them flying down the mountain side, so frightened that they left their arms behind for the Waldenses to use against them.

Ah! how the men and women praised and blessed little Antoine. But still more did they praise and bless the good God who used the child's hand to sound the note which drove the soldiers away.

In trying to make a boy understand what conscience is, a teacher finally asked, "What makes you feel uncomfortable after you have done wrong?" "The switch," feelingly replied the boy.



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such as God commands his children never to do.

Antoine's friends, who lived in these beautiful valleys, were all of the Church of the Waldenses, and they had to bear a great deal of sorrow and pain on this account. But they would bear anything sooner than deny the Lord Jesus whom they loved.

At the time our little general drove the enemy from the field the poor Waldenses were in great trouble. An army had been

be sure, but which were safer than the pretty valley homes, when once the great army should appear.

The men all made ready to fight for their homes and families.

On came the army, climbing the steep mountain paths, up which the poor hunted people had gone. It was hard to see the fierce soldiers coming so near the hiding places of the women and children; but what could the Waldenses do? They had no arms but the sling and cross-bow, and