

PHARAOH'S STATIONERY.

A museum in Berlin has just acquired some interesting specimens of old Egyptian stationery. One of them is a palette or inkstand, with two holes for red and black ink respectively, and a lower one inscribed approximately to the period of the eighteenth or the nineteenth dynasty, perhaps 1,500 years B. C. It is made of wood and has two compartments—an upper one provided taining three reed pens. Some of the ink still remains, in a dry condition, of course, after 3,400 years. When this inkstand was in use, if the date given above is correct, the Israelites were dwelling in Goshen, and it may even have belonged to one of the Pharaohs. Moses was not born till more than a century later. Another inkstand of later date is thought to have been intended for a school boy. It has no fewer than four ink holes. These curious monuments of Egyptian home life were found in tombs at Thebes, in Upper Egypt.

GIANT SLOTH.

A sleepy boy, yawning and stretching on one of the desks of an old school-room, while the noonday sun is shining through its windows. The boy alone, with a slate between his knees, and a dog's-eared book at his side. What does it all mean? If you would like to know I will tell you. It means that Hans has been beaten. Not by the school-master, though he deserves a caning. Not by his school-fellows; they would like him to join them at their play. It means that Hans has been beaten this morning by the great giant, Sloth, who attacked him before he was out of bed, and kept him there half an hour too long; waylaid him on the way to school, and made him ten minutes late; who, even when he was there, would not let him alone, but tempted him to draw pigs in his spelling-book, to cut his name on the form, and, in fact, to do anything and everything but learn his lessons; and who, even now, when poor Hans has to stay and write an imposition, will not let him begin his task, but keeps him dawdling there, cross, tired and sleepy.

Ah! Hans, my boy, unless you meet that great giant more bravely, he will soon overcome you altogether, and turn you into a miserable slave. You often say that you would like to be a soldier, and fight the enemies of your country; but what sort of soldier would you make unless you learn to obey orders as soon as they are given, and what sort of battles would you win, when every day you have to run away from Giant Sloth? Turn and fight him, Hans. He is only a coward, after all. It is quite true that he has beaten you this morning, but that is no reason why he should beat you to-morrow. It is no reason why he should be your master now. Set to work at once, Hans. Sit down with your book and slate this very minute, and see how soon the giant will slink off. It is only when you leave the door

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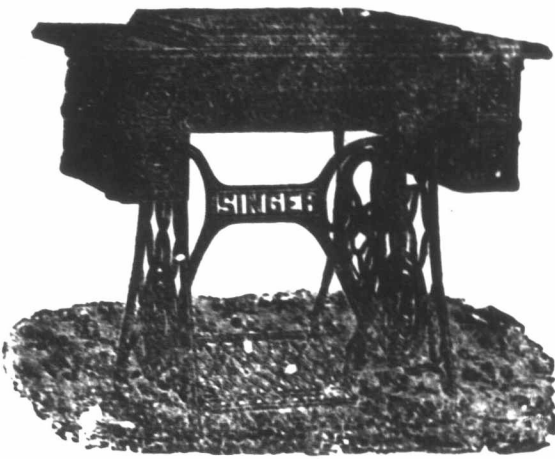
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open that he can come in. Send him away this instant, and tell him never to show his face to you again.

But poor Hans cannot hear us. The giant is whispering to him all the time. "What a lovely day it is outside. What a shame it is that you have to stop in this dingy old school room to write these horrid lines, when everyone else is at play."

So Hans sits there idle, and the warm air makes him still more sleepy. Presently he slips down to one of the forms, rests his arms on the desk and his head on his arms, and when the boys come back for their afternoon's work, they find him sitting there asleep, a helpless slave to Giant Sloth.

When school closed that afternoon, the school-master asked Hans to walk into his little room. The old man did not take down his cane, as Hans quite expected, but pointed to a chair, and then sat down himself rather wearily.

"My boy," he said, not unkindly, "why is it that you, who might learn your lessons so well, and so easily, seldom learn them at all?" And at these gentle words, Hans, who had borne unmoved the laughter of the boys, hung his head, and something very like a tear rolled down his cheek.

But he said nothing, and after a moment's pause the old school-master spoke again. "I know, Hans, that you are not a bad boy. You do not wish to grieve me. You do not mean to be so careless in your work—" but here he stopped, for Hans had risen, and with a tear-stained, but very eager face, stood before him.

"Indeed," said the boy, "I will do what you tell me. I will try to learn. I will work hard. I will go straight home now, and in the morning I will bring you all to-day's lessons, and those for to-morrow, too."

"You shall try, Hans," answered his master, with a smile, and bade the boy a kind "Good-evening" wondering much how he would fare in his new struggle with Giant Sloth, for well the school-master knew that the giant would not let him off without a hard fight.

And so it proved, for long before the evening's task was done, the giant had attacked him many times. First came his school-fellows to ask him to play. Then little Gretchen, his sister, who was so fond of dressing him up as a soldier. More than once he felt so sleepy, that it seemed as if Giant Sloth's great arms must be stifling him. But Hans threw them off, never stopping work till the last line was written, and when the old school-master said to him next day, "I see that this time you have beaten the giant." Hans felt that it was worth fighting to win such a victory.

—Through every rift of discovery some seeming anomaly drops out of the darkness, and falls as a golden link into the great chain of the order.