

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

## Harvest Song.

BY DAET FAIRTHORNE.

Laugh out, laugh out, ye orchard lands,  
With all your ripened store;  
Such bounteous measure nature yields—  
What could heart ask for more?

With earth's broad lap abrim with food,  
The azure skies above,  
The heavens whisper: "Earth is good;"  
Earth answers: "Heaven is love."

The winds that wander from the West,  
O'er fields afar or near,  
Find plenty nowhere manifest  
In richer stores than here.

The golden rick, the bursting bin,  
Of rich and ripened grain,  
Bespeak the wealth which all may win  
In industry's domain.

The corn-fields set in grand array  
Of solid rank and row,  
Are streams of wealth which set this way,  
And soon shall overflow.

Laugh out, laugh out, ye ripened fields,  
With e'er increasing mirth;  
The joy your bounteous measure yields  
Shall bless the whole round earth.

## WILD-GRASS CUTTERS OF THE ALPS.

BY JENNIE WHITE.

If the friends in our picture were not already "labeled," you might mistake them perhaps for a picnic party or a new sort of "bobogyaners"; but in fact they are not abroad for pleasure at all—though they do seem to be having a pretty good time—but are hard at work making their living.

"Wild-grass cutters," our artist calls them, and we might quite as appropriately call them "haymakers," though the insignia of their occupation—the pitchfork—is absent, and they haul their "crop" on runners instead of on wheels. You see, haymaking in that great mountain system of central Europe, known to us as the Alps, varies in several particulars from the method we are accustomed to use.

Perhaps you know that in those great mountains only about one-fourth of the territory between base and summit—the lower portion—is adapted to cultivation; while above this district is a vast expanse of wild pastureland and forest, and beyond this to the snow-crowned summit is a rocky, icy, barred waste.

The people living in the lower mountain slopes make their living, principally, by raising cattle, sheep, and goats and by the products of their dairies; and I think you will agree with me that they afford a good illustration of that much-talked-of "division of labour" system, for, while the men take care of the flocks and herds, the women attend to all the work of field, garden, and dairy!

But they illustrate the principle in still another way. While the summer season lasts, of course there is plenty of pasture for the cattle, but when winter comes they must all be fed, and provision must be made accordingly, so while one-half of the populace remains at home taking care of the animals, farms and dairies, the other half go up to the pastureslands above and cut the wild grass that grows so abundantly there, bring it down the mountain, and

store it away for use during the winter; and in this work too the women and children have a part.

Are you wondering why they use sleds in hauling? Well, if you will remember that the descent is often very steep and over slippery mountain-paths where it would be impossible to use wheels, probably you will conclude that that mode of transportation is very practical and sensible; the only way, indeed, unless they carried it on their backs.

process begins with the laying on of leaf after leaf of gold in the proportion of two per cent. Afterward each bar is wrapped in paper and well heated in charcoal fire. A sort of vise stands ready, and in it bar after bar as it comes from the fire is fixed and thoroughly burnished. All traces of its silver original has now disappeared, and the bar is ready for conversion into wire. This is accomplished by drawing it from one hundred to one hundred and fifty times through ever-diminishing holes in steel

There is a small home demand for the round wire for the adornment of epaulets, etc., but the bulk of the manufactured article finds its way in the shape of "ky gold thread to India and the far East generally, where it is converted by skilled native labor into those gorgeous cloths and tissues in which the heart of the Oriental delights. What a wonderful property does gold possess in its malleability! It is asserted that every ounce of the bars whose fortunes we have followed with no little interest, each containing only two per cent. of gold, will run to the length of from five hundred to two thousand five hundred yards; and the amazing figure of five thousand yards is on record. This latter thread would be finer than human hair, but the extreme limit is not even yet reached.—*Chambers' Journal.*



WILD GRASS CUTTERS OF THE ALPS.

## HOW GOLD THREAD IS MADE.

The silver is brought from the Bank of England in cakes weighing about one thousand ounces. To secure the necessary degree of tenacity a certain proportion of copper is added, and the alloyed metal, in the form of cylindrical bars, is next thoroughly heated. The hammering process follows; and the bars, originally about two feet in length and two inches in diameter, but now half as long again and proportionately thinner, are in the next place filed and rubbed until their surfaces are even.

What we may call the second part of the

plates, and finally, when the capabilities of this metal have been exhausted, through apertures in diamonds, rubies, or sapphires. The delicate wire thus obtained must now be passed through the steel rollers of one of Herr Krupp's little "flattening mills." This brings us to the final process—the spinning of the flattened wire around silk to form the golden thread of commerce. These spinning machines are worked by water, although two steam engines are to be found in the factory, for water power is considered to be more regular and even in its action.

## A MOTHER'S HEART.

BY J. E. MILLER.

We ought to watch closely the character of the memories we leave in our homes. One person has left this testimony:

"Many a night, as I remember lying quietly in the little upper chamber before sleep came on, there would be a gentle footstep on the stair, the door would noiselessly open and in a moment the well known form softly gliding through the darkness would appear at my bedside. First there would be a few pleasant inquiries of affection, which gradually deepened into words of counsel. Then, kneeling, her head close to mine, her most earnest hopes and desires would flow forth in prayer. Her tears bespoke the earnestness of her desire. I seem to feel them yet where they sometimes fell on my face. The prayers often passed out of thought in slumber, and came not to mind again for years, but they were not lost. I willingly believe they were an invisible bond with heaven that secretly preserved me while I moved carelessly amid numberless temptations, and walked the brink of crime." Is it not worth while for every mother to try to weave such memories into the early years of her children's lives?

## THE DEPTH OF THE SEA.

REAR-admiral Belknap's survey of parts of the Pacific, preparatory to the laying of the proposed trans Pacific telegraph cable, indicates that extraordinary difficulties will be encountered. His soundings show the result of a trough or basin of enormous depth and extent along the east coast of Japan and the Kurile Islands and under the Kuro Siwo, or Japan or Black stream. The basin exceeds any similar depression yet found in any other regions of the great oceans. In a run of thirty miles after leaving the coast of Japan the water deepened more than 1,800 fathoms, and upon the next cast of the lead the wire broke after 4,643 fathoms had been run out with out the bottom having been reached. Thermometers especially constructed for deep-sea soundings were wrecked by the unexpected pressures. The depth of the deepest cast five miles and a quarter, the deepest water yet found is sufficient to hold two mountains as high as Japan's great Fujiyama, one on top of the other, and then the summit of the highest would be nearly two-thirds of a mile under water.