

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

VOL. XX.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 27, 1900.

No. 43.

## The One Who is Missed.

BY LILIAN GRAY.

Three beautiful children kneel at night  
By the mother's side to pray,  
But ever she misses, with aching heart,  
The one who has gone away.

And if you ask her which of these  
Is the darling, she cannot say;  
But of all her children the dearest one  
Is the one that went away.

Gay ringing voices fill the house,  
And thrill her with joy and pride;  
But none of them all has tones so sweet  
As the little one who died.

And which are the loveliest who can tell?  
These eyes—blue, brown, and gray;  
But none have the look of the  
violet eyes  
Of the one who went away!

Here's Alice, graceful and pure and  
fair,

Brave Charlie and gentle May;  
But the sweetest, loveliest one of all  
Was the one who went away.

These rest at night in the mother's  
care,  
Close sheltered from harm and  
cold;  
But the safest of all is the little  
one  
In the Saviour's guarded fold.

## CHRISTIAN MARTYRS.

BY THE EDITOR.

During the early Christian centuries the enthusiasm for martyrdom prevailed, at times, almost like an epidemic. It was one of the most remarkable features of the ages of persecution. Notwithstanding the tortures to which they were exposed, the fiercer the tempest of heathen rage the higher and brighter burned the zeal of the Christian heroes. Age after age summoned the soldiers of Christ to the conflict whose highest reward was death. They bound persecution as a wreath about their brows, and exulted in the "glorious infamy" of suffering for their Lord. The brand of shame became the badge of highest honour. Besides the joys of heaven they won imperishable fame on earth; and the memory of a humble slave was often hailed with a glory surpassing that of Curtius or Horatius. The meanest hind was ennobled by the doom of martyrdom to the loftiest peerage of the skies. His consecration of suffering was elevated to a sacrament, and called the baptism of fire or of blood.

Burning to obtain the prize, the impetuous candidates for death often pressed with eager haste to seize the palm of victory and the martyr's crown. They trod with joy the fiery path to glory, and went as gladly to the stake as to a marriage feast. "Their fetters," says Eusebius, "seemed like the golden ornaments of a bride." They desired martyrdom more ardently than men afterward sought a blebopric. They exulted amid the keenest pangs that they were counted worthy to suffer for their divine Master. "The tyrants were armed," says St. Chrysostom, "and the martyrs naked; yet they that were naked got the victory, and they that carried arms were vanquished." Strong in the assurance of immortality, they bade defiance to the sword.

Though weak in body they seemed clothed with vicarious strength, and confident that though "counted as sheep for the slaughter," naught could separate them from the love of Christ. Wrapped in their fiery vesture and shroud of flame, they yet exulted in their glorious victory. While the leaden hail fell on the mangled frame, and the eyes filmed with the shadows of death, the spirit was enbraved by the vision of the opening hea-

ven, and above the roar of the mob fell sweetly on the inner sense the assurance of eternal life. The names of the "great army of martyrs," though forgotten by men, are written in the Book of Life. "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

"There is a record traced on high,  
That shall endure eternally;  
The angel standing by God's throne  
Treasures there each word and groan;  
And not the martyr's speech alone,  
But every wound is there depicted,  
With every circumstance of pain—  
The crimson stream, the gash inflicted—  
And not a drop is shed in vain."

This spirit of martyrdom was a new principle in society. It had no classical

tian Apologist; "our numbers increase in proportion as you mow us down." The earth was drunk with the blood of the saints, but still they multiplied and grew, gloriously illustrating the perennial truth—"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

## VULTURES.

BY HELEN A. HAWLEY.

All of God's creatures ought to interest us, even though, in themselves considered, some may be offensive. We look upon this picture of vultures and turn from them in disgust, yet they only follow the bent of their natures. They are birds of prey, which fly by daylight, and live upon carrion, or any other de-

spreading ten feet. Another variety is called the hooded vulture. Whatever the family, the habits are the same. They are filthy, and gorge themselves with their dreadful food. They are also cowardly, keeping away from the living. In the Bible, Isaiah gives this as an image of desolation: "There shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate."

The vultures' eyes are so keen that they detect their prey by sight instead of smell. So in that marvellous sacred poem, Job says: "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." He is speaking of the mines in the bosom of the earth, which even the keen eye of the vulture could not penetrate.

## A CHURCH-GOING CAT.

Lately I heard a funny story of a cat that was very fond of going to church when the rest of the family went, says a writer in the Brooklyn Eagle. Her church going was not encouraged by the mistress, and usually, about church time, Mrs. Pussy was caught and shut up in a room by herself, to prevent her from following after the folks.

But sometimes she could not be found when the right moment came, and sometimes, when she was found and shut up, she managed afterward to elude her captors. Anyway, it was often the case that after the congregation was comfortably settled, and the service of prayer or hymn was being held, a gentle "mew" was heard by pussy's horrified mistress, and Mrs. Pussy came trotting down the aisle, to the amusement of the congregation. She knew quite well the proper paw, and often succeeded in getting there before she was caught. And when she had once reached the pew the easiest way was to let her stay. She was quite willing to lie quietly at her mistress' feet until the family was ready to start for home again. Then she went along, quite demurely, with the rest.

Once it happened that a member of the family, a young daughter, was married. Pussy saw the folks start off for church. What she thought about it is not told. Nor how she found out exactly where they had gone. But the marriage service had hardly begun before Mrs. Pussy was seen walking up the aisle. She sat down gravely in the rear of the bridal party and waited until the ceremony was over. Then she followed them all home again, seemingly satisfied that she had acted with perfect propriety, and had merely asserted her right, as a member of the family, to be present on the occasion.

## THE FATHER OF ORPHANAGES.

In the little town of Yverdon, on the shores of the Lake Neuchatel in Switzerland, there is to be seen a bronze monument to one of the heroes of peace. It bears the name of Pestalozzi and, as an epitaph, the words: "He was the saviour of the poor, the friend of the wretched, the father of the orphan. He lived as a beggar that he might teach beggars to live as men. All for others; nothing for himself."

The story of his life is a very simple one. He lived in the time of the Napoleonic wars, when men were being killed by the hundred thousand, and scattered over Europe were the home-steads in which were their widows and orphan children. Pestalozzi cared nothing for the glorious victories, but his heart bled for the poor little children whose fathers had fallen in battle. It was little that he could do to help them, but he did all he could. He wrote books describing their sufferings, and with the profits he opened schools and established farm colonies in which he gathered the most needy. To support these institutions he begged from the rich, and in his sorest straits he was known to beg from door to door. Immense sums came to him for his labour and by his begging, but he never had any money, and he died penniless. His whole life, with all its toil and hardships, was laid down in sacrifice for others.—Christian Herald.



CHRISTIAN MARTYRS.

counterpart. Socrates and Seneca suffered with fortitude, but not with faith. The loftiest pagan philosophy faded into insignificance before the sublimity of Christian hope. This looked beyond the shadows of time and the sordid cares of earth to the grandeur of the Infinite and the Eternal. The heroic oaths of the believers exhibited a spiritual power mightier than the primal instincts of nature, the love of wife or child, or even of life itself. Like a solemn voice falling on the dull ear of mankind, these holy examples urged the inquiry, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And that voice awakened an echo in full many a heart. The martyrs made more converts by their deaths than in their lives. "Kill us, rack us, condemn us, grind us to powder," exclaimed the intrepid Chris-

caying substance. Many a battle-field, where there was no time to bury the dead, has been to them a harvest-field. We read that in some heathen countries, instead of burying a corpse, it is placed upon a high framework and left for the vultures' feast, till at last nothing remains but the skeleton.

These are dismal things to write, yet even these horrid birds have their uses. They often avert pestilence by acting as scavengers. Oriental countries, as a rule, are not cleanly, and they devour the offal which is left lying about, and for this are held in high esteem. In Egypt they were called Pharaoh's chickens.

Those in our picture represent California vultures, which are the largest birds of prey in North America, being about four feet long and their wings