

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

**Children's Crusade—A Fragment.\***

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

I.

What is this I read in history,  
Of marvel, full of mystery,  
So hard to understand?  
Fiction? Is it truth?  
Children in the flower of youth,  
Heart in hand and hand in hand,  
Without what helps or arms,  
Without armour, without arms,  
Marching to the Holy Land!

Who shall answer or divine?  
Ever since the world was made  
Such a wonderful crusade  
Started forth for Palestine.  
Ever while the world shall last,  
Will it reproduce the past;  
Ever will it see again  
Such an army, such a band,  
Over mountain, over main,  
Marching to the Holy Land.

Like a shower of blossoms blown  
From the parent trees were they;  
Like a flock of birds that fly  
Through the unfrequented sky,  
Holding nothing as their own,  
Led them into lands unknown,  
Led to suffer and to die.

Oh the simple, child-like trust!  
Oh the faith that could believe  
That the harnesses, iron-mailed  
Knights of Christendom had failed  
By their prowess to achieve,  
That they, the children, could and must!

Little thought the hermit, preaching  
To yon wars to knight and baron,  
That the words dropped in his teaching,  
In entreaty, his beseeching,  
Could by children's hands be gleaned  
And the staff on which he leaned  
Be as useless as the rod of Aaron.

As a summer wind upheaves  
The innumerable leaves  
From the bosom of a wood—  
Not as separate leaves, but massed  
All together by the blast—  
So for evil or for good  
His resistless breath upheaved  
All at once the many-leaved,  
Many-thoughted multitude.

The crusade of the children in the  
Middle Ages—from which very few of them  
returned, and which never reached the Holy  
Land—is but a type of the new crusade to  
which our boys and girls are summoned—  
not for the rescue of Christ's  
sepulchre, but for the rescue of men  
and women made in his image: a crusade  
which is destined to be crowned with  
victory. We want to enlist every boy and  
girl in Canada in this crusade against the  
evil traffic—the greatest evil which despoils  
our country. So in our boys and girls  
to men and women, and by their votes  
at the polls and the influence in the homes,  
able to sweep from the land this great  
evil and crime.

In the tumult of the air  
Rock the boughs with all the nests  
Cradled on their tossing crests;  
By the fervour of his prayer  
Troubled hearts were everywhere  
Rocked and tossed in human breasts.

For a century, at least,  
His prophetic voice had ceased;  
But the air was heated still  
By his lurid words and will.

As from fires in far off woods,  
In the autumn of the year,  
An unwonted fever broods  
In the sultry atmosphere.

II.

In Cologne the bells were ringing,  
In Cologne the nuns were singing  
Hymns and canticles divine,  
Loud the monks sang in their stalls,

And the thronging streets were loud  
With the voices of the crowd;  
Underneath the city walls  
Silent flowed the river Rhine.

From the gates, that summer day,  
Clad in robes of hooden gray,  
With the red cross on the breast,  
Azure eyed and golden-haired,  
Forth the young crusaders fared,  
While above the band devoted  
Consecrated banners floated,  
Fluttering many a flag and streamer,  
And the cross over all the rest:  
Singing lowly, meekly, slowly,  
"Give us, give us back the holy  
Sepulchre of the Redeemer!"  
On the vast procession pressed,  
Youths and maidens.

III.

Ah! what master hand shall paint  
How they journeyed on their way,  
How the days grew long and dreary,  
How their little feet grew weary,  
How their little hearts grew faint!  
Ever swifter day by day  
Flowed the homeward river; ever  
More and more its whitening current  
Broke and scattered into spray,  
Till the calmly flowing river  
Changed into a mountain torrent,  
Rushing from its glacier green  
Down through chasms and black gorges  
Like a phoenix in its nest,  
Burned the red sun in the west,  
Sinking in an ashen cloud,  
In the east, above the crest  
Of the sea like mountain chain,  
Like a phoenix from its shroud,  
Came the red sun back again.

Now around them, white with snow,  
Closed the mountain peaks. Below  
Headlong, from the precipice  
Down into the dark abyss,  
Plunged the cataract, white with foam,  
And it said, or seemed to say:  
Oh, return, while yet you may,  
Foolish children, to your home,  
There the Holy City is!"

But the dauntless leader said  
Faint not, though your bleeding feet  
O'er these slippery paths of snow  
Move but painfully and slowly,  
Other feet than yours have bled,  
Other tears than yours been shed.  
Courage! lose not heart or hope.  
On the mountain's southern slope  
Lies Jerusalem the holy!"  
As a white rose in its pride,  
By the wind in summer tide  
Tossed and tossed from the branch,  
Shower its petals o'er the ground,  
From the distant mountain's side,  
Scattering all its snows around,  
With mysterious muffled sound,  
Loosened, fell the avalanche.  
Voices, a low far and near,  
Roar of wind and waters blending,  
Mists uprising, clouds impending,  
Filled them with a sense of fear,  
Formless, nameless, never ending.



NATIVE CHINESE MISSIONARY.

ONE of the most striking triumphs  
of the Gospel is when a worshipper of  
a false god becomes not merely a  
worshipper of the true God, but also  
a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus.  
This moral miracle has many times  
been repeated in the history of Chris-  
tian missions. We give a portrait  
here of a native Chinese preacher,  
brought up in the dark tenets of the

religion of Buddha, who renounced  
that vain philosophy, became a disciple  
of Jesus, and then went forth to  
preach to his countrymen the precious  
faith which he had learned. Many of  
these Chinamen are just the material  
to make first rate Methodist preachers  
of—they are shrewd, intelligent,  
pious and devoted to God and to his  
cause.