

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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The Land of Beautiful Thought.

BY E. J. HALL.

There are weary ones who have had no rest,
Who have spent their days in the dim by-ways

Of the dreary land of Worry,
Whose blistered feet have trod the street
Of the crowded city of Hurry;
Who have never heeded the soul's behest,
Left their care and gone forth and sought
The land of Beautiful Thought.

Oh, these troubled ones have known small joy!

They have never seen the silver sheen
On the ocean of God's love,
Let never rise their tear-dimmed eyes
To the sapphire skies above;
Their grief and pain have had small alloy,
Because they have never gone forth and sought
The land of Beautiful Thought.

'Tis of other tried ones I want to tell,
Who have gazed their fill with many a thrill

On the mountain of God's strength,
Seen the dimpling face of the river of Grace
Flowing its infinite length;
Of its waters drank—have grown strong
and well,
Because they have truly, earnestly sought
The land of Beautiful Thought.

Though often they've seen the wreck of hope,

And trod with tears for many years
The lonely valley of Doubt,
Now they spend their days on the hills
of Praise,

With breezes of joy about;
On the highway of care they no longer
mope,
Because at last they've been wise and sought

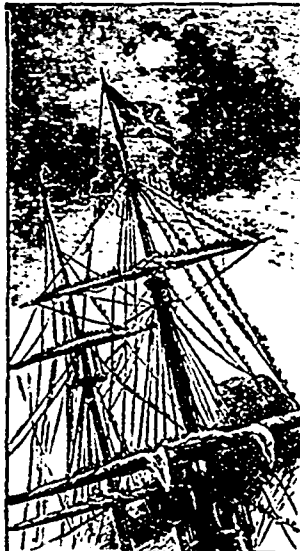
The land of Beautiful Thought.
Millburn, Ont.

THE SAND-MARTIN.

I do not know of any more interesting little builder than the sand-martin. It is a wonderful little bird, as you will confess when I tell you about it. First of all, think what wonderful travellers these birds are. In the summer they abound not only in England, but actually as far off as the northern parts of Sweden and Norway. When the summer has passed away they take their departure, and make their winter home as far away as India and the south of Africa. Sometimes they have to cross many miles of sea, and it is no uncommon thing to see hundreds resting during their flight on the masts and ropes of any vessel they may happen to pass on their journey. It is the first of all the birds of passage to return to England in the spring, and when you read of some one having seen the "first swallow" in the spring, you may be sure it was a sand-martin and not a swallow, that had been seen. But you need never mistake a sand-martin for a swallow. It is a smaller bird, its under part being white and its upper part mouse-coloured; when on the wing it moves with a peculiar jerking flight, which readily distinguishes it from either the swallow or its near relative the house-martin. The bird, however, is best known on account of the wonderful house which it forms for rearing its young. It selects the face of some cliff, where the rock is not too hard, and bores a passage with a wonderful amount of regularity and skill. When beginning to work, it clings to the face of the bank with its feet, and pecks away at the hard surface, loosening the earth bit by bit. During the work the bird assumes all manner of positions, its beak acting as a kind of pivot, the bird working as often as not with its head downwards. Looking at its tiny beak you can hardly believe that it could achieve the result it does; especially as if you tried you would find yourself unable to do anything of the kind with a strong pocket-knife. The little tunnel into the bank having been formed, the bird constructs in a tolerably straight line with

a little upward slope for a considerable distance, sometimes about three feet, sometimes even eight or nine feet long. At the end a chamber of somewhat larger dimensions is formed, which the bird lines with some grass and feathers very prettily arranged, on which the plucky-white eggs are laid.

The same parents rear several broods of young birds each year, but the birds do not multiply very fast. The chief reason for this is that although they are quite secure so long as they remain in their curious nests, yet when the young birds make their first attempts to fly, there are many foes, such as the magpie and crow and sparrow-hawk, on the lookout for them, and thus large numbers are snapped up before they are able to take care of themselves. Then, again, many boys, I am sorry to say, think it a very fine sport to climb up the banks and root out the nest which they cannot reach. This is a cruel and foolish sport, and the more so because the sand-martins are very good friends to the farmers, killing flies and other insects that otherwise would be very troublesome.



THE SAND-MARTIN.

THE STOLEN PICE.

A little Hindu boy was running along the road shuffling his feet in true boy fashion. Suddenly his toe struck something hard in the sand, and the force of the blow brought out six pice (money to the value of three cents) from their hiding-place. The boy's bright black eyes grew still more shiny as he viewed the treasure. He did not wonder about the pice being there, because he saw some little children of a rich neighbour playing in the sand as he was on his way home from school.

He knew that the pice must belong to them, but he also knew that on the next day would be the village market, and with those six pice he could purchase enough sweetmeats to satisfy even the most troublesome of "sweet teeth," as we call them in America. So he quickly tied up the pice in a corner of his cloth, and turned about and ran home as fast as he could. He was afraid that his brother or his mother might discover the

money, so he slyly hid it away in his low straw eaves of the house. He could not forget about them, however, and his mind was strangely troubled.

That evening his mother went to the village store to buy some household necessities. She returned to the house with both hands full, and called Indra, the boy, to come and hold some of the things while she lighted the little tin lamp. A bottle of mustard oil and a pound of salt were given into his hands, but he had no sooner taken them than in some strange way they fell from his hands. The salt burst its covering of dry leaves and mixed with the dust on the floor, and the oil bottle broke and

red and the only ones in the neighbourhood.

One morning several of them were missing a fact which caused my father to say some very emphatic things. It was plain that a two-legged thief and not an animal, had taken them, as there were a number of footprints around the hen-house.

Several days later a number of others disappeared, and then my father was wild-eyed. He bought a savage dog that was warranted to eat a man on the slightest provocation, and turned him loose at night. He also borrowed a bear-trap from one of the neighbours and set it near the doorway of the hen-house. But it was all in vain. It was only the matter of a few nights when a number more hens disappeared with no signs of the thief.

It was then that my detective ability began to develop by laying plans to catch the thief. On Sunday night, while my folks were at church, I conceived a plan that I thought might work. I secured a pot of red paint from the barn and fixed it over the doorway of the hen-house in such a manner that it would be sure to fall on any one opening the door. Then I had figured that it would only be necessary to look for some one covered with red paint to be sure of the thief.

But my dream of looking for a man covered with red paint was short-lived. My father, returning from church, happened to go out to the hen-house to see if everything was all right. He opened the door to look inside and got the contents of the paint-pot over his head. This so startled him that he forgot about the bear-trap until he had put his foot into it and had it closed upon him with a snap. That awoke the dog and he seized the other leg.

His cries brought the household out on a run. We managed to get him loose and over to the horse-trough, where we washed off what we could of the red paint, and I gave up my efforts to catch that particular thief.—The Epworth Herald.

IN THE CARS.

We observed that our handsome young-looking conductor eyed little Tom somewhat greedily, presently he coaxed him with a ripe peach to sit on his knee and something in the way he touched the shining curls made mother Jean say: "You must have a little boy at home."

"Two of 'em, madam," he answered eagerly; "one no bigger than this one, but he can sing like a choir; I wish you could hear him sing, 'Jesus loves me.'"

"He goes to Sunday-school, then?" said mother Jean, and Tom pricked up his small pink ears.

"Oh, yes, indeed," said the conductor proudly.

"What church do you belong to?" was the next gentle question.

"Well, I don't belong to any church myself; you see I'm a rough man and I

lead a pretty hard life, but I want my wife and children to have the best of everything, and it won't be my fault if they don't have it."

"Don't you think," asked his new acquaintance, "that the very best thing they could have would be the comfort of knowing that you were a Christian? that in all your dangers and hardships you were one of those for whom all things work together for good? Could you possibly give them any blessing as great as that?"

Little Tom found himself set softly down in his mother's lap. Newmarket station was in sight, but the conductor bent his tall head and said with much feeling: "Thank you, madam, I never thought of that before."

Then he went forward to his place, and I knew by the look on mother Jean's face that she was praying for him, that the little seed might not be caught away.

"We cannot escape history"—Lincoln.

CATCHING A THIEF.

A well-known police officer gives in the Detroit Free Press an experience of his boyhood. We do not wonder that he remembers it:

"My first experience as a thief-catcher," said the detective, as he smiled softly to himself, "came when I was a young lad on my father's farm. My father kept a large number of chickens, of which he was extremely proud, as they were high