

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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WHEN THE SWALLOWS HOMEWARD FLY.

The picture on this page gives a charming bit of Old World scenery. It is such as can be seen in many an English village. We saw one such where the quaint old church, with its ivy-mantled tower, dated back nearly a thousand years. These monuments of our forefathers, "speaking of the past unto the present," are extremely impressive. The stone pavement was almost worn away by the feet of generations of worshippers who had passed through the old crumbling porch. What tales those stones could tell, had they but tongues, of the joys and sorrows of those successive generations!

The quaint old thatched roof in the foreground, and the timbered front in middle distance, are very characteristic of English villages. In the fall of the year great flocks of swallows may be seen soaring and circling around the church towers, as if holding a convention to arrange for their distant flight across the channel, across the broad fair fields of France, across the broad Mediterranean, to their far-off native Africa. You remember Mrs. Hemans' beautiful poem on the Birds of Passage. In answer to her question, they report the sad changes they have everywhere met.

"A change we have found and many a change,
Faces and footsteps and all things strange!
Gone are the heads of the silvery hair,
And the young that were have a brow of care.
And the place is hushed where the children played—
Naught looks the same, save the nest we made."

To which the poet replies, and let us each lay the sacred lesson to heart:

"Sad is your tale of the beautiful earth,
Birds that o'er sweep it in power and mirth!
Yet through the wastes of the trackless air
Ye have a guide and shall not despair!
Ye over desert and deep have passed,
So may we reach our bright home at last."

A FAITHFUL DOG.

An interesting story of a dog has been told by a gentleman who was travelling in France during the late war with Germany. He met one day some wounded soldiers returning to their regiments, and observed one of them who had a little dog, an iron-gray terrier, following at his heels, but

only on three legs. In an earnest manner the told him how the dog had been the means of saving his master's life. He had been struck by a ball in the chest when fighting near Ham, and lay on the ground for six hours after the battle was over. He had not lost consciousness, but the blood was flowing freely, and he was getting weaker and weaker. There were none but the dead near him, and his only companion was the terrier, who prowled

denly, when it had come to the worst, he heard a bark, which he knew belonged to only one little dog in the world; he felt something lick his face, and saw the glare of lanterns. The dog had wandered for miles, till he reached a roadside inn. The people had heard the cannon all day, and seen the kepi in the dog's mouth, and noticing his restless movements, followed him. He took them straight to the spot, faster than they could



WHEN THE SWALLOWS HOMEWARD FLY.

restlessly round him, with its master's kepi (military cap) in its mouth. At last the dog set off at a trot, and the wounded soldier felt sure that his only friend had deserted him.

The night grew dark, and the cold intense, and he had not even the strength to touch his wounds, which every instant grew more and more painful. His limbs grew cold, and feeling a sickly faintness stealing over him, he gave up all hope of life, and recommended himself to God. Sud-

denly, when it had come to the worst, he heard a bark, which he knew belonged to only one little dog in the world; he felt something lick his face, and saw the glare of lanterns. The dog had wandered for miles, till he reached a roadside inn. The people had heard the cannon all day, and seen the kepi in the dog's mouth, and noticing his restless movements, followed him. He took them straight to the spot, faster than they could

"CAN you tell me what time it is?" asked a lady while waiting in a bank. "No, no; I am not the teller. Next window, please."

TRYING A WITCH.

The time has long gone by, with its story of cruel persecution; and only that the record has passed into history we might forget that the blood of the innocent had ever been spilled. For centuries the witch-craft mania raged in different parts of Europe, being first instigated by Catholic priests, and afterward followed up by Protestant ministers. Especially in Scotland, the belief and persecution raged to excess. Finally, the British colonies became imbued with this fearful spirit, and in 1692 the awful tragedies of Salem, Massachusetts, were enacted.

As a general thing the suspected person was poor, old, and retiring, living in some remote spot, and generally living alone. If the person had some peculiarity of feature, face, or form, she was sure to be thought possessed of an evil spirit. If a cow refused to give milk, or a horse became lame, or a child was taken sick, or a hay-rick burned, suspicion fell upon one of these innocent ones, who was suspected of having the "evil eye," and who, after long persecution, was brought to a so-called trial.

Such a trial was simply a farce, as the accused knew that she had been pre-doomed, and that the charges brought against her were utterly false. When a witch was about to be tried, the crowd surrounded her humble abode, dragged her forth, and with curses and abuses led her to trial.

The suspected one was generally a frail, old woman, who, if she had any friends among the rabble, knew that they dare not attempt to defend or succor her. In the anguish of her soul she could only strive to fix her thoughts upon her Master, who was once also led out by the mob, stoned, hooted at, falsely tried, and cruelly put to death.

The death of a witch was often terrible to think of. Some were tied to a tail of a cart, and dragged about the town until life was extinct, and the form unrecognizable. Some were thrown into the river and stoned by the blood-thirsty mob, until the gray heads sank to rise no more. Some were tied to a stake and burned. Occasionally, the victim, by some rare good chance, was allowed to escape death, but only to live a life of persecution. Is it not occasion for gratitude to God, that in this, our day, the old, the friendless, the poor, the peculiar, are objects of love and care?