

of the loss of his vessel, with all on board."

"Have you ever learned the full particulars of the shipwreck?"

"No; how could I?" Mrs. Johnson turns suddenly pale.

"Be calm, I beseech you, my dear lady. I did not suppose that you could have heard. But I met just now, in the street, an old friend of mine—and of yours—who knows a good deal about it. And I want to assure you, before he comes in, that—that the story as it reached you—was—was considerably exaggerated, that is all. Excuse me, and I will send in my friend."

Mr. Todd quickly withdraws. The color comes and goes upon the mother's face. "Merciful Father!" she cries, "what does it all mean?"

She rises from the chair; the door that Mr. Todd has left ajar gently opens, and quickly closes. We will not open it again just now. That place is too sacred for prying eyes. It is a great cry of joy that fills the ears and eyes of Mr. Haliburton Todd, as he goes softly down the stairs, and walks away to his hotel.

An hour later, when the shock of the joy is over a little, and the explanations have been made, and father and mother and children are sitting for a few moments silent in a great peace, the nature of the human boy begins to assert itself.

"Is n't it," ventures Ben, timidly, as if the words were a profanation, "is n't it about time for dinner?"

"Indeed it is, my boy," answers his mother; "and I'm afraid our dinner is spoiled. Open the oven door, Ruby."

Ruby obeys, and finds the poor, forgotten chicken done to a cinder. "Never mind," says the mother. "Our dinner will be a little late, but we'll find something with which to keep the feast."

Just then, there is a knock at the door opening into the new neighbour's apartment.

"What can they want?" says Mrs. Johnson. "Perhaps, my dear, you had better answer the knock. They are new-comers to day."

Mr. Johnson pushes back the bolt and opens the door. The room is hung with a profusion of Christmas greens. A bright fire blazes on the hearth. A table in the middle of the room is loaded with smoking viands. A smiling coloured waiter, with napkin on arm, bows politely when the door is opened.

"Et you please, sah, dinnah is ready, sah!"

"Whose dinner?" demands Mr. Johnson.

"Your dinnah, sah. De folks's dinnah 'n dis yer front room. It was order'd fo' dem."

"Where was it ordered?"

"Copeland's, sah."

"Who ordered it?"

"Gen'l'm'n with gray' ulcerated coat on, sah; I sean kim kim up t' ver room 'bout 'n hour ago. I was to git it all ready 'n call you jes' half-past two."

"Another of Todd's surprises," exclaims Mr. Johnson. "Well, my dears, the dinner is here; and we should be very ungrateful not to partake of it with thanksgiving."

What a happy feast it is! How the laughter and the tears chase each other around the table! How swiftly

the grief and dread of the two desolate years that are gone, fly away into a far-off land!

Bye and bye, when the cloth is removed, and they are seated around the open fire, Ruby says, musingly: "Papa, did you really and truly know Mr. Todd when you were a boy?"

"Certainly, my darling, why do you ask?"

"I can't quite think," says the girl, "that he is a real man. It seems to me as if he must be an angel."

While she speaks, the angel is knocking at the door. They all fly to him, the father hugs him, the mother kisses his hand; the children clasp his knees.

"Help! help!" shouts the hearty lumberman. "I didn't come here to be garroted."

Then, with much laughing and crying, they tell him Ruby's doubts concerning him.

"Well," he says, merrily, "I may be an angel, but, if so, I'm not aware of it. Angels are not generally addicted to the lumber business. And you needn't make any speeches to me, for I haven't time to hear 'em. Fact is, this has been the very reddest of all my red-letter days; the merriest of my Christmasses; and you people have been the innocent occasion of it all. And I'm not done with you yet. I'll have you all up to my lumbercamp next summer; there's a nice cabin there, for you. Pine woods'll do you lots of good, madam. Great fishing there, Ben! You'll all come, won't you? It's almost train-time. Good-bye!"

And before they have time to protest or to promise, Mr. Haliburton Todd is down the stairs, rushing away to the station of the Eastern Railroad.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLKS:

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 23, 1883.

OUR NEW PAPER.

THE first number of HOME and SCHOOL, has been received with a general chorus of approval. It is admitted, to be the most beautiful Sunday-school paper ever published in the Dominion, and we hope to still further improve it. The Metropolitan Sunday-school, Toronto, had the honour of giving the first order for the new paper. This school, under the able superintendence of Alderman Boustead, is thoroughly



HOUSE IN NORWAY 334 YEARS OLD—From Du Rhailu's "Land of the Midnight Sun," in the "Methodist Magazine" for January.

loyal to all the institutions and publications of our Church. While already taking large quantities of BANNER, PLEASANT HOURS, and SUNBEAMS, it gives an order for 300 copies of HOME and SCHOOL. We hope that every school in the country that can at all afford it, will give as large an order as possible. Where two copies of the same paper now go into a family, by substituting HOME AND SCHOOL for one of them, double the amount of reading will be obtained for the same cost.

CHRISTMAS GREETING.

"A MERRY Christmas" to the hundred thousand of readers of PLEASANT HOURS! That's what I hear the Christmas bells saying as their merry voices ring out, strong and clear, through the frosty air. A merry Christmas? Why not? Is it not the anniversary of the world's greatest joy-day? It speaks to us of the Bethlehem stable, the manger, the Virgin's babe; of the wondering shepherds, the glad angels, the curious wise men from the East; of the birth of Jesus our Saviour, who laid down His heavenly crown and sceptre, and joined Himself to a soul and body like yours and mine, that He might redeem us, make us good, and, therefore, happy for ever and ever. Who can help being happy on so glad a day as this? Yes, Christmas is—must be—the gladdest, merriest, happiest day in all the glad some year to those who know it to be the birthday of Jesus. Let us therefore all join in singing this Christmas carol:

This is the day when holy men,
Led onward by a star,
To bow before the Newly-Born,
Came from their home afar.

Their gold, and frankincense, and myrrh,
In lowly love they brought;
Each gift with precious meaning stored
Beyond the giver's thought.

In tribute to the kings of earth
Their gold the nations bring;
Therefore they offered gold to Him,
Our own anointed king.

Before the mercy-seat of God,
Rich frankincense was poured:
And so they brought Him frankincense,
To own Him God and Lord.

In myrrh embalmed in olden time,
The dead were wont to lie:
Then myrrh was token meet for Him
Who came on earth to die.

And little children as we are,
We, too, would come and lay
Our gold, and frankincense, and myrrh
Before His feet to-day.

We'll run and do His kingly will,
Whene'er that will is told
By parents, teachers, brethren, friends:
Obedience is our gold

Three times a day we'll meekly kneel,
To thank His loving care,
And ask Him to protect us still
Our frankincense is prayer.

Let disappointments in our hearts
No evil tempers stir;
We'll bear them as He bore His cross:
For patience is our myrrh.

A merry Christmas? Certainly, Have we not all our pretty love gifts and our nice feasts to be merry about? God gave His Son on the first Christmas day to feast our souls. Our little gifts to each other, and our festive tables, are only types of that greatest of gifts, that richest of all feasts. Led us be glad, then, over our love tokens, and our nice dishes, because they all tell of love—our own friends' love and God's love to us, in giving us kind friends, and best of all, in the gift of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

A COURTEOUS old gentleman, being told a very tough story, said: "Since you were an eye-witness, I suppose I must believe you; but I do not think I'd have believed it if I had seen it myself."