

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVII.]

TORONTO, MAY 15, 1897.

[No. 20.]

## The Little Lad's Answer.

Our little lad came in one day,  
With dusty shoes and tired feet,  
His playtime had been hard and long.  
Out in the summer's noontide heat.  
"I'm glad I'm home," he cried, and hung  
His torn straw hat up in the hall,  
While in the corner by the door  
He put away his bat and ball.

"I wonder why," 'twas laughing said,  
"This little lad always comes here,  
When there are many other homes  
As nice as this, and quite as  
near?"

He stood a moment deep in  
thought,  
Then, with the lovelight in  
his eye,  
He pointed where his mother  
sat,  
And said, "She lives here,  
that is why!"

With beaming face the mother  
heard;  
Her mother heart was very  
glad,  
A true, sweet answer he had  
given—  
That thoughtful, loving, little  
lad,  
And well I know that hosts of  
lads  
Are just as loving, true, and  
dear—  
That they would answer as he  
did,  
" 'Tis home, for mother's liv-  
ing here!"

## LEADING THE BLIND.

Few things appeal more strongly to our sympathies than the condition of the blind. To see no sun, no moon, nor the sweet face of nature—and worse still, never to behold the faces we love—is one of the saddest afflictions of earth. Yet many who are blind are happy and cheerful, notwithstanding their affliction. It is surely the duty of those who can see, to help those who cannot. The young girl in our picture is doing this. Amid the crowded streets she is carefully guiding the poor boy, who is probably an utter stranger, across the road. If he could only see the look of sympathy on her face, he would be still more thankful than he is.

## HOW RITCHIE "SAW IT."

Fred and Ritchie were school-fellows of about the same age, and regular chums. Yet you never saw boys so unlike in appearance. Fred was very tall and stout for ten years old, with rosy cheeks, and was always merry and full of fun. Ritchie was what the boys called "undersized," his face was very white, and he looked as if he had gone through more trouble than many grown-up men.

One reason why they were such constant companions was that neither of them had any boy play-mates at home. Fred had sisters, who petted him, and bought things for him, but they could not play at cricket, nor football, nor swim boats. When he had a boat given to him, he could not do without Ritchie to help him to sail it. Ritchie was the youngest of his family. He had big brothers, but they did not treat him kindly, and would not let him go out with them. They had "no patience with kids knocking about their heels," they said. So Ritchie was glad to be with merry, kind Fred, and Fred's mother always made him welcome. "Come in, dearie," she would say, "come when you can, and do not wait for an invitation." So they used to have fine times. If it rained, they might make as much noise as they liked in the breakfast-room; and when fine,

there was a pond to sail their boats in. The only thing the matter with the pond was that there were so many weeds in the middle; but ragged boys were always waiting about, and should a boat be caught in these weeds, they would take off their boots and wade in to free it.

Fred lived in a pretty small house. Ritchie's was very large, and in the fashionable part of the town. In Freddie's house Jesus was loved and honoured, but Ritchie's father did not love Jesus, and he used to teach his children not to believe in that dear Saviour who

"Ritchie, you know you have sinned, and God must punish sin, and Jesus was willing to be punished instead of you."

"I do not call it fair," he replied doggedly, stamping his foot on the floor.

"Ritchie, dear," said his governess, "Jesus was punished instead of you, on him was laid the iniquity of us all."

"I can't see it," replied Ritchie. "I wish I could, but it does not seem fair; what good could another being punished for me do?"

Fred had one fault which brought him into trouble. It was his chattering

could hardly conceal his vexation, it was such a lovely day, and half-holiday, too.

School was dismissed, and away went the boys, leaving poor, miserable Fred; but Ritchie lingered. At last he begged of the governess, "Do let me have half of Fred's punishment, please do."

"But," she replied, "that would not be fair; you have been good and Fred has not." "I know," said Ritchie, "but please let me." She could not resist his pleading. So the punishment time began. Fred looked one way and Ritchie the other. The governess sat writing,

not a sound could be heard but the scratching of her pen. At last the minute hand of the clock came to the quarter. "Time is up," she said; but Ritchie came to her, his face bright with joy. "Oh!" he cried, "I see it all. It is all right." "What do you mean, Ritchie, dear?" she asked. His face was aglow with joy, as he replied, "About the Lord Jesus He chose to be punished instead of me."

"Yes, Ritchie, but Jesus bore all the penalty, not the half, and he did it for you even when you did not love him."

"Yes," said Ritchie, "I can see it all now. He died for me." And away went the boys, Ritchie's heart filled with happiness he never knew before.



LEADING THE BLIND.

had loved them and died for them. He was very harsh to them, and what made his temper worse was, he had lost so much money, and in his trouble he could not go to Jesus to be comforted and helped to bear his loss. After a time he went to South Africa, leaving wife and children, so can you wonder that Ritchie was not merry like Fred?

The boys had a governess who loved Jesus, and the school was always opened with a Scripture lesson and prayer. They loved that lesson, and would gather round her as she spoke of the kind things the Lord Jesus used to do to people in sickness and sorrow, and how he died on the cross for them. Ritchie would listen with his quiet face quivering, and would say, "It was a shame!" Then she would point out that Jesus gave himself a sacrifice for sin, and say

his tongue in school-time. At 10-30 "silence time" commenced, and any boy speaking, except about lessons, must be kept in fifteen minutes for each offence. One morning Ritchie and Fred planned a journey along the shore.

"Now, Fred," said Ritchie, "don't get kept in this morning." "All right," replied Fred, "I will look out." When "Silence" was called, Ritchie looked meaningly at Fred, who nodded in reply, and nearly made the slip of saying, "All right!" Suddenly Fred remembered something droll, and whispered it to his neighbour. The monitor saw him, and called, "Fifteen minutes, Fred, for speaking." Ritchie looked at him reproachfully, but it was not ten minutes after when the monitor again called, "Fred, another fifteen minutes for speaking in silence hour." Ritchie

## A BICYCLE RAILWAY.

The town of Ridgeway, Ontario, Can., boasts of the most novel method of transportation yet put in practical use. It is the invention of Captain Lina Beecher, and is known as the Beecher single rail or bicycle railway. The new road starts at Ridgeway, and has been completed a portion of the way towards Crystal Beach. A trial was made of the completed portion of the road recently by an invited party under the chaperonage of the inventor, which was a success, and demonstrated the practicability of Captain Beecher's system of transportation. The track of this novel road is elevated on posts about five feet apart, and consists of a centre "T" rail and two guide rails. These guide rails are eighteen inches apart, and the "T" rail, on which the cars run, is between, and about four inches higher. The car runs on two flat wheels along the "T" rail, and is held upright by four bevel-edged wheels, which move along the ground rails. While the car is in motion it retains the upright position in obedience to the same law that holds a bicycle thus when in motion, hence the name "bicycle railroad," by which it is becoming generally known. It is worthy of comment that while in motion the guide wheels hardly touch the rails, the car running very easily and steadily on the two centre flat wheels.

The cars are equipped with electric brakes, lights and bells, and take the curves and sharp grades with surprising ease and perfect safety. Each car weighs about a ton and a half, and will seat eighteen passengers very comfortably. They are fitted with a five horse-power motor and storage batteries, which are suspended from the car on each side of the track, helping by their weight to preserve the car in its upright position. A speed of thirty five miles an hour has been attained on the piece of road already finished, which, it is claimed, can be increased if necessary. One of the great advantages the company claim for the road is that it will be absolutely free from dust, smoke, and cinders, as it will run, in this case, from four to eighteen feet above the ground, passing through fields instead of along dusty highways.