

Columbus.

BY HARRIET PRASCOYTT SPOFFORD.

Heavily in his breast
The mariner's heart was beating;
Ever the course shaped west,
Ever the land retreating.

Mutiny muttering loud—
Naught all his hoping, his dreaming—
Suddenly out of a cloud
Wings were flashing and streaming!

Wings that told of the nest,
Told of the bough and the blossom,
Gave him the joy of his quest,
Kindled the heart in his bosom

Promising land at last,
Circling over and under,
Fanning around his mast—
What was the bird, I wonder?

Nothing the Genoese cared
Were it osprey or swallow—
The gray sea waste was dared,
Palm-fringe and shore must follow.

Oh, when bleak skies break up
With winds the bluebird is whirled in,
I drink from the selfsame cup
Two voyager pledged the world in!

For some of his joy must be
In the flash of the blithe new-comer,
Whose wings discover to me
Whole continents of summer!

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JULY 3, 1897.

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JULY 11, 1897.

Confession of sin.—Psalm 61. 1-6.

THE AUTHOR.

David was the author of this and many of the Psalms to be found in this book. Like most people, David's experience abounded in lights and shades. When he composed this Psalm, he was suffering intense grief on account of the heinous sin which he had committed. Sin always occasions misery. You cannot mention a single evil that exists in the world that has not been produced by sin. None of the readers of this lesson over do a wrong deed without bringing upon themselves some penalty. Shun sin if you want to escape punishment.

HIS NEED PROMPTED THE PRAYER.

He felt a load upon his mind which no earthly hand could remove. Hence the burden of his heart prompts him to pray unto God. He did not seek to conceal or hide his sin. He that covereth his sin shall not prosper. David confessed his sin. Bishop Hall has said, "There are many who have sinned like David, but only few have repented like David." He did not regard his sin as something of little moment. He abhorred himself and repented as in dust and ashes. Never regard sin as something of small import. You see, David calls sin "iniquitous," and transgressions, which sufficiently indicate his opinion of it.

VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS.

Verse 1. "David said, 'He wants his sin to be "blotted" out. Our life after re-

sembles a dirty page which we cannot clean. David wants his sin to be blotted out, so that it can be no longer seen. He also prays to be "washed" thoroughly. When persons wash themselves they do so that they may be clean. The filth of sin was now upon him, and he wants every particle to be taken away. The language implies that the Psalmist will submit to the infliction of any course of discipline, if only this curse may be taken away.

FELT KEENLY.

Verse 4. This verse sets forth the depth and intensity of his guilt. It is as much as to say, To have sinned against others is bad enough, but, oh! to have sinned against God, to have brought dishonour upon his holy name is what overwhelms me with grief. He truly mingled grief with weeping and watered his couch with tears. He was tortured by night and by day, and wherever he went he could do nothing but mourn over his conduct, to describe which he could not command language sufficiently strong and detestable.

A GOD OF PURITY.

Verse 6. David knew that God was holy, just, and good. He knew what God looked for in others. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. He not only sees the deeds perpetrated, but he knows the motive that prompted them. Man may be deceived, but God cannot. Man may not understand, but God knoweth all things. He sees the end from the beginning.

How important that we should keep from sin. When sin finds us out, do not seek to conceal it. Acknowledge guilt where it exists. Pray for pardon to him who alone can grant it. God only can forgive, and he will not bestow that prerogative on another.

HINTS ON SWIMMING.

BEGINNING.

All young persons should learn to swim. It not only affords a delightful and healthy exercise, but is often the means of saving life itself.

The greatest difficulty in the way of learning to swim is fear. Observation, reason, and practice will overcome this.

Remember that your body is lighter than the water, and this fact will give you confidence in the power of the water to bear the weight of your body. Were it not that the lungs fill with water, thus forcing out the air, it would be almost impossible for a person to sink. To avoid this let yourself well down in the water, keeping your head above the surface and throw your arms back. Keep the mouth closed, breathing through the nose. In this way your lungs fill with air instead of water, thus making your body lighter than the water, and you cannot sink.

You have now learned to float, and your battle is half over. Practice of the arm and leg movements will do the rest. It is better to learn these without the aid of things commonly used, such as corks, ropes, planks, and inflated bladders.

Wade out at some point where the water deepens gradually, and as far as your courage permits; turn toward the shore and strike out for it with both arms and legs. The propelling force is mainly in the arms. Place your hands in front of you with the backs together, at the same time drawing your feet well up toward your body; now separate your hands as far as you can, pushing back the water with the palms, at the same time kicking backward with your legs in much the way a frog does.

Keep calm and level-headed, making your motions slow and steady.

OTHER METHODS.

Padding. The next simplest method in swimming is that adopted by Carlo and other dogs. The position in the water is much the same as before, but the motions are different. With your hands in front of you, palms downward, paddle with first one and then the other. In times of danger, or when speed is otherwise required, this method is not the best, neither is it as useful as a means of chest expansion. It is generally used by swimmers for the purpose of rest by bringing a new set of muscles into play.

To float on the back keep your head on a level with the rest of your body. No movements are required for the legs, which are kept together. A slight motion only is needed with the hands at the sides. In this way you may float for a long time without fatigue.

To swim on the back keep the same position as above, the arms toward the head and return from the sides. The legs

movements are the same as in the first method.

Another good motion is that of treading water. Stand erect, moving first one leg, then the other, up and down, using the arms to balance yourself.

"Probable Sons."

CHAPTER IX.

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

When Sir Edward retired to his room that night, he paced up and down for some time in front of his little niece's picture that she had given him. His brow was knitted, and he was thinking deeply.

"I am longing to have peace," he muttered. "Why cannot I make up my mind to seek it! 'I will arise'—aye, easy to say—it's a hard and bitter thing for a backslider to retrace his steps. How the child stabs me sometimes, and how little she knows my past!"

He stopped and gazed at the picture. "And the Lord himself used this as an illustration. I could not want anything stronger."

A deep-drawn sigh followed, then a heartfelt cry rose to heaven.

"May God have mercy on me, and bring me back, for I can't bring myself!"

The next morning Sir Edward had an interview with his keeper, who brought his son up with him, and as the tall, broad-shouldered young fellow stood before the squire, and in earnest, humble tones asked if he could be given a chance of redeeming his character by being employed on the estate, Sir Edward's severity relaxed, and after a long conversation with him he promised he would give him a trial.

He smiled grimly to himself as father and son left him with warm expressions of gratitude.

"So that is the child's hero! One whose example I might well follow. He has had the courage at last to take the step from which I am still shrinking. Why should I fear that my welcome home would be less full of love and forgiveness than his?"

It was Christmas Eve; a wild and stormy day, the wind raged ceaselessly round the old house, howling down the chimneys, and beating the branches of the trees outside against the window panes.

Milly had been very busy for some hours helping Ford to decorate the hall though Ford would every now and then pause in his work, saying, "There, Miss and rooms with holly and evergreen, Milly, I'm sure we're overdoing it; if the house was full of company now, I would take a pride in it, but I don't believe the master will notice whether it's done or not. It seems to me as he is getting more and more shut up into himself lately. Christmas is a dull time with us."

All was finished at last, and Milly went up to the nursery and stood at the window, her bright brown eyes eagerly scanning and taking note of every object out of doors.

"It's a perfect hurricane," said nurse presently, as she sat with her work in a comfortable chair by the fire. "If we feel it inland like this, what must it be at sea!"

"I should like to be on the sea," said Milly. "I love the wind, but I think it is getting a little bit too rough this afternoon. I'm rather afraid it will hurt the little trees. Ford said if I went out I should be blown away. Do you think, nurse, if the wind was very, very strong, it would ever be able to blow me up to heaven?"

"I am afraid not," said nurse gravely, "and I don't think we could spare you, my dear. You would not like to leave this world yet awhile."

"Sometimes I think I should, and sometimes I think I shouldn't. I think I should like to be blown up to spend a day there, and then come back again. Oh, nurse, Goliath is screaming and cracking so! I wish the wind would knock him over, he is a horrid old tree. I always think he is making faces at me when I run past him. Wouldn't it be nice to see him blown down?"

"You mustn't wish that," said nurse, getting up from her chair and moving towards the door; "it's a dangerous thing for an old tree to be blown down. Now I am going downstairs for a short time, so be a good child and don't get into mischief while I am away."

Milly remained at the window for some minutes after nurse's departure, then her quick eyes noticed a poor wretched little kitten mewing pitifully as she vainly tried to shelter herself from the violent blasts around by crouching close to a tree.

In an instant, without thought of consequences, the child darted to the nursery door and down the broad oak staircase.

"Poor pussy, I will run and fetch her in. I expect she has run away from the kitchen."

Sir Edward was writing at his study table, when an unusually violent gust of wind caused him to raise his eyes and glance out of the window. There, to his amazement, he saw, under the old oak tree on the lawn, his little niece, her golden-brown curls flying as she battled with the elements, and struggled vainly to stoop and take the kitten in her arms.

He started up from his seat, but as he did so a blast that shook the house swept by, there was an awful cracking, then a crash, and, to his horror, a huge limb of the old oak came with an awful thud upon the very spot where his little niece was standing.

"My God, save her!" was his agonized cry, as he saw at the same moment the little figure stagger and fall. Then, forgetting his weakness and lack of physical strength, he dashed out of the house, and in another instant was standing over her.

His first feeling was one of intense thankfulness to find that the branch in falling could have only slightly grazed her, as she was lying on the ground untouched by it; but as he raised the motionless figure, and noted a red mark on her forehead which was swelling rapidly, his heart sank within him. It did not take him long to carry her into the house, and he was met at the door by nurse, who wisely wasted no time in useless lamentation, but set to work at once to restore animation to her little charge. Her efforts were successful. Milly was only slightly stunned, but it had been a miraculous escape, and had the blow been an inch nearer her temple it might have been fatal. As it was, the child was more frightened than hurt, and when a little time after her uncle took her in his arms with unwonted tenderness, she clung to him and burst into passionate sobs.

"Take care of me, uncle! That nasty old Goliath! He tried to kill me, he did! I saw him coming on the top of me. God only just saved me in time, didn't he?"

When the bruise had been bathed and dressed by nurse, Sir Edward still kept her on his knee, and after nurse had left the room, and the child rested her little head on his shoulder in a very subdued frame of mind, he did, what he had never done yet—stooped over her and kissed her, saying:

"You have been very near death this afternoon, little one, and I could ill have spared you."

Milly raised her large dark eyes to his.

"If I had died I should have gone straight up to God, shouldn't I?"

"Yes, you would."

"I should have liked that. I suppose he doesn't want me yet, or he would have sent for me."

When she came down to her uncle that evening she raised a very sad little face to his from the opposite side of the table.

"Uncle Edward, have you heard who Goliath really did kill?"

"Do you mean the tree that came on you? No one else was hurt, I hope?" and Sir Edward's tone was a little anxious.

"She was killed dead—quite dead, and mangled, nurse said. It was the poor little kitten, uncle, that I ran out to fetch."

The brown eyes were swimming with tears, and Milly could not understand the smile that came to Sir Edward's lips.

"Only a kitten. Well, it was sad, I daresay, but there are plenty of kittens about the place."

"But, uncle, I've been thinking so much about this one. Ford says she had run away from the stable. I expect she was going to be a prodigal kitten, perhaps, and now she'll never run away any more. It's so sad about her, and I think why it is sad is because nobody cared, not even nurse. She said she would rather it had been the kitten than me. Poor little kitty, her mother will be missing her so to-night! Do you think, uncle, the wind or Goliath killed her? I think it was Goliath. I just looked out of my window on the stairs before I came down. The wind has stopped now, and the trees seemed to be crying and sobbing together. I'm sure they were sorry for kitty. I think they were tired out themselves, too, they have been so knocked about to-day. I wish so much I had been just in time to save the dear little kitten."

"We will not talk about her any more," said Sir Edward cheerfully. "Have you seen Tom Maxwell lately?"

(To be continued.)