

Your Own.

What if your own were starving,
Fainting with famine pain,
And yet you knew where golden grew
Rich fruit and ripened grain?
Would you hear their wail
As a thrice-told tale,
And turn to your feast again?

What if your own were thirsting
And never a drop could gain,
And you could tell where a sparkling well
Poured forth melodious rain?
Would you turn aside,
While they gasped and died,
And leave them to their pain?

Yet, what else are you doing,
O ye by Christ made free,
If you'll not tell what you know so well
To those across the sea,
Who have never heard
One tender word
Of the Lamb of Calvary;

"They're not our own," you answer,
"They're neither kith nor kin."
They are God's own: his love alone
Can save them from their sin;
They are Christ's own:
He left his throne
And died their souls to win.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, AUGUST 17, 1895.

AN EASTERN TRADITION.

It was a strange time to travel—with a little baby too; but while the midnight stars were shining, they went very quietly out of the town of Bethlehem. They were dressed as if for a journey, and they went on, far from the town, across the hills and down the valleys. Sometimes a shepherd on the hillside in his watchful slumber heard distant footfalls, raised his head, looked around his folded flock; then, as the sound died away, pressed close the lamb in his bosom and slept again. The travellers went on; a patriarch, walking with a pilgrim staff, while he led a sure-footed, willing beast that bore a young and lovely mother, and in her arms a sleeping child.

Can you think who they were?

Through the long night and the gray morning they went on, until the rising sun seemed to paint Judea's far-off hilltops against the sky.

A little morning rest, and they journeyed again. Soon the trees and shrubs seemed stunted, and the grass scorched by the noonday heat, and at every step the coarse fringes of the patriarch's woollen robe trailed in the dry dust of the desert. At evening they had crossed the desert and rested beneath a fir tree, while he unloosed the hachet of his sandals, and took the infant from his mother's arms.

Do you suppose the little dimpled hands patted in baby glee, or was there a sad thoughtfulness on the Child's face at the strange scenes around him?

Another night came, and their path was through a narrow, rocky pass. The mother's young eyes could quickly see any threatening danger. Looking up, she said, "Sire, what are those moving figures on the rocks above?"

He replied, "Only the wild goats that are browsing on the cliffs."

But the mother saw the strange forms coming nearer, and she asked, "Can Herod's cruel bands have reached us here?"

Clasping her Baby close, she murmured, "No! my angel-named Immanuel; robber bands cannot destroy this Holy One, the power of the highest shall overshadow thee." Suddenly a giant form seized the father by his hoary head, and tried to snatch the girdle from his loins.

The patriarch looked poor. What had he for the chief of that robber band? He was clothed in a coarse robe and wore rough sandals; but the perfumed air around told the sweet secret of hidden frankincense and myrrh in that broad belt. Perhaps there might be gold there too!

The father struggled and turned pale at the hold of that strong arm; but suddenly it fell, a soft hand was laid upon it.

"Hast thou a mother?" Ah! that voice! It was the accent of a Nazarene, his boyhood's tongue.

He looked in the clear moonlight he saw a pleading, lovely face, an innocent sleeping Babe in her arms, and on her lips the name of mother.

That word! his heart was frozen long ago in the hard winter of crime, but that word melted the icy depths.

With the air of one used to command, he sent the robbers back to their cavern dens; then reverently bade the pilgrims go safely on their way.

Many years passed by, and brought the time when the powerful Romans conquered all who would not pay tribute to Caesar.

The robber bands were taken, and their chief brought in chains to Jerusalem.

How he raved in his gloomy dungeon—how the chains clanked—every link of them seemed the wretched years of crime that had dragged him to this depth of woe; and when his angry spirit wore out his weary body and he slept, why was it in his dreams he so often saw the one sweet picture in his memory, the Holy Infant in his mother's arms?

The day came, for which all other days were made.

He who was once the sleeping Infant was outstretched upon the cross; beside him on another cross hung the outlaw robber chief. Even as the nails pierced those hands, already dyed in blood and sin, so sorrow and repentance pierced his wretched heart.

He could only turn his eyes to the sinless Mighty One beside him, and the lips that had blasphemed called him "Lord." He prayed; and penitents of earth and saints of heaven have rejoiced over that precious answer, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

LEARN A TRADE.

It has long been customary in the royal family of Prussia to require every boy, when of sufficient age, to learn some useful trade. The late Emperor Frederick learned the trade of a carpenter. Prince Albert is well skilled in the art of book-binding; and his two older sons are learning the trade of stone and brick masons, while the third is to become a carpenter. The reason for this is found in the considerate prudence of the family. While connected with the strongest government in Europe, these Hohenzollerns—this is the family name by descent—recognize that thrones and wealth are uncertain. So great a conqueror and emperor as the first Napoleon may perish in banishment on an obscure island; Louis Philippe may be compelled to flee in disguise, and die neglected in a foreign country; Louis, the third Napoleon, may follow in the same manner, and die in like obscurity; and many another prince or monarch has lost his throne and died in exile. The German princes do not forget history; and they deem it well that every lad born among them shall learn some useful trade, and be prepared to take care of himself by the industry of his own hands if evil emergency should arise.

We commend this example to all young

men and boys. There are thousands who deem it beneath their station to learn a plain trade. Many prefer to seek a way for a living by almost any other method rather than do this. Very many of these same young men, if they possessed knowledge of skilled art, would be able to reach honourable independence, while without such knowledge they must remain all their lives the servants of other men.

"ALL THE GIRLS."

BY LILY SHERMAN RICE.

"All the girls." I hear a great deal about them. "All the girls" are having new tennis suits this season and life is a dreary waste to cousin Bess because she must make her old one do another year. Her sister Helen will feel aggrieved the whole vacation through, if she can't go to California on the teachers' excursion with "all the girls." Even Baby Blue starts off to school in a pout because mamma won't let her carry a pickle to eat at recess, like "all the girls." And so it goes. Always "all the girls" are better off than we!

Of course Helen and Bess and the baby don't intend us to understand them literally when they talk in this way. They're speaking of "all the girls" in their special "set," not of "all the girls" in the neighbourhood or the town, certainly not of "all the girls" in the country, or the hemisphere, or the world. Everybody knows what they mean. The expression is a perfectly common one. I must be very notional, they think, to find any fault with it.

But the commonest expressions are worth studying now and then. If "all the girls"—all my girls—would study this one, they would learn more contentment for themselves and more sympathy for other people, I'm thinking. Let me borrow it to make a few remarks with. They won't be true. But they will all be a great deal nearer the truth than the remarks that Helen and Bess and the rest make every day. Listen then.

All the girls' mothers weep for them when they are born. All the girls are thrown to the crocodiles. All the girls' homes are in huts. All the girls sleep on mud floors. All the girls have blubber and train-oil for breakfast. All the girls dine off cats and rats and mice. All the girls are dressed in skins. All the girls wear one garment day and night and wash it twice a year. All the girls plough in the fields, yoked up with their fathers' cows. All the girls live in dread of famine or of wild beasts. All the girls' brothers spit on them. All the girls' fathers sell them for cattle. All the girls are married at fourteen. All the girls' husbands despise them. All the girls' mothers-in-law beat them. All the girls' children desert them when they grow old or sick. All the girls are in mortal fear of ghosts and bogies and witches and the evil eye and the cruel gods. All the girls mourn because they have no souls.

I said these statements would be truer than those my girls are in the habit of making. If Helen doubts it, let her get down her school geography and meditate on the population tables at the end. What proportion of all the people of the world are in countries where we should choose to live? How would the number of girls that make excursions across continents compare, do you think, with the number that never travel outside the village where they were born, except as they go afoot? Do you suppose that Baby Blue and all the other little girls that pine for pickles carry lunch-baskets enough to feed the children that are actually hungry this very minute? Would all the tennis flannel in the United States cover the children that are cold?

It does not need many of these comparisons to show us where we stand, both as to privilege and responsibility. The truth is, all the girls that have clothes to keep them warm, food three times a day, and a place of their own to work and dress and sleep in, laws to protect them and a friend or two to love them, a chance to learn to read and a Bible to read from—all these girls are princesses of the earth. It becomes princesses, does it not, to be serene and large-hearted and beautiful?—*Well-Spring.*

LETTING MOTHER REST.

ONE of the papers tells of a pretty and talented girl who had completed her school course with credit, and by reason of special accomplishments had received much attention and admiration, and who was asked the other day how she enjoyed her freedom from school life.

"Oh, I'm enjoying it very much," she answered, brightly. "I'm doing the house-work, and letting mother have a little rest."

"Your mother is away then, is she not?" was the natural question.

"Oh, no," was the reply; "she's at home, but I'm giving her a chance to rest in the morning, and to dress up and sit out on the piazza when she feels like it. I think it will do her good to have a little change."



JUNIOR LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

August 25, 1895.

THE DEAR OLD BOOK.—2 Timothy 3. 15.

Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the Holy Scriptures. The Old Testament only is meant, because the New Testament was not written when Timothy was a child or an infant, as Mr. Wesley renders the word which in our version is called "child." The word Scriptures means "writings" which refers to the method used in ancient times to preserve the holy records, which were written on sheets similar to our maps.

We are more highly favoured than Timothy was, inasmuch as we have both the Old and New Testaments. The latter confirms the former. We can examine them together and see how one interprets the other. Happy are those children whose parents teach them to know the Holy Scriptures. Parents who neglect their duty in this respect incur great guilt, and inflict serious injury upon their children. Happily the art of reading is now so well known, and the Bible is so extensively circulated, that all may read for themselves the blessed book which teaches all mankind the way of salvation.

Christ commanded his followers everywhere to "Search the Scriptures." This blessed book is not for a few privileged persons. All can read for themselves and thus become wise unto salvation. Observe, that no matter what men may know about all other branches of knowledge with which it is possible to be acquainted, until they understand the way of salvation, they are without God and without hope in the world. Let all our young friends make themselves familiar with this Book of books, which alone answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

HOW TO TEACH A LESSON TO A JUNIOR LEAGUE.

BY ALICE MAY DOUGLAS.

In teaching a lesson always make the subject of personal salvation the leading theme. You need not always allude to it in so many words, but so construe your remarks and questions that this one great subject may be brought to the minds of your scholars.

In praying for success in teaching the lesson pray that what you say may lead to the conversion of your scholars.

Ask questions until the children begin to give "funny answers" which to them seem witty. At such a time to cease questioning is preferable to taking the precious time to correct the offender. He can be dealt with privately at the close of the meeting, and the other children will know nothing of the affair. Then they will never have a chance to drive him away from the meeting by remarking, as one leader did: "Ho, John, you thought you'd be funny, didn't you? but the teacher got ahead of you. Ha, ha!"

Many of the answers given to a teacher's questions are irreverent. They often flavour of the slang of the day. They should never be allowed, and by stopping the lesson for a few seconds, and by remaining silent, the displeasure of the teacher may be expressed better than by scolding.