

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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The Bird's Song.

I asked a sweet robin, one morning in May,
Who sang in the apple-tree over the way,
What 'twas she was singing so sweetly about,
For I'd tried a long time, but I could not find out,
"Why, I'm sure," she replied, "you cannot guess wrong,
Don't you know I am singing a temperance song?"

"Teetotal—oh! that's the first word of my lay,
And then don't you see how I rattle away?
'Tis because I've just dipped my beak in the spring,
And brushed the fair face of the lake with my wing,
Cold water, cold water; yes, that is my song,
And I love to keep singing it all the day long.

"And now, little girl, won't you give me a crumb
For the dear little nestlings waiting at home?
And one thing besides, since my story you've heard,
I hope you'll remember the lay of the bird,
And never forget, while you list to my song,
All the birds to the cold-water army belong."

THE SOLO.

This pleasant picture represents what is a frequent and delightful incident in our Canadian Methodism—the employment by some fair girl of her voice for the honour and glory of God in leading the devotions of the congregation. Leading the devotions, we say; for singing in the house of God should always be of a devotional character—never for mere aesthetic display, much less for the display of personal vanity. Very often the Gospel can be sung into the heart of the people when it cannot be preached into their hearts. Those who heard Mrs. Kress's exquisite singing in the Metropolitan church will know what we mean. We shall never forget the way in which we heard the passage, "I will wash my hands in innocence," sung in Cobourg thirty years ago; and the exquisite pathos with which a lady sang,

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er,"

haunts our memory still. Let our young friends employ their precious gift of song in thus giving wings to the Gospel, and it may be that they shall find the blessed results in eternity.

PLAIN TALKS TO BIG BOYS.

BY ARCHER BROWN.

When it comes, it comes to stay. Men rarely ever abandon it after the twenty-first year. Therefore take it for life, or quit it short. If you commence it, count that your final decision. But before de-

clining to make tobacco your lifelong companion, consider well some points:

First, its advantages. A pipe or cigar or quid has narcotic effects that are counted pleasant. When the appetite is formed it is grateful to satisfy it. There are features of comradeship about smoking particularly. It is thought that a story can be better told and enjoyed in the blue haze of a smoking-room on the train or steamer than in pure air or sunshine. It is a solace for the Irish labourer breaking stone or working in the trench, and for the lonely cowboy on the Western plains. Men in highly

because some other fellow invites it, and then admit, as many a friend of mine has done, that we are caught in a trap of unbreakable habit.

If reason and will and manhood are going to have anything to do with deciding the matter, there are some things that must be thought of. They are the disadvantages. All admit that the habit, once formed, is a master. What kind of a master is it?

It is an unclean master. A clean mouth, sweet breath, untainted clothes, apartments free from stale odour are hard things for an habitual smoker to

ever, have been strong enough to give it up.

It is an almost immoral master. Not in itself a necessary evil, it nevertheless promotes certain associations and leads in certain directions as to other habits which are unhealthy to the moral nature. Do you know a liquor soaker who is not fond of tobacco? Did you ever see a barroom or prize-fighting or gambling crowd or rough gang of any kind that was not smoking and chowing? To paraphrase a famous remark of Horace Greely: "All tobacco users are not horse thieves, but all horse thieves are tobacco users." A lad who has learned to handle a cigar with grace has made a first-class start on a road that has more than one bad stopping place. If you think that is not so, let me ask you whether, if you were an employer and wanted a young man for a position of trust and growth, you would select the one with a cigar in his mouth, or the one who had decided not to use it?

It is a hard master. It is more masterful than your judgment and will combined. The old fable, "I can stop any time I want to," is disproved by the earnest attempts of many a strong man you and I know.

It is a costly master. Two seven-cent cigars a day only will in thirty years cost \$4,269, compounding annually at six per cent. I have the figures of the calculation before me. Most smokers spend twice that on themselves and friends. What would the sum named buy?

A good home.
A superb private library.
Four journeys around the world.
Capital sufficient to start a business.
A college education for two or three men.
Five years' support in case of disability.
The self-respect and ambition of a moneyed man.

There are two kinds of money I would never spend on tobacco: first, the money I may have earned myself by hard work, and need for self-improvement, a start in life, or help of others, and, second, that which my father has earned by work and self-denial, and gives to me.

—Christian Advocate.

LACE MAKING.

A good lace maker in England gains a shilling (twenty-four cents) a day and his dinner, working ten hours steadily. In Belgium the girls work an hour longer, and their average receipts are five francs (one dollar) a week and board. But it is an unhealthy and uncertain industry, subject to great vicissitudes, dependent on the fickleness of fashion, exacting in its demands, and making such requisitions often upon the nervous system and the eyes as to invite both paralysis and blindness. In olden times it often suffered from summary laws, made almost invariably on account of the jealousy of the high born.

Few love to hear the sins they 'o'e oact.



THE SOLO.

nervous employments, like night workers on newspapers, crave the stimulant and seldom go without it. It is not in the catalogue of admitted vices. Many excellent men smoke, some good men chew, and I have known truly pious and godly men who could befoul a street car or bespatter a carpet with a misdirected shot at an inconvenient spittoon. In some countries smoking is practically universal, even the women joining. In this country a majority use tobacco in some form. So we are dealing, not with an abstract question, but one very near to the life of every boy growing into manhood.

I say, if it's a good thing, let us go into it. If analysis shows it to be a bad thing, let us keep out of it. Anyhow, let us not drop into it by accident, or

manage. This point needs no elaboration. But if a proof is wanted, I only ask a glance at the floor of the smokers' side of a ferry or the smoking car of a train, and a sniff of the atmosphere after a few minutes of the crowd's unrestrained enjoyment of the weed, and—what is quite as significant—a note of the contrast in appearance between the men who crowd these places, and those who seek cleaner floors and purer air.

It is an unhealthy master. It corrupts the sense of taste, injures the stomach, deadens the sensibilities, causes cancers and heart troubles. I can count half a dozen personal friends at this moment who know, on physicians' authority, that further continuance of smoking means shortened days, perhaps sudden death. Only one or two, how-