

placed upon it by experts is \$1,500,000—although it may be doubted if any one could buy it for twice that amount. It is kept in a great iron cage, along with the other crown jewels, in the Tower of London, which is at all times strongly guarded, as well it may be, for with the rest of the precious stones and crowns and other valuables comprising the regalia, the contents of the cage are estimated as being worth £3,000,000 or \$15,000,000.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, MAY 20, 1893.

WHAT IS SAID OF "ONWARD."

"We have been taking *Onward* nearly ever since it started and want to say we have been delighted with it. We have only a small school yet, we take twenty numbers. The scholars vote for *Onward* every time; for myself I don't think I can say enough in its favour.

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THE QUEEN'S TENDERNESS.

There is so much of forgetfulness of the rights of inferiors and servants, on the part of the "privileged classes" generally, that we always feel pleased and refreshed to read the stories which are told of Victoria's good heart and kind consideration. Grace Greenwood relates the following:

When I was in England I heard several pleasant anecdotes of the queen and her family from a lady who had received them from her friend, the governess of the royal children. The governess, a very interesting young lady, was the orphan daughter of a Scottish clergyman. During the first year of her residence at Windsor, her mother died. When she first received the news of her mother's serious illness, she applied to the queen to be allowed to resign her situation, feeling that to her mother she owed a more sacred duty than to her sovereign.

The queen, who had been much pleased with her, would not hear of her making this sacrifice, but said in a tone of most gentle sympathy: "Go at once to your mother, child; stay with her as long as she needs you, and then come back to us. Prince Albert and I will hear the children's lessons; so, in any event, let your mind be at rest in regard to your pupils." The governess went and had several weeks' sweet, mournful communion with her dying mother. Then when she had seen that dear form laid to sleep under the daisies in the

old kirkyard, she returned to the palace, where the loneliness of the royal grandeur would have oppressed her sorrowing heart beyond endurance had it not been for the gracious womanly sympathy of the queen—who came every day to her school-room—and the considerate kindness of her young pupils.

A year went by, the anniversary of her great loss dawned upon her, and she was overwhelmed as never before by the utter loneliness of her grief. She felt that no one in all the great household knew how much goodness and sweetness passed out of mortal life, that day a year ago, or could give one tear, one thought, to that grave under the Scottish daisies.

Every morning before breakfast, which the elder children took with their father and mother in their pleasant crimson parlour, looking out on the terrace at Windsor, her pupils came to the school-room for a brief religious exercise. This morning the voice of the governess trembled in reading the Scriptures of the day. Some words of divine tenderness were too much for her poor, lonely, grieving heart—her strength gave way, and laying her head on the desk before her, she burst into tears, murmuring, "O, mother, mother!"

One after another, the children stole out of the room, and went to their mother to tell her how sadly the governess was feeling; and that kind-hearted monarch, exclaiming, "Oh, poor girl, it is the anniversary of her mother's death," she hurried to the school-room, where she found Miss—struggling to regain composure. "My poor child," she said, "I am sorry the children disturbed you this morning. I meant to have given orders that you should have this day entirely to yourself. Take it as a sad, sacred holiday—I will hear the lessons of the children." And then she added, "To show you that I have not forgotten this mournful anniversary, I bring you this gift," clasping on her arm a beautiful mourning bracelet, with a lock of her mother's hair, marked with the date of her mother's death. What wonder that the orphan kissed with tears this gift, and the more than royal hand that bestowed it?

MRS. RICKS AND THE QUEEN.

"Aunt Martha" Ricks, an old coloured woman from Liberia, called on Queen Victoria one day last summer in her royal palace at Windsor. That gracious lady treated "Aunt Martha" as if she had been a duchess. Mrs. Ricks has told an English reporter the story of her visit:

"It is just a week," said Aunt Martha, "only just one week since I arrived. And I have seen her and her house and her country. I cannot quite believe yet that it is all true. But it is true, and now I do not care how soon the Lord shall call me home. I am ready any day.

"We went down on the train on Saturday afternoon. The Liberian minister, Dr. Blyden, and some other friends went with us. At Windsor two carriages met us at the station and at four o'clock Queen Victoria came and saw me. It was in a golden room; everything was so beautiful, and there were pictures of all the kings and queens, and I did not know where to look to see it all. I never heard Queen Victoria come in, but all at once they told me she was there, and they were all coming towards us. I cannot tell you what Queen Victoria said to me, she speaks so softly; but she smiled, and her voice was sweet, and she shook hands with me, only with me. They had told me she never shook hands with people; no queens did; she never shakes hands with Dr. Blyden, though he is the Liberian minister; but Queen Victoria really shook hands with me."

"Who was with the Queen, Mrs. Ricks? Did I hear Mrs. Roberts say that the Prince of Wales was with her?"

"Who—the young man? Yes, he was there. I don't know which of the three gentlemen he was, but they all looked very pleased, and smiled. But I saw the whole royal family; seven, I think there were—the Queen Victoria and the whole royal family; every one of them.

"And Queen Victoria looked just as I had always thought she would look, only a little older. She stoops and I don't stoop, though I am older than she. I am seventy-six. But she has had troubles, great troubles; as wonder her shoulders are

best. She did not stay long in the golden room; when I could think again they had all gone, and I forgot what she said; but I shall never forget how she smiled, and how she shook hands with me. After that we were taken all over Queen Victoria's house. O, the beautiful, beautiful things of which it was full! And we had dinner in a lovely room, and we saw her chapel and the place where she sits when she goes to meeting. The chapel will last forever; it looks as if it were built to last always, always. We went right to the top of Queen Victoria's house; she allowed me to see everything; and then we were driven back to the station."

"And you brought the queen a beautiful present, did you not, Mrs. Ricks?"

"At home when a poor man comes to visit us on our farm, he never comes without some little present. How could I come to Queen Victoria and bring her no present? I made it all myself, every stitch of it. It was a quilt nine feet square, of white satin. And on it I had embroidered a coffee tree, in green satin, with branches and leaves, and with the berries, some red and some green, and there was a man gathering the coffee, and a border of passion flowers. Yes, I cut the tree out and made everything myself, to take as a present to Queen Victoria. I took it to Windsor last Saturday, and one of the royal family, a gentleman, said he would deliver it. Was it much work? Not too much; and I was happy making it."

"And had you really all these years meant to come to England for the purpose of seeing our queen?"

"Yes, all these years. I had heard it often, from the time when I was a child, how good the queen and the English kings, her relations, had been to my people, to slaves and blacks; how they wanted us to be free, as white people are; and how they worked for us and tried to free us. I was born a slave in America, but my father bought himself and my mother and his children off, and we went all back to Africa when I was a child; therefore I have never felt the hardships of slavery. But I have known others who have, and I know what it means. My husband, who has now been dead six or seven years, often laughed and said, 'Well, when are you off to England to see the Queen Victoria?' and others said the same, and laughed at me. I could not afford it then; but I was saving all the time, and at last I had enough. They would not believe it, that I really was going, all alone, and said, 'Aunt Martha, surely you are not going to England?' But I did mean to go, and started off alone. It happened that some friends were going, but I did not know that when I went. We came straight to England; but my friends got off in another town—France, I think, they call it—and I came on to England alone by the steamer. I meant to stay till October, but it will be too cold. It is not very cold now, as long as the wind does not blow. But when the wind blows it is as if I were being shot with a ball. So I must go home sooner. And why should I not go? What I have looked forward to almost all my life has now come true; now I am ready. I shall work on my farm as long as I can, and when my call comes to go, then there is nothing to keep me. The sooner it comes the better. All my friends are gone; I have only two stepsons, and those help me on the farm. And I have seen the Queen Victoria."

Was not that a gracious act for the Queen of England to do for that poor old colored woman?

GRANDMOTHER'S ADVICE.

I WANT to give you two or three rules. One is—

Always look at the person you speak to. When you are addressed, look straight at the person who speaks to you. Do not forget this.

Another is—
 Speak your words plainly. Do not mutter or mumble. If words are worth saying, they are worth pronouncing distinctly and clearly.

A third is—
 Do not say disagreeable things. If you have nothing pleasant to say, keep silent.

A fourth is—and O, children, remember it all your lives—
 Think three times before you speak once! Have you something to do that you find

hard and would prefer not to? Then listen to a wise old grandmother. Do the hard thing first, and get it over with. If you have done wrong, go and confess it. If your lesson is tough, master it. If the garden is to be weeded, weed it first and play afterward. Do the thing you don't like to do first, and then with a clear conscience, try the rest.

The Song of the Camp.

"Give us a song!" the soldier cried,
 The outer trenches guarding,
 When the heated guns of the camp allied
 Grew weary of the bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,
 Lay grim and threatening under;
 And the tawny mould of the Malakoff
 No longer belched its thunder.

There was a pause. A Guardsman said,
 "We storm the forts to-morrow;
 Sing while we may—another day
 Will bring enough of sorrow."

They lay along the battery's side,
 Below the smoking cannon;
 Brave hearts from Severn and from Clyde
 And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love and not of fame,
 Forgot was Britain's glory:
 Each heart recalled a different name,
 But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,
 Until its tender passion
 Rose like an anthem, rich and strong—
 Their battle-eve confession.

Dear girl! her name he dared not speak,
 But as the song grew louder,
 Something upon the soldier's cheek
 Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned
 The bloody sunset's embers,
 While the Crimean valleys learned
 How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell
 Rained on the Russian quarters,
 With scream of shot and burst of shell,
 And bellowing of the mortars!

And Irish Norah's eyes are dim
 For a singer dumb and gory;
 And English Mary mourns for him
 Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

Sleep, soldiers! still in honoured rest
 Your truth and valour wearing;
 The bravest are the tenderest,
 The loving are the daring.

A Modern Prodigal

BY

Mrs. Julia McNair Wright

Author of "The Captain's Bargain," "Dagmar's Son," "The Story of Rosamund," "A Made Man," etc.

CHAPTER II.

FRIEND AMOS LOWELL.

ACHILLES, fleet of foot, passed through more than one mental change in that short run from the barn to the house. The cubus which had weighed on his life was gone. He drew the deep breath of freedom; hope and ambition took possession of him. On him now rested the care of the family; how much he would do for them! Wrath and satisfied vengeance against his father gave way to tender devotion to his mother. And now his mother in an agony of weeping! Not that Achilles had never seen her weeping before, tears rather than smiles had been Stanhope's portion since her children knew her.

Achilles could not realize how hard it was for middle age and long disappointment to react toward hope. He knew nothing of that wealth of woman's love, faithful to death. He had vaguely expected to find his mother, like himself, rebounding from fear, and already arising to remove from household. The six weeks since his arrest had been weeks of penury, of storm, of scanty comfort, but they had been weeks of domestic peace. Achilles had spent them largely in planning what