

PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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GIVING THE FLOWERS A DRINK.

Did you know that flowers grow thirsty? Sometimes, when they have had no water for some time they will turn up their little leaves toward the sky as if begging for a drink. Over the network of each leaf is a covering that we may call its skin. Then under this the leaf is full of little cells which are as closely joined together as those of the bee's honey-comb. These leaf-cells are filled with a sort of soft jelly, which contains among other things the matter which gives the leaf its green colour. Each leaf is also provided with a number of tiny pores. Through these pores, which are really so many little mouths, it drinks that part of the water which it requires for its nourishment.

Every plant does its digesting in its leaves, which are, therefore, like so many little stomachs. The dear old lady we see in our picture knows how important it is for her plants that they should not get their little mouths filled up with dust, or have to wait too long for a drink, so she is holding them out in the rain even at the risk of getting wet herself. She looks very pleased to see the rain come pouring down, for she knows how refreshed her flowers will feel after they have had a good drink. Plants very much prefer rain water to hard or well water.

NEGLECTED TREASURE.

A TRAVELLER one day called at a cottage to ask for a draught of water. Entering, he found the parents cursing and quarrelling, the children trembling, crouched in a corner; and wherever he looked he saw only marks of degradation and poverty. Greeting the inmates, he asked them:

"Dear friends, why do you make your home so wretched?"

"Ah, sir," said the man, "you don't know the life and trials of a poor man, when, do what you can, everything goes wrong."

The stranger drank the water, and then said softly (as he noticed in a dark and dusty corner a Bible), "Dear friends, I know what would help you, if you could find it. There is a treasure concealed in your house. Search for it."

And so he left them.

At first the cottagers thought it a jest, but after a while they began to reflect. When the woman went out, therefore, to gather sticks, the man began to search, and even to dig that he might find the treasure.

When the man was away, the woman did the same. Still they found nothing;—increasing poverty brought only more quarrels, discontent and strife.

One day, as the woman was left alone, she was thinking upon the stranger's words, when her eye fell on the old Bible. It had been a gift from her mother, but since her death had been long unheeded and unused.

A strange foreboding seized her mind. Could it be this the stranger meant? She took it from the shelf, opened it, and found the verse inscribed on the title-page, in her mother's handwriting. "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." It cut her to the heart.

"Ah!" thought she, "this is the treasure, then, we have been seeking." How her tears fell fast upon the leaves!

From that time she read the Bible every day, and prayed, and taught the children to pray, but without her husband's knowledge. One day he came home, as usual quarrelling, and in a rage. Instead of meeting his angry words with angry replies, she spoke to him kindly.

"Husband," said she, "we have sinned grievously. We have ourselves to blame for all our misery, and we must now lead a different life." He looked amazed. "What dost thou say?" was his exclamation. She brought the old Bible, and sobbing cried,

"There is the treasure. See, I have found it!"

The husband's heart was moved. She read to him of the Lord Jesus, and of his love. Next day she read, and again and again, she sat with her children round her, thoughtful and attentive.

and close bushes. It has a straight, glancing flight, and as it shoots swiftly along the water, affords a brilliant sight. It is usually seen perched on a small bough overhanging the stream, from whence it darts upon the small fish that form its food. Upon capturing its prey, it carries it to land, and, after beating it to death upon a stone, swallows it whole.

I HAVE heard sermons on the responsibilities of mothers that made me tremble. While we accept our responsibilities, we say to fathers: You are not doing your duty to your children when you go to the polls and vote for men who legalize the liquor traffic. You cannot expect us to keep them pure, when by your votes you open the doors of temptation to them.



GIVING THE FLOWERS A DRINK.

Some time went on. It was after a year that the stranger returned that way. Seeing the cottage, he remembered the circumstances of his visit, and thought he would call and see his old friends again. He did so, but he would scarcely have known the place; it was so clean, so neat, so well ordered. He opened the door, and at first thought he was mistaken, for the inmates came to meet him so kindly, with the peace of God beaming upon their faces. "How are you, my good people?" said he. Then they knew the stranger, and for some time they could not speak. "Thanks, thanks, dear sir; we have found your treasure. Now dwells the blessing of God in our house—his peace in our hearts!"

So said they, and their entire condition, and the happy faces of their children declared the same more plainly.

THE KINGFISHER.

THIS bird, in the brilliant marking of its plumage, excels most others, though it cannot be called handsome, its bill and head being very large in proportion to the other parts of its body. The top of the head and back of the neck are dark green, flecked with spots of blue upon the tips of the feathers. The lower part of the body is light violet or blue, gleaming vividly under a strong light, and clearly showing as the bird is flying. A white patch or streak passes from the eye to the back of the neck, and a dark green streak is drawn immediately under the white patch. The throat and chin are white, the bill black, and the eyes crimson.

It stays by the banks of clear rivers and brooks, preferring those that flow slowly and whose beds are fringed with willows