

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. I.

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No. 3.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

I.—THE PLANTING.

WAS a dull little room in a dark English town.

And no one to speak of was there,
 At ten ragged boys on a bench sitting down,
 And a motherly woman so fair,
 The background a solid and kind-hearted man.

Whose face tells the pleasure he takes
 In this, the first Sunday-school, leading the van
 Of the army whose marshal is RAIKES.
 Is not much they're doing; just learning to spell.

And slowly a promise to con-
 In an hour or two kept out of mischief, well,
 Is there ought here to set upon?
 No boys they are ragged, and vicious, and small.

And the room it is meagre and plain,
 And the name of the teacher is hid from us all,
 In God's book we'll see them again;
 For the seed of that planting was potent in love.

Was watered and tended for garner above.

II.—THE FULL CORN IN THE EAR.

The years of a century quickly have sped,
 Since that memorable opening day,
 The scholars who followed, and teachers who led.

From earth have long passed away,
 Yet all over Christendom, each Sabbath day,
 When the bells the blessed hour chime,
 They gather by millions to study God's way.

These children of fortunate time
 Far out in the desert, in many a tongue,
 In Europe and Asia the same,
 The lessons are studied and praise songs are sung.

And often they mention the name
 Of that kind-hearted Englishman, prophet of God,

Whose magic example awakes
 These echoes and praises. Under the sod
 Is the body of good ROBERT RAIKES—
 His soul is with God, and sees from the skies
 His wonderful harvest with blessed surprise.

W. S. B. M.

REQUIRED READING, S.S.R.U.

(Sunday School Reading Union.)

STORIES OF EARLY METHODISTS.

CHARLES WESLEY, THE FIRST "METHODIST."

CHARLES WESLEY, a younger brother of John, was sent to Westminster High School, where his brother Samuel was one of the younger assistant teachers, and who paid his younger brother's course of study. Little

Charles was a spirited lad, well-knit, active, and afraid of nothing, which qualities not only made him a favorite for boys who are always hero-worshippers—but gained him the title of "Captain of the school." His leadership, however, was of a different sort from that which would have led him to rob his superiors, cringe to his superiors, and fight his equals; he had a heroic spirit, and was as generous as he was brave.

Dr. Smith mentions a case in point. "There was a Scotch laddie at school, whose ancestors had taken sides with the Pretender, as the papist claimant to the throne was called, and who, in consequence, was greatly persecuted by the other boys: but the little 'Captain,' Charles Wesley, took him under his charge, defended him, fought for him, and saved him from what would otherwise have been a life of intolerable misery. This lad was James Murray,

question was submitted to the young man himself, whether to go to Ireland as the adopted son of Garret Wesley, or to stay in England and take his chances as the son of a poor clergyman, he made choice of the latter, a decision which his brother John called a "fair escape," and another boy became the heir of the Irish Wesley's name and fortune.

Charles Wesley followed his brother John to Christ Church College, Oxford,

somebody's prayers, (my mother's, most likely,) that I am come to think as I do, for I cannot tell how or when I awoke out of my lethargy, only it was not long after you went away."

Charles' piety first showed itself in honest, hard work with his books, then in attendance upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper every week; and being now desirous of doing something more by way of working out his own salvation, he persuaded two or three of his young friends to join him in a systematic effort to obtain a state of absolute holiness. They adopted a system of rules for a holy living, apportioned their time exactly among their various duties, allowing as little as possible for sleeping and eating, and as much as possible for devotion.

It was this regularity of life that earned them the name of "Methodists," a term derived from a Greek word which signifies "One who follows an exact method."

John Wesley afterward defined the word "Methodist" as "One who lives according to the method laid down in the Holy Scriptures."

It thus appears that the "Holy Club" was organized by Charles Wesley, while his elder brother was absent at Epworth, but when John returned to Oxford, Charles and his two friends, Kirkham and Morgan, received him with great delight, and by reason of his superior age and acquirements, he at once became the head of the little fraternity.—*Illustrated History of Methodism.*

LABOURS OF THE HOLY CLUB.

Mr. Morgan, the son of a gentleman in Wales, was of a benevolent disposition, and led the way in many charitable undertakings. Pity led him to Oxford Castle, as the jail was then called, to visit a man who was under sentence of death for murdering his wife.

On his return he tried to enlist his companions in prison visitation, and after a little hesitation this was added to their duties.

In those days the laws were unreasonably harsh upon debtors. However small the debt, it was in the creditor's power to cast a poor man into prison, and keep him there until the debt was paid. In many cases it was impossible for him to raise the money while kept away from his business; and for weeks, months, or even years, he might languish in poverty and despair. To these unhappy men the visits of kind, godly sympathizers were peculiarly welcome.

Many of the debtors were freed by the kindness of the "Methodists," who, by lending money without interest, or



A DOUBLE-DECKER MEETING HOUSE.—(See next page.) H 43

afterward the great Baron Mansfield, Lord Chief-Justice of England.

While Charles was a pupil at Westminster, a wealthy Irish gentleman, Garret Wesley, Esq., wrote to the Rev. Samuel Wesley inquiring if he had a son named Charles: giving out that he wished to adopt a boy of that name.

The result was that for some years the school bills of the lad were paid on the stranger's account by his supposed agent at London, but when the

six years after. He is said to have spent the first two years in anything else except study. When reproved by his elder brother for his folly he would reply, "What! would you have me to be a saint all at once!" But soon after John had gone down to Epworth to assist his father, Charles became deeply serious. In a letter to his brother, asking such advice as he had so lately scouted, he says:

"It is owing in a great measure to