

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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BY E. S. ORR.

To smoky London's millions,
Auld Reekie, or Belfast,
Where women ride on pillions,
And jaunting cars go past;
To Welshmen's rocky quarry,
To every Highland glen,
A two-cent stamp will carry
The product of your pen.

By India's ancient river,
And Afric's burning sand,
The postman will deliver
The message from your hand.
Two cents on any letter,
Half-ounce—you understand—
You could not wish for better
Than Mulock now has planned.

To every fishing station
On bleak Newfoundland's coast,
A kindly salutation
For two cents goes by post.
Orange or cane plantation,
On rich Jamaica's plains,
By this new proclamation
The same great boon obtains.

Oh! would that wheresoever
Great Britain's flag's unfurled,
The same rate might deliver,
Our letters through the world.
May Canada's young nation,
Favoured by heaven's Lord,
Send men of every station
The pen—but not the sword.

WHATEVER YOU UNDERTAKE, ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.

"When I was quite a lad," said a wealthy and distinguished merchant, to one asking the secret of his success in life, "I went to pay a visit to my grandfather, a venerable man, whose velvet cap, blue coat, and huge silver knee-buckles filled me with awe.

"On my bidding him good-bye, he drew me gently to him, and, placing his hand on my head, said: 'My little grandson, I have one thing to say to you; will you try to remember it?' I looked into his face and nodded; for I was afraid to promise aloud. 'I want to give you a piece of advice,' he continued, 'which, if you follow it, will prove a sure passport to success. It is this: In whatever you undertake, always do your best.'

"This was my grandfather's only legacy to me, but it has proved far better than silver and gold. I have never forgotten those words, and I believe I have tried to act upon them. After reaching home, my uncle gave my cousin, Marcus, and myself some weeding to do in the garden. It was in the afternoon, and we had laid our plans for something else. Of course we were disappointed.

"Marcus was so ill-humoured that he performed his part of the work very carelessly, and I began mine in the same manner. Suddenly, however, the advice of my grandfather was recalled to my mind, and I resolved to follow it. Indeed, I 'did my best.'

"When my uncle came out to oversee our work, I noticed his look of approbation as his eye glanced over the flower-beds I had weeded; and I shall never forget his kind and encouraging smile, as he remarked that my work was well done. Oh! I was a glad and thankful boy; while poor Marcus was left to drudge alone over his beds all the afternoon. How much easier he would have found it to do his work well at first!

"At fifteen, I was sent to the academy, where I had partly to support myself through the term. The lessons were hard at first, for I was not fond of study; but my grandfather's advice was my constant motto, and I tried to do my best. As a consequence of this, I soon succeeded in obtaining the good opinion of my teachers, and was looked upon as a faithful, painstaking student.

"My character, too, became known beyond the academy; and, though I was but a small boy for my age, and not very strong, my mother had three or four places offered for me before the year was

out,—one from the best merchant in the village, in whose store a situation as clerk was considered very desirable. The latter offer was a great surprise to me, but it was a result of the reputation I had won.

"The habit I had formed of faithfully doing my best, in whatever I had to do, proved very valuable; and, although I did not possess unusual talents, I found difficulties vanish before me. I gained the confidence of those with whom I had dealings; and, in short, prosperity has, with the blessing of God, crowned my efforts. My only secret of success has been my grandfather's legacy—Always do your best."

Speaking of blocks of ice, Harper's Round Table tells how the Russian boy makes a good sled from it:

"He saws out a block that is longer than it is thick, and about high enough for a comfortable seat. Then he scoops out a hollow like a saddle a little back of the middle of the upper surface and upholsters it with straw or rags. It is then ready for its first trip down hill, and if the rider is skilful he will make very good time on it.

"But carrying it back to the top of the incline would be too hard work for even a Russian boy, and pushing it up hill would be about as bad. A clever lad once thought of a better way, and all

is necessary to make one—it will last all winter. Imagine him freezing a new set of runners on when the old ones have worn out!"

HISTORY FROM A TREE.

In an English museum there is a section of polished Douglas pine large enough, say, to make a round table to seat a dozen persons. Instead of making it an object-lesson in botany, the museum authorities have ingeniously chosen it as a medium for the teaching of history. The tree was cut down in 1885, and as the age of a tree can be inferred from the number of rings which its cross-section discloses this one must have been five hundred and thirty-three years old. In other words, it was born in 1352, and it lived through the most interesting part of English history—from Edward the Third to Victoria.

It is therefore a simple matter to mark different rings with their dates and the names of the events that were happening while they were being born. This is what has been done—from the centre of the tree in two directions, right away to the bark. The markings, which are neatly executed in white paint, reveal some interesting facts. Thus, when the pine was four years old, the battle of Poitiers was fought, in 1356; when it was twenty-five Edward the Third died. It was one hundred and nineteen when Caxton introduced printing, and when Columbus discovered America it was one hundred and forty. When Shakespeare was born two hundred and twelve rings had already made their appearance; when Raleigh settled Virginia, two hundred and forty. Fifty years later Sir Isaac Newton was born. When the great fire of London was raging this venerable specimen could boast three hundred and fourteen rings, and eighty more when the battle of Culloden was fought.

It had reached the remarkable age of four hundred and twenty-four when American independence was declared, and the yet more remarkable age of four hundred and eighty-five when Queen Victoria ascended the throne. And even then it had a long time yet to live, when the axe of the woodman cut short its days.

HER WISE IDEA.

One of Boston's bright school-teachers had a boy come into her class from the next lower grade who had the worst reputation of any boy in school. His behaviour, says the Boston Herald, was so tricky and disobedient that he had always been put into a seat directly in front of the teacher's desk, where he could conveniently be watched. His reputation had preceded him, but the new teacher had her own ideas as to how recalcitrant boys should be treated. On the very first day she said: "Now, Thomas, they tell me you are a bad boy, and need to be watched. I don't believe it. I like your looks, and I am going to trust you. Your seat will be at the back of the room, end seat, the fourth row from the wall."

That was all she said. Thomas went to his seat dumbfounded. He had never in his life been put upon his honour before, and the new experience overcame him. From the very first he proved one of the best and most industrious pupils in the school; and not long ago his teacher gave him a good-conduct prize of a jack-knife.

One day she was going down one of the streets not far from the school, when suddenly she noticed Thomas among a small crowd of street gamins. He saw her, too, and immediately took off his hat, and called out, his face beaming with a glad grin. "Hello, Miss E— Nice day."

The other boys laughed at him, but he silenced them by saying:

"Well, she's the best friend I ever had, and I'm going to take my hat off every time I see her."

The man who can say "yes" and "no" at the right time has the greatest command of language.



WINTER IN RUSSIA.

RUSSIAN WINTER.

The great country of Russia has many varieties of climate, it extends over so many degrees of latitude, but our first thought when its name is mentioned is of long and extreme cold. The people have to live and to dress as the long severe winters force them to, and in their journeys, made mostly by sleds and sledges, they must suffer greatly. Some one has described a gentleman's home in Siberia as a little house thatched with deerskin. In winter, in such a dwelling, blocks of ice are substituted for windows, and there is never warm enough weather all winter to melt them.

other boys have copied him ever since. He found a good rye straw and began blowing through it at the front of the block with the end of the straw close to the ice. Soon he had a little hole in the block, as neatly drilled as a steel tool could have done it. In the course of an hour and a half he had driven a hole slantwise through the ice, coming out at the top just in front of the saddle. A stout string passed through the hole and knotted completed his sled, which could then be drawn up hill almost as easily as the best coaster that ever was made. If a boy is careful of his ice sled—and he is apt to be careful, for considerable work