

of his subjects. From national assemblies, which he required the clergy as well as others to attend, to canals, roads, and bridges, he showed an ever wise activity. How much the religion of Christ entered his heart may, as in many a modern instance, be only vaguely surmised, but he zealously encouraged the spread of Christianity, according to his view of it, and lent an influence to the church that helped to subdue the savagery of the period.

Alfred of England certainly presented a far more lovable and exalted Christian character, and yet we cannot but feel a glad glow of strength in Charlemagne and his work. God gave him for forty-six years to uplift the Dark Ages out of much brutality and ignorance, and he was no trifle in his day and generation. Vallantly he put forth his energies to serve his people, and claims in this not only admiration, but a following. Let each as God has given capacity, work in the large or small place assigned, remembering that the Lord of lords and King of kings came to serve and to save the world. If we would follow him, we must be energetic to help the sorrowing and the suffering and every human being as we can.—S. S. Visitor.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 24, 1896.

SUNSHINE.

BY REV. SAMUEL GREGORY.

"A pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."

If you look straight at the sun it is not pleasant for your eyes, for the dazzle of its light pains and blinds you. Astronomers have proper instruments for beholding the sun, and the instruments are so wonderful that they carry the observers (as it were) near enough to look at it, as you might stand and look at a burning mountain. Men who so look at the sun tell us that it is a great and awful furnace. It sends out vast tongues of flame, which flash and flicker in all directions—and these flames are many thousands of miles high. How hot it must be we can imagine by remembering that we are ninety-five millions of miles from it, and yet in some parts of our world the heat is almost too great to be borne. The thought of all this makes us feel how wonderful that great sun must be, by whose heat and light all things live.

PERSIAN SUN WORSHIPPERS.

The ancient Persians worshipped the sun. They rose early, and as the sun rose and sent his morning beams across the sky, they bowed as if to a god. For glorious as the sun is here, his splendour is greater in Eastern lands. People who have seen it, describe sunrise in the solemn, silent Egyptian deserts, as the most impressive of all things. A traveller once told me that he watched the sun set on Mount Sinai, and he said it seemed to make the world like one great red rose. The sunshine which lit up Bible lands was fairer than that which falls on English fields and gardens. But even as we see it, it is a thing of joy. The birds sing as if in its praise, and the flowers turn their cups as if to fill them with its brightness. It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun.

ARCTIC WINTER.

In Arctic regions there are in the year six months of continuous darkness. The effect of the darkness is as hard to endure as the effect of the intense cold. Our British sailors, who go there for exploration, pine for the sight of the sun. The sledge-dogs whine in the darkness, and the misery of it often makes them go mad. When an expedition starts for the far north, all sorts of things, as musical instruments and the like, are taken to help to keep up the spirits of the men, during those months when there is no sunshine. Where there is no sunshine there is unbearable gloom—the sun is the brightness of the world.

BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN.

That is why we, when we speak of happiness, compare it with sunshine. We say that people have sunny faces, and sunny smiles, and sunny tempers, and sunny lives.

And we speak of our Lord Jesus Christ as being like the sun, because out of him comes all the brightness that is in our hearts. When he came into this world people said: "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us!" His coming was like the rising of the sun on a desert. His words were bright as sunbeams. It is said that people wondered at the "gracious" words that proceeded out of his mouth. That is, his words were kind and sweet, as sunshine is to our faces. It was like taking sick folks out into the bright summer noon, when they were taken to hear him speak of the love of God. To listen to his parables and sayings was like watching the loveliness of sunshine on the fields. The religion of Jesus brings brightness into the lives of all who love him.

THE BIRD IN THE SNOWSTORM.

There is a story which you have read in English History, which tells us how the bright light of Christ's words came to this country. The people were heathens, and worshipped false gods. As you travel to Eastbourne, and look out of the railway carriage window, you will see, on the face of a hill, the outline of a giant figure, where the earth is bared down to the white chalk rock, they call this enormous figure "The Wilmington Giant." In reality it is a figure to represent one of the gods which were worshipped in England, and the outline which covers that hillside was cut in the chalk long before any one in this land had learned the name of Jesus. At last some missionaries came. King Edwin called his chiefs together, heard the story of Jesus, and said: "Shall we receive this new teaching?" Then one of the chiefs said: "Call to mind, O king, what sometimes happens in winter weather, when you are sitting at the table with your chiefs. The fire is blazing, and all within the hall is warm and bright, while outside it is storm, and snow, and darkness. Then a little bird comes into the hall through the doorway, flutters through the warmth and light, and flies out again at the other side. The little bird has vanished into the darkness. And such is man's life on earth. He goes away from the light of life into darkness. So if this new teaching can tell us anything of that darkness, into which we pass at last, my counsel is that we receive it."

That is the story of how men in those old days thought of Christ. It seemed to them the coming of a great light—a light brighter than the sun.

HALF AN HOUR IN A CAVERN

We all like cheerful people, and love to feel cheerfulness in ourselves, and when we love Jesus it is as if we had walked out into the sun, and felt its radiance on our faces.

Once I went with some friends into the Peak Cavern, in Derbyshire. We carried candles, and followed a guide, who stopped us here and there and made speeches. A brook ran along at our feet in the darkness, and at times we came to places where were deep fissures, down which water splashed. We were a long time in the damp, and cold, and gloom, and in places had only one candle, and once or twice, for a minute or two, no candle at all. It gave me a creeping feeling, and made me melancholy, and at last we came back to the little entrance where we started. As soon as it was opened we saw the clear sunshine and the bright day. I remember the surprise. We had grown accustomed to darkness, and the sunshine was such a contrast to the gloom, and so unexpected. We should not have been surprised to step out and find all outside dark as night. But the sunshine was so welcome. It was a pleasant thing for our eyes to behold the sun.

Now, life in the cave is like sullen unhappy life, and coming out into the rays of the sun is like the cheerfulness of heart which we ought to feel if we live as God's children ought to live. He puts

gladness into our hearts, and makes them warm and bright.

AN ECLIPSE OF THE SUN.

And not only does the religion of Jesus put light in life, and cheerfulness into our hearts, but it fills us with love that is like sunshine. It makes us kind. Some people try to be good without being kind. It is like trying to be invisible. You cannot leave kindness out—that is a great part of what is meant by being good. I dare say that you have quarrelled with some one. If you have, you know that your heart seemed suddenly to grow dark. As when there is an eclipse of the sun—as soon as the obscuring body passes before the sun it grows dark, and the birds wonder what is the matter, and go to bed as if night had come—so when we have feelings of hatred there is gloom at once in our souls. It is the eclipse of love. And as soon as we are friends again the heart is bright, for love is the sunshine of the heart. "He that dwells in love dwells in God, and God dwells in him, for God is love."

THE MOTTO ON A SUN-DIAL.

Let us all welcome Jesus as we welcome sunshine. Even if we live and grow wise, and rich, and prosperous, all life will end in nothing if we are not the friends of Jesus. On an old sundial there are the words, "I only mark the hours that shine." All the other hours are nothing to the sun-dial. And God only marks in his Book of Life the hours that shine—the hours when the Spirit of Jesus lights up our lives with faith, and cheerfulness, and love, and kindness. These are the golden hours of life, and Jesus came to make all our hours golden with the light of his love.

PULLING WEEDS.

"A penny for your thoughts, Roland." "I was thinking, Lill, of Jack Reynolds, and wondering why, with almost everything a fellow could wish for, he should be the most disagreeable, the meanest, and the most unhappy boy in school."

"Have you solved the problem?" "No, not exactly, but I have decided that I am more fortunate in one way than he. I have a sister I would not exchange for all of his things. I don't believe if he had one like mine he could be so disagreeable."

"Suppose you invite him here some evening. Perhaps I can help explain your riddle."

And so it happened that Jack Reynolds, who was so disagreeable that no one ever thought of inviting him anywhere, spent an evening with Roland and his sister.

"Don't believe I ever had a better time in my life," he said the next day. "That sister of yours is a trump. She looks as though she could not help being happy if she tried. Is she always so?"

"Yes, always."

"What makes her so?"

"The truth is," said Roland, "she is always trying to make others comfortable and happy, and never thinks of being so herself."

"Humph! That's it, is it?"

"That's a good deal of it, yes. Would you like to know what she said about you?"

"No. It would not be anything good."

"But it was. Lill often says our characters have to be cared for just as a beautiful garden is looked after; and now she says you have the making of a splendid man in your character, a man we might all be proud to know some day if you would only cut down and pull up the weeds that are choking out the beautiful flowers."

"Did she really say that, Roland? May I come again?"

He did come again and again, and before long a great change was noticed in him. He grew cheerful, happy, and contented, and began sharing his good things with others.

It was hard to change all at once, but Jack persisted till the boys were proud of him, and told him so.

"The credit," he would always say, "is due to the girl who taught me how to pull weeds. I suppose I will have to go on rooting them out as long as I live, but it is easier work now."

HOW BASIL CROSSED OVER.

Avis is a little girl whose home is in the great city of London. Every morning she goes to school in charge of her great St. Bernard dog, Basil, who walks proudly at her side, waving his bushy tail majestically, and never deigning to glance at the little street curs, who express their opinion of his state by short barks of derision. A crowded thoroughfare has to be crossed each day, and Avis had taught Basil to run ahead a

few steps and bark loudly at the policeman whose duty it is to stop all traffic until the foot-passengers are safely over.

One morning Avis awoke with a sore throat, and her mother would not allow her to go to school. But Basil, whose throat was not sore, saw no reason why he should be deprived of his usual morning walk, and at the accustomed hour he slipped quietly away. With his usual grand air he walked down the street until he came to the crossing.

The policeman stood in the middle of the road, which was packed with omnibuses, hacks, and hansoms. At the sound of his familiar bark, he held up his baton, and immediately the crowded buses and other vehicles were drawn up solidly in line.

In response to the wave of his hand, who should step out on the crossing but Basil! He made his way deliberately across to the opposite sidewalk, apparently quite unaware that he was doing a most unusual thing for a dog, while the omnibus drivers, the passengers, and the dazed policeman burst into a hearty laugh, as they realized how, unconsciously, the knowing dog had tricked them all.

A JUNIOR PRAYER.

BY FLORENCE R. LANGWORTHY.

(Aged twelve.)

Praise to his holy name!
He's cleansed me from all guilt.
Lord, I am wholly thine;
Oh, lead me where thou wilt.

Surrendered is my will;
All that I have I give.
And I may feel assured
That I'll forever live.

Ambition and my pride,
My work, my life, my all,
Returned for thy great love
Seems very, very small.

Lord, may I never stray;
My steps wish to retrace;
Nor falter on the way,
Nor thy loved name disgrace.

But ev'ry single day
My love for thee increase;
Be steadfast in thy work,
Oh, holy Prince of Peace.
—Epworth Herald.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

NOVEMBER 1, 1896.

"A charge to keep I have."—Mark 13. 34.

A COMPARISON.

Christ for the time being is like a man who has gone on a long journey, and has left his business in the hands of his servants. All his interests are in their care, all his honour is in their keeping, hence they are commanded to watch.

OUR POSITION.

As the subjects of Christ's kingdom, we all have a work to do. We cannot all do the same work, nor can we all perform the same amount of work. But there are positions which all may occupy, there are duties which all can perform. There is not to be a single idler in the Church of the living God. The Master's bodily presence is not now to be seen in the world, but his eye is always upon his people, and he is ever in effect saying to one and all, "Occupy till I come."

THE HYMN.

This is beautifully appropriate. Hear it—

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

"To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil,
O, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will."

Charles Wesley, the poet of Methodism, is the author of this hymn. He was a great hymnologist. There is no church hymn-book in the world that does not contain some of his soul-inspiring compositions. From the earliest days of Methodism, this hymn has been sung to the tune of Royston, hence it is well known to all Methodist congregations. We hope all our young people will commit this hymn to memory, and endeavour as far as possible to understand its sentiments and act them out in their everyday life. By so doing, we will act the part of true disciples, and do those things which will not only be well-pleasing to God, but also secure our own spiritual welfare, and assist to spread the name of Christ from the rivers unto the ends of the earth.