

## The Ripened Leaves.

BY MARGARET F. BANGSTER

Said the leaves upon the branches,  
 One sunny autumn day  
 We've finished all our work, and now  
 We can no longer stay  
 So our gowns of red and yellow,  
 And our sober cloaks of brown,  
 Must be worn before the frost comes  
 And we go rustling down

"We've had a jolly summer,  
 With the birds that built their nests  
 Beneath our green umbrellas,  
 And the squirrels that were our guests  
 But we cannot wait for winter,  
 For we do not care for snow;  
 When we hear the wild northwesterners  
 We loose our clasp and go

"But we hold our heads up bravely,  
 'Til to the very last,  
 And shine in pomp and splendour  
 As away we flatter fast.  
 In the mellow autumn noontide,  
 We kiss and say good-bye,  
 And through the naked branches  
 Then may children see the sky"

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK  
 Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 26, 1898.

## "A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS."

"Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

The Apostle Paul must have loved soldiers, for he refers to them very often, especially during the latter part of his life. It is more than likely that when he wrote this letter to Timothy, his wrist was chained to a Roman soldier, for he was in prison, and expecting every day to be led out to execution. If he looked down into the courtyard below his prison, he would see soldiers drilling—the finest soldiers in the world. He learned many a useful lesson from them. He was an old veteran soldier and, writing to his friend Timothy, a young soldier in the same army, he asks him to "suffer hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

First, then, let us find out the meaning of the first words of the text, "Suffer hardship with me." As you see a soldier swaggering along the street with a short cane under his arm, I dare say you think sometimes that it is a fine thing to be a soldier. That seems an easy way of earning a shilling a day. But if you think a soldier has nothing to do but wear fine clothes and enjoy an easy life, you make a great mistake. No; a soldier's life is a hard life. You must not judge from what you see when he is off duty. During active service a soldier must often undergo great hardships. He has to make long and fatiguing marches, he seldom sleeps in a comfortable bed; he must expose himself to great and terrible dangers. Probably more soldiers are killed in time of war by hunger and cold and disease than by actual fighting. Even at home a soldier has no easy time, as we shall see. Assuming then, that you, like young Timothy, have already joined the army, I want to tell you a few things about a soldier's life at home—about the training which is necessary to make "a good soldier of Christ Jesus." There are four lessons which a soldier must learn before he is fit for active service.

## CONQUER YOURSELF.

A soldier is no use for fighting against any other foe until he has conquered that one. Now, we are all proud of our British soldiers. You would know a soldier if you saw him in plain clothes, he has such an easy, graceful walk, such a fine, manly bearing. He stands erect, his shoulders thrown back, his broad chest expanded. But you should see some of these men when they enlist. You would notice their sloping shoulders, their hollow chests, their awkward, clumsy, ungainly walk—they are anything but smart. Their first duty is to conquer all that. They are not ready for active service until that is put right.

Now, if we are to be good soldiers of Christ Jesus we must begin with ourselves. And that will be our hardest battle. If we conquer that enemy we shall be ready for anything; only it is not a deformed body we have to fight against, but a crooked soul, not round shoulders, but the laziness which produces them, and surly words and quick tempers. This is the hardest fight of all. Shall I tell you why I think so? The wise man tells us: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty: And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16. 32). It is not easy work, this ruling the spirit; but we must do it if we are to be good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

## OBEDIENCE.

Every soldier in the British army, from Lord Wolseley to Tommy Atkins, must learn this lesson. A soldier may not choose his duty. He is not asked whether he will go to the burning Sudan or the bleak waste hills on the Indian frontier. He must be ready to go anywhere at any time. You remember that Roman officer who came to Jesus in Capernaum. He knew how to obey and make others obey (Matt. 8. 9). "I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh." A soldier must obey the word of command, even if he thinks his officer has made a mistake. Most of you have read "Lanyon's" "Charge of the Light Brigade." That story tells about a regiment who were commanded at the battle of Balaklava to charge against the entire Russian army. Of course the order was a mistake; but the brave men never stopped to ask any questions.

"Their's not to make reply,  
 Their's not to reason why,  
 Their's but to do and die."

Most of the six hundred were killed, but it will be to their everlasting honour that they had learned so well the lesson of obedience.

You may have read, too, of the brave Roman sentry who stood at his post at Pompeii when everybody else fled to escape the terrible eruption which buried that great city. You see, he had been told to stand guard at that post, and he was true, even to death.

We read of a great soldier in the Old Testament who might have done splendid service for God, but he was rejected because he had not learned this lesson. "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15. 22).

If we are good soldiers of Jesus Christ we shall obey his orders. The great Captain of our salvation himself "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" and became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5. 8, 9).

## COMRADESHIP.

Good soldiers must learn to help each other. No army could win a battle if each man in it fought for himself, and merely looked after his own interests. Soldiers must act together. They must be loyal to one another, both in war and in peace. No punishment is too severe for those who deal treacherously towards their comrades.

Not long ago we read in the papers about a famous officer in the French army who had forgotten this lesson of comradeship. One day the troops were drawn up where all could see the offender, and first his sword was taken away, then his epaulettes were stripped off, and he was drummed out of the regiment, a disgraced man. If a soldier is once dismissed for bad conduct he can never join the army, again. Such a disgrace is always remembered against him. Good soldiers of Jesus Christ must always help one another. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6. 2).

## BELIEVE IN YOUR CAPTAIN.

After all, that is the best way to make a good soldier. The reason why Wellington's soldiers won so many battles was just this—they all believed in Wellington. Some people tell us that the Iron Duke never lost a battle. I am not at all sure about that; but I am certain

that our Captain never lost a battle. The motto on the coat-of-arms of the county of Kent is just this one word, "Invicta" (unconquered). And that is true of the great Captain of our salvation. He is always victorious. And he has promised his help and strength to every one who is fighting "the good fight of the faith." The apostle Paul was perhaps the greatest of all Christ's soldiers. He won splendid victories for Christ; but he never thought he had done it. He used to say: "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 57). And another veteran said: "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5. 4).

Let every young soldier of Jesus Christ, then, learn these four lessons well: (1) Self-conquest, (2) Obedience, (3) Comradeship, (4) Trust.

## SHALL WE LEAVE THE LAD?

BY DEAN FAIRRAK.

The Grosvenor, East Indian, homeward bound, went ashore and was wrecked on the coast of Caffraria. The crew, one hundred and thirty-five in number, had to penetrate on foot across trackless deserts infested by wild beasts and cruel savages, to the Dutch settlements at the Cape of Good Hope. It was their only chance of saving their lives. With this forlorn object before them, they separated into two parties—newly more to meet on earth.

There is a solitary child among the passengers—a little boy seven years old. As the first party moves away, he cries after one of them—the ship's carpenter—who had been kind to him. The poor, shipwrecked wayfarers were in extremity. A frightful death stared them in the face. Their one hope lay in the rapidity of their march.

But the cry of the child touched them. They took him with them, they made him a sacred charge. The sailors, swimming themselves, pushed him on a little raft across broad rivers, they carried him through the deep sand and the long grass.

They lie down and wait for him, when the poor carpenter, who has special charge of him, lags behind, beset by lions, by tigers, by savages, by thirst, by hunger, by death in a crowd of ghastly shapes, they never ("O Father of all mankind, thy name be blessed for it," says the great writer who tells the tale—Charles Dickens) forget the child.

The captain and the coxswain, too feeble to stagger along any further, sit down to die. They are seen no more. The carpenter dies of poisonous berries, eaten in starvation; the steward succeeds to the sacred guardianship of the child.

God knows all he does for the poor baby; weak and ill, he carries him in his arms; he feeds him, when himself in the agonies of want; he folds his ragged jacket around him, when he himself is shivering through the chilly nights; he lays his little worn face, with a woman's tenderness, upon his sunburnt breast; soothes him in his suffering; sings to him as he limps along, unmindful of his own parched and bleeding feet.

They fall ill, the man and the little child, and cannot proceed. Though delay may mean death, for two days those starving men wait beside them. On the third day they must move for dear life. The little boy is sleeping by the fire, while they make their silent preparations to move on, and they agree that he shall not be disturbed till the last moment.

The moment comes, the fire is dying, and the child is dead; his faithful friend, the poor steward, staggers on for a few days, and then he too lies down in the desert and dies.

"But" says he who tells the tale, "he shall be reunited in his immortal spirit—who can doubt it?—with the child, when he and the poor carpenter shall be raised up with the words, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me.'"—Christian Endeavour World.

## THE HAT AND ITS OWNER.

A good illustration of the detective quality was shown in the trial of a house-breaker a few years ago. The burglary was effected—as most burglaries are—by the aid of a neighbouring uninhabited house. The thieves crossed along the roof, and made their descent through a skylight. They robbed the premises at their leisure, and decamped successfully with the stolen property. There was one clue left—only one. A hat was found on the roof. The hat was sent to Scotland Yard, and the force was invited to inspect it. One policeman immediately said that he knew who was the owner. In the event it was found he was as good as his word. The owner was discovered,

and, being unable to give a satisfactory account of how he spent the evening of the burglary, and, moreover, being awkwardly for him, in the possession of the stolen property, the jury came to the conclusion that he was guilty, and found their verdict accordingly. A more interesting question remained. How did the policeman know the exact head on which to fit that very unlucky hat? The constable told the story himself. He had been on duty in the gallery of the Old Bailey during the trial of a well-known burglar. He sat on a back bench, and wore plain clothes, and he noticed in front of him a young man, with a highly criminal type of face, who seemed to take the greatest interest in the trial. The constable, accordingly, took the greatest interest in him and in his belongings, and, as the unconscious spectator held his hat in his hand, looked into it, and, as Inspector Bucket would say, "totted it up." The result in this little sum in addition was the registering in his memory of a peculiarly-shaped grease-mark on the lining which crossed the maker's name. The constable never forgot that hat, and the professional career of its owner soon rendered him more and more interesting. Thus he was able in a moment to restore to the burglar the property he had been so unfortunate as to leave behind him on the roof.

## A Marvel.

BY CAROLYN WELLS.

An old astronomer there was  
 Who lived up in a tower;  
 Named Ptolemy Copernicus  
 Flammarion McGower.  
 He said: "I can prognosticate,  
 With estimates correct;  
 And when the skies I contemplate,  
 I know what to expect.  
 When dark'ning clouds obscure my sight,  
 I think perhaps 'twill rain;  
 And when the stars are shining bright,  
 I know 'tis clear again."  
 And then abstractedly he scanned  
 The heavens, hour by hour,  
 Old Ptolemy Copernicus  
 Flammarion McGower.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE  
PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

MARCH 6, 1898.

How our Junior Pledge helps us: By prayer.—Matt. 6. 9-13; Matt. 26. 41; Luke 16. 1.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER.

First Text. A grand summary of prayer, which every one should be taught from infancy. It is used in all pulpits, and no written prayer can equal it, not to say surpass it. Every sentence is pregnant with meaning. All who make a practice of using it daily will experience untold advantage by the practice.

## THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

This is incumbent from the fact of the universal need of mankind, and then further, to all who read the New Testament it is well known how the Saviour inculcates the duty, and whatever he commands is of universal obligation. We are morally bound from our relation to him to obey his commands, even should they not harmonize with our own preconceived notions.

## SPECIAL SEASONS.

When exposed to dangers or beset with temptations, we should especially pray for Divine help. Watch and pray should be faithfully attended to at such seasons. Watch for seasons and opportunities to pray. Keep a close inspection lest we should be ensnared by the enemy of souls and be taken captive. The Christian soldier keeps his armour bright by the use of the weapon—all prayer. There is no season when prayer is not necessary. We are commanded to pray always. This does not mean that we are to be always upon our knees, but we are to maintain the spirit of prayer, and when so situated that we cannot perform the duty by a regular formal prayer, we can repeat a few sentences of pious ejaculations, as, "Lord, bless me," "I am thine, save me." In this way we will obey the command, "Pray without ceasing."

## ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRAYER.

Promise of reward. We are commanded, "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make known our requests unto God," that is, in prayer, "and the peace of God which passeth understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." This is the promise. "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Here you see that prayer is illustrated by asking, seeking, and knocking. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full."