

## The Ripened Leaves.

BY MARGARET W. MANASTER.

Said the leaves upon . . . 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 cloaks of sober 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,  
 And 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  
 'Unto the very last,  
 And shine in pomp and splendour,  
 As away we flutter fast  
 In the mellow autumn's noontide  
 We kiss, and say good-bye,  
 And through the naked branches  
 Then may children see the sky."

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## Pleasant Hours:

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

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 9, 1899.

## AFTER THE HARVEST.

"The summer is past; the harvest is ended."

All around us are the empty fields with stubble brown and sere, their rich sheaves of golden grain all garnered safely in. Autumn is here, with its soft, hazy sunlight resting on hill and vale. How swiftly the time passes by!

Each year has just one spring, with its singing birds, its opening flowers, and laughing brooks; just one summer, with its sweet-scented hay and harvest of golden grain; just one autumn, with its ripened fruit and hazy sunlight. Then cometh winter, and that year is ended forever.

Herein is a lesson, oh, soul, for you. Your life can have but one springtime—only one—with its golden opportunities to scatter far and wide the precious seed; one summer, with its harvest of golden grain, which must be taken care of at once, or else forever lost; one autumn, when the pulse grows faint and the step is slow; then comes winter and a hush, and a long, long rest. O soul of mine, art thou making good use of the seed-time and the harvest?

All around us the autumn leaves are lying; dead and withered, they shiver and tremble and fall. But grandly they have fulfilled their mission, "affording shelter to the birds, shade to the beasts," and often cooling the tired brow of the traveller with their soft, gentle breezes. Not in vain have they lived. And as we tread on their lifeless forms in the forest, they still whisper some grand lessons to the heart of man.

"We all do fade as a leaf."

When our brief summer of human life is ended, and the harvest is passed, oh, soul of mine, can it be said of us that we fulfilled our mission as nobly as the leaves?

One seed-time—one harvest—only one! Oh, hasten into the field while yet it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work!

## More About Volcanoes.

(Continued from first page.)

In places flowed far over the plain, destroying numerous houses and vineyards in its progress.

One of the cuts on our fourth page shows the effects of the oscillations of the earth's surface through volcanic action at the Temple of Serapis, near Naples. The water marks and boring of marine insects show the different levels at which the columns stood for long periods, being immersed to different depths in the water.

## VISIT TO THE KILAUEA.

Lady Brassey thus describes her visit to this remarkable volcano, shown in the large cuts on the first and fourth pages:

"Immediately after dinner we mounted and set off for the volcano. We had not gone far before we were overtaken by a shower which once more drenched us to the skin. The scene was certainly one of extreme beauty. The moon was hidden by a cloud, and the prospect lighted only by the red glare of the volcano, which hovered before us and above us like the Israelites' pillar of fire, giving us hopes of a splendid spectacle when we should at last reach the long-wished-for crater.

"When we emerged from the wood, we found ourselves at the very end of the old crater, the bed of which, three or four hundred feet beneath us, was surrounded by steep and, in many places, overhanging sides. It looked like an enormous cauldron, four or five miles in width, full of a mass of cooled pitch. In the centre was the still glowing stream of the dark red lava, flowing slowly towards us, and in every direction were red hot patches, and flames and smoke issuing from the ground. A bit of the 'black country' at night, with all the coal heaps on fire, would give you some idea of the scene. Yet the first sensation is rather one of disappointment, as one expects greater activity on the part of the volcano; but the new crater was still to be seen, containing the lake of fire, with steep walls rising up in the sea of lava.

"Twenty minutes' hard riding brought us to the door of the 'Volcano House,' from which issued the comforting light of a large wood-fire, reaching half-way up the chimney. Native garments replaced our dripping habits, and we sat before the fire in luxury until the rest of the party arrived.

"The grandeur of the view in the direction of the volcano increased as the evening wore on. The fiery cloud above the present crater augmented in size and depth of colour; the extinct crater glowed red in thirty or forty different places, and clouds of white vapour issued from every crack and crevice in the ground, adding to the sulphurous smell with which the atmosphere was laden.

"I was up at four o'clock next day, to gaze once more on the wondrous spectacle that lay before me. The molten lava still flowed in many places. The red cloud over the stream was slowly ascending in every direction, over hill and valley, till, as the sun rose it became difficult to distinguish clearly the sulphurous vapours from the morning mists.

"Before leaving the inn the landlord came to us and begged us in earnest and confidential manner to be very careful, to do exactly what our guides told us, and especially to follow in their footsteps exactly when returning in the dark.

"First of all we descended the precipice, 300 feet in depth, forming the wall of the old crater, but now thickly covered with vegetation. It is so steep in many places that flights of zig-zag wooden steps have been inserted in the face of the cliff in some places, in order to render the descent practicable. At the bottom we stepped straight on to the surface of cold lava. It was the most extraordinary walk imaginable over that vast plain of lava, twisted and distorted into every conceivable shape and form, according to the temperature it had originally attained, and the rapidity with



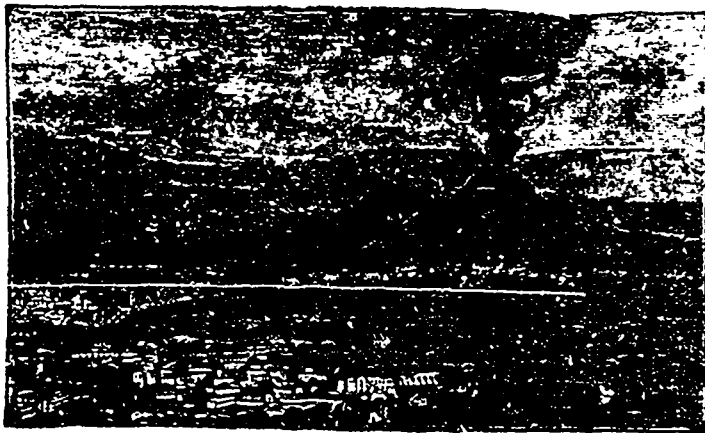
CRATER OF VESUVIUS.

which it had cooled, its surface, like half-molten glass, cracking and breaking beneath our feet. As we proceeded the lava became hotter and hotter, and from every crack arose gaseous fumes, affecting our noses and throats in a painful manner, till at last, when we had to pass to leeward of the molten stream flowing from the lake, the vapours almost choked us, and it was with difficulty we continued to advance.

"At last we were standing on the edge of a precipice, overhanging

## A LAKE OF MOLTEN FIRE

a hundred feet below us, and nearly a mile across. Dashing across the cliffs on the opposite side, with a noise like the roar of a stormy ocean, waves of blood-red, fiery liquid hurled their billows upon an iron-bound headland, and then rushed up the face of the cliffs to toss their gory spray high in the air. The restless, heaving lake boiled and bubbled, never remaining the same for two minutes together. Its normal colour seemed to be a dull dark red, covered with a thin gray scum, which every moment and in every part swelled and cracked, and emitted fountains, cascades, and whirlpools of yellow and red fire, while sometimes one big golden river, sometimes four or five, flowed across it. There was an island on one side of the lake, which the fiery waves seemed to attack unceasingly with relentless fury, as if bent on hurling it from its base. On the other side was a large cavern, into which the burning mass rushed with a loud roar, breaking down in its impetuous headlong career the gigantic stalactites that overhung the mouth of the cave, and flinging up the liquid material for the formation of fresh ones.



NAPLES AND VESUVIUS.

"It was all terribly grand, magnificently sublime; but no words could describe such a scene. The precipice upon which we were standing overhung the crater so much that it was impossible to see what was going on immediately beneath, but from the columns of smoke and vapour that arose, the flames and sparks that constantly drove us back from the edge, it was easy to imagine that there must have been two or three grand fiery fountains below. As the sun set, and darkness enveloped the scene, it became more awful than ever. We retired a little way from the brink to breathe some fresh air, and to try and eat the food we had brought with us; but this was an impossibility. Every instant a fresh explosion of glare made us jump to survey the stupendous scene. The violent struggles of the lava to escape from its fiery bed and the loud and awful noises by which they were at times accompanied, suggested the idea that some imprisoned monsters were trying to release themselves from their bondage, with shrieks and groans, and cries of agony and despair at the futility of their efforts.

"Sometimes there were at least seven spots on the borders of the lake where the molten lava dashed up furiously against the rocks—

## SEVEN FIRE-FOUNTAINS

playing simultaneously. With the increasing darkness the colours emitted by the glowing mass became more and

more wonderful, even the smoke and vapours were rendered beautiful by their borrowed lights and tints, and the black peaks, pinnacles, and crags, which surrounded the amphitheatre, formed a splendid and appropriate background. Sometimes great pieces broke off and tumbled with a crash into the burning lake, only to be remelted and thrown up anew. I had for some time been feeling very hot and uncomfortable and on looking round cause was at once apparent. Not two inches beneath the surface, the gray lava on which we were standing and sitting was red hot. A stick thrust through caught fire; a piece of paper was immediately destroyed.

"One more long last look, and then we turned our faces away from the scene that enthralled us for so many hours. The whole of the lava we had crossed, in the extinct crater, was now aglow in many patches, and in all directions flames were bursting forth, fresh lava was flowing, and steam and smoke were issuing from the surface. It was a toll some journey back again, walking as we did in single file, and obeying the strict injunctions of our head guide to follow him closely, and to tread exactly in his footsteps. Once I slipped, and my foot sank through the thin crust, sparks issued from the ground, and the stick on which I leaned caught fire before I could fairly recover myself. Either from the effects of the unaccustomed exercise after our long voyage, or from the intense excitement of the novel scene, combined with the gaseous exhalations from the lava, my strength began to fail, and before reaching the side of the crater I felt quite exhausted. I struggled on at short intervals, however, collapsing several times and fainted away twice; but at last I had fairly to give in, and to allow myself to be ignominiously carried up the steep precipice, to the 'Volcano House' on a chair, which the guides went to fetch for me.

"December 25th (Christmas Day).—Turning in last night was the work of a very few minutes, and this morning I awoke perfectly refreshed and ready to appreciate anew the wonders of the prospect that met my eyes. The pillar of fire was still distinctly visible when I looked out from my window, though it was not so bright as when I had last seen it; but even as I looked it began to fade, and gradually disappeared. At the same moment a river of glowing lava issued from the side of the bank we had climbed with so much difficulty yesterday, and slowly but surely overflowed the ground we had walked over. I woke Tom, and you may imagine the feeling with which we gazed upon this startling phenomenon, which, had it occurred a few hours earlier, might have caused the destruction of the whole party."

## READ GOOD BOOKS.

Never under any circumstances read a book of doubtful quality. No words can overstate the mischief of bad reading. A bad book will often haunt a man his whole life long. It is often remembered when much that is better is forgotten. It intrudes itself at the most solemn moments, and contaminates the best feelings and emotions. Reading trashy second-rate books is a grievous waste of time also. In the first place, there are a great many more first-rate books than ever you can master; and in the second place, you cannot read an inferior book without giving up an opportunity of reading a first-rate book. Books, remember, are friends. Books affect character; and you can as little neglect your duty in respect of this as you can safely neglect any other moral duty that is cast upon you. Keep the mind pure, and the life will be pure also.

## PULLING OUT THE NAIL-HOLE.

Every wrong thought, and every bad habit, leaves its indelible trace upon us. The myriad cells of our brain, scientists tell us nowadays, record and store away the slightest of our doings forever. The following anecdote illustrates how much easier it is to make than to remove what might be called a moral scar:

"John," said a father to his son, "I wish you would get me the hammer."

"Yes, sir."

"Now a nail and a piece of pine board."

"Here they are, sir."

"Will you drive the nail into the board?"

It was done.

"Please pull it out again."

"That's easy, sir."

"Now, John," and the father's voice dropped to a lower key, "pull out the nail-hole."