

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVI.]

TORONTO, JULY 18, 1896.

[No. 29.]

Picnic Time.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

It's June agin, an' in my soul I feel the
fillin' joy
That's sure to come this time o' year to
every little boy;
For, every June, the Sunday-schools at
picnics may be seen,
Where "fields beyont the swellin' floods
stand dressed in livin' green;"
Where little girls are skeered to death
with spiders, bugs an' ants,
An' little boys get grass stains on their
go-to-meetin' pants.
It's June agin, an' with it all what hap-
piness is mine—
There's goin' to be a picnic an' I'm
agin' to jine!

One year I joined the Baptists, an' good-
ness how it rained!
(But grandpa says that that's the way
"baptizo" is explained.)
And once I jined the 'piscopills an' had a
heap o' fun—
But the boss of all the picnics was the
Presbyterium!
They had so many puddin's, sallids,
sandwidges, an' pies,
That a feller wisht his stummick was as
hungry as his eyes!
Oh, yes, the eatin' that the Presbyteriums
give us is so fine,
That when they have a picnic you bet
I'm going to jine!

But at this time the Methodists have
special claims on me,
For they're goin' to give a picnic on the
21st, D.V.:
Why should a liberal Universalist like
me object
To share the joys of fellowship with
every friendly sect?
However strict their articles of faith
elsewise may be,
Their doctrine o' fried chick'n is a
savin' grace to me,
So on the 21st of June, the weather be-
in' fine,
They're goin' to give a picnic, an' I'm
agin' to jine!

THE BOY DISCIPLE.

BY

ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON.

CHAPTER XII.

Abigail sat just inside the door, turn-
ing the noisy hand-mill that ground out
the next day's supply of flour. The
rough mill-stones grated so harshly on
each other that she did not hear the
steps coming up the path. A shadow
falling across the door-way made her
look up.

"You are home very early, my
Phineas," she said, with a smile. "Well,
I shall soon have your supper ready.
Joel has gone to the market for some
honey and—"

"Nay! I have little wish to eat," he
interrupted, "but I have much to say to
you. Come! the work can wait."

Abigail put the mill aside, and brush-
ing the flour from her hands, sat down
on the step beside her, wondering much
at his troubled face.

He plunged into his subject abruptly.
"The Master is soon going away," he
said, "that those in the uttermost parts
of Galilee may be taught of him. And
he would fain have others beside the
twelve he has chosen to go with him on
his journey."

"And you wish to go too?" she ques-
tioned, as he paused.

"Yes! How can I do otherwise?
And yet how can I leave you and the
little ones alone in these troubled times?
You cannot think how great the danger
is. Remember how many horrors we
have lately heard. The whole country
is a smouldering volcano, ready to burst
into an eruption at any moment. A
leader has only to arise, and all Israel
will take up arms against the powers
that trample us under foot."
"Is not this prophet, Jesus, he who is
to save Israel?" asked Abigail. "Is he
not even now making ready to establish
his kingdom?"

"I do not understand him at all!"
said Phineas, sadly. "He does talk of
a kingdom in which we are all to have
a part; but he never seems to be work-

ing to establish it. He spends all his
time in healing diseases and forgiving
penitent sinners, and telling us to love
our neighbours."
"Then, again, why should he go down
to the beach, and choose for his con-
fidential friends just simple fishermen.
They have neither influence nor money.
As for the choice of that publican Levi-
Matthew, it has brought disgrace on the
whole movement. He does not seem
to know how to sway the popular feel-
ing. I believe he might have had the
support of the foremost men of the na-
tion, if he had approached them differ-
ently."

miracles cannot make them forget how
boldly he has rebuked them for hypocrisy
and unrighteousness. They never will
come to his support now, and I do not
see how a new government can be
formed without their help."

Abigail laid her hand on his, her dark
eyes glowing with intense earnestness,
as she answered. "What need is there
of armies and human hands to help?"

"Where were the hosts of Pharaoh
when our fathers passed through the Red
Sea? Was there bloodshed and fighting
there?"
"Who battled for us when the walls
of Jericho fell down? Whose hand
smote the Assyrians at Sennacherib?
Is the Lord's arm shortened that he can-
not save?"

of joy,—you are rightly named. You
have led me out of the doubts that have
been my daily torment. I see now, why
he never incites us to rebel against the
yoke of Caesar. In the fulness of time
he will free us with a breath.

"How strange it should have fallen
to my lot to have been his playmate and
companion. My wonder is not that he
is the Messiah, but that I should have
called him friend, all these years, un-
knowing."

"How long do you expect to be away?"
she asked, after a pause, suddenly re-
turning to the first subject.

"Several months, perhaps. There is
no telling what insurrection and riots
may arise, all through this part of the
country. Since the murder of John
Baptist, Herod has come back to his
court in Tiberias. I dislike to leave
you here alone."

Abigail, too, looked grave, and
neither spoke for a little while. "I
have it!" she exclaimed at length,
with a pleased light in her eyes. "I
have often wished I could make a long
visit in the home of my girlhood. The
few days I have spent in my father's
house, those few times I have gone
with you to the feasts, have been so
short and unsatisfactory. Can I not
take Joel and the children to Bethany?
Neither father nor mother has ever
seen little Ruth, and we could be so
safe and happy there till your return."

"Why did I not come to you before
with my worries?" asked Phineas.
"How easily you make the crooked
places straight!"

Just then the children came running
back from the market. Abigail went
into the house with the provisions they
had brought, leaving their father to
tell them of the coming separation and
the long journey they had planned.

A week later, Phineas stood at the
city gate, watching a little company
file southward down the highway. He
had hired two strong, gaily-caparisoned
mules from the owner of the caravan.
Abigail rode on one, holding little
Ruth in her arms; Joel mounted the
other, with Jesse clinging close behind
him.

Abigail, thinking of the joyful wel-
come awaiting her in her old home, and
the children happy in the novelty of
the journey, set out gaily.

But Phineas, thinking of the dangers
by the way, and filled with many fore-
bodings, watched their departure with
a heavy heart.

At the top of a little rise in the road,
they turned to look back and wave
their hands. In a moment more they
were out of sight. Then Phineas,
grasping his staff more firmly, turned
away, and started on foot in the other
direction, to follow to the world's end,
if need be, the friend who had gone on
before.

It was in the midst of the barley har-
vest. Jesse had never been in the
country before. For the first time, Na-
ture spread for him her great picture-
book of field and forest and vineyard,
while Abigail read to him the stories.

First on one side of the road, then the
other, she pointed out some spot and told
its history.

Here was Dothan, where Joseph went
out to see his brothers, dressed in his
coat of many colours. There was Mount
Gilead, where the arrows of the Philis-
tines wounded Saul, and he fell on his
own sword and killed himself. Shiloh,
where Hannah brought little Samuel to
give him to the Lord; where the Prophet
Eli, so old that his eyes were too dim to
see, sat by the gate waiting for news
from the army, and when word was



BETHANY.