

The Dream-Town Show

There is an island in Slumber Sea,
Where the drollest things are done,
And we will sail there, if the winds are fair,
Just after the set of the sun.
'Tis the loveliest place in the whole wide world,
Or anyway, so it seems,
And the folks there play at the end of each day,
In a curious show called "Dreams"
We will sail right into the evening skies,
And the very first thing you know
We are there at the port and ready for sport,
Where the dream folks give their show.
And what do you think they did last night,
When I crossed their harbour bars;
They hoisted a plank on a great cloud bank
And teetered among the stars.
And they sat on the moon and swung their feet,
Like pendulums to and fro;
Down Slumber Sea is the sail for me,
And I wish you were ready to go
For the dream folks there on this curious isle
Begin their performance at eight;
There are no encores and they close their doors
On every one who is late.
The sun is sinking behind the hills,
The seven o'clock bells chime;
I know by the chart that we ought to start
If we would be there in time.
O, fair is the trip down Slumber Sea,
Set sail and away we go;
The anchor is drawn, we are off and gone
To the wonderful Dream-Town show.

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Pleasant Hours:

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

TORONTO, MAY 1, 1897.

SQUIRE DAVIS' CHURCH FIGHT.

BY C. OWEN LARRISON.

"There shall be no Junior League in this church." So decreed Squire Davis, and it looked as if he would have his way.
The village of Elmwood was a struggling little town in the new West. People were mostly poor, and were obliged to deny themselves of many comforts. There was no church in the town, and the people were yet too poor to build.
While they were debating what they should do for a place to hold preaching and Sunday-school, Squire Davis came from nobody knew where and settled in the village. He seemed to be wealthy, and bought a great deal of land about the village, but no one could get acquainted with him. He resisted every effort to find out anything about his history or his fortune.
He was as eccentric as he could well be. This fact was displayed in the building of a new church for Elmwood. He consulted no one about the enterprise, and when they found out what he was at, utterly refused any help. However, the church was built, and a Methodist preacher who lived on a circuit near by was invited to start a class. Squire Davis was his own board of trustees and janitor. However, no one questioned his right to manage his own

building, and things went on very nicely for a while.
The first sign of war was when an Epworth League was organized. Squire Davis looked more moody than ever, and was heard to mutter "They didn't have such carryings on in my days." However, he never talked with anyone as to what he thought, and no one apprehended trouble. Elmwood was justly proud of her Sunday-school and Epworth League. Only one thing seemed needed to make things complete, and that was a Junior League. So it was announced that on the next week they would meet and organize a Junior League. On which announcement Squire Davis gave utterance to the statement at the beginning of this story, locked up the church, and went home.
However, the people were not easily put out of their purpose, and announced that they were determined to organize a League. "Let 'em," threatened the squire. Now, there is no more certain way to get either boys or grown-up people into trouble than to dare them. So what should the Elmwood people do but gather in the school-room on the night in question and organize a Junior League, sending forth defiance to the squire. They would meet without him or his church, they said, and make sure that he would hear it. But they reckoned without their host. The next Sunday morning when they gathered for church and Sunday-school the church was locked, and no sign of Squire Davis about. One of the stewards went up to his house to see about the keys, but though he almost beat the door down, he thought, yet he failed to arouse the deaf housekeeper or find if the squire was at home. Several others went, and at last the minister tried it, all to no avail. They were obliged to go home without their meeting and Sunday-school. Thus the fight went on for several weeks, and the church remained locked.
Embassy after embassy thundered at his door, only to hear the hollow echoes of the knocks or the deaf housekeeper rattling her pans, unconscious of the clatter she made. Once some one thought he heard a chuckle on the inside, much like the sound a miser will make when gloating over his gold. But no one could gain admittance to the house or church.
Thus matters went on for several weeks, and people were getting anxious, for the Sunday-school was being broken up, and the boys were beginning to get restless with no place to go on the long Sundays. At last, one week, the report got out that the church would be open on the next Sunday. No one seemed to know where it came from, but all were willing to believe it. The preacher was notified, and on Sunday morning, a full half-hour early in their eagerness, a large crowd assembled at the church. They were a little surprised to find it locked, for the squire was generally prompt, but did not think much about it for awhile.
At last they began to believe they were victims of a trick, and made inquiry how the report had been circulated, but no one could find just where it did originate. While they were discussing the matter on the doorstep, and almost ready to go home, Squire Davis was sitting in his large arm-chair and grimly smiling over his victory. For he had also heard the report, and knew that just then they were being disappointed.
All at once there came a timid knock at the door. Many a thundering knock had he listened to in the past weeks without moving from his chair. But this knock was so timid and frightened-like that it brought the squire to his feet, and the tears started in his eyes as he thought of his own little girl who used to knock that way at the door of his room after she had been excluded in punishment.
He opened the door, and a little miss of seven summers stood before him.
"Please, sir," she said, "it's most church time, and I've come to tell you. I thought maybe you'd forgot."
"Who are you, my little girl?" he asked, scarce noticing what she said.
"My name is Ruby Allen, sir, and mamma says that I may join the Junior League."
The lines in the old man's face hardened at this mention of the Junior League, and he inquired, grimly: "Where are you going to meet?"
"Why, in the church," said Ruby, in surprise; "and it's almost time to go. If you don't hurry we'll be late."
"Who told you the church would be open?" said the old man, trying to be indignant, but failing while looking into a pair of bright blue eyes that called up old memories.
"God told me," responded Ruby, innocently.
"God told you?" ejaculated the old man. "I don't understand you."

"It's just like this," answered Ruby. "All the big folks has been prayin' that God would open the door for us so we could have church and Sunday-school. So I just prayed for God to soften your heart so you would let us in. We are so sorry we can't have our Sunday-school, and mamma cries every day 'cause Brother Tom is a bad boy on Sunday."
"But how do you know that God will answer your prayer?" asked the old man, tears coming into his eyes.
"Oh, my teacher says if we are good and believe God, that he will give us what we ask for. Hasn't God told you?"
"Yes, my little girl, God sent a little angel and told me, and—I believe we had better be going. This little angel is so much like a little girl that I used to have to love me, until one day a dreadful fever came and took my little darling and her mother at one blow, and ever since I have been a lonely old man with no one to love me."
"Why, I'll be your little girl," said Ruby. "I don't believe you are the cross old man they say you are. I'm going to love you. But come on, or we'll be late."
The simple faith of the child touched a tender chord in his heart, and he took her by the hand and mused as they made their way to the church. He thought how his own heart had rebelled against the fate that took his wife and child from him. He thought of how that wife would have him be, and how his little girl, if she could have seen him as he had been, would have shrunk from him, and he resolved that he would lead a new life.
The people were just preparing to go home when he and Ruby came in sight. A fire was soon made, and they say that Parson Willett never preached better than he did that morning. Then in class-meeting the squire stood up for the first time in many a long year, and told the story of his fight against the will of God, and how God finally sent his angel in the person of a little girl to win him back. There was no further fight against the Junior League. They met that very afternoon, and Ruby was made an officer.
That was several years ago. The squire at once made a deed of the church to a board of trustees for the Methodist church, and everything flourished from that day on. Ever after that the squire and Ruby were warm friends. Often they might be seen walking through the village hand in hand. Then came the day that Squire Davis was no more, and many friends gathered in sadness around his grave. His last act was to bequeath all his wealth to Ruby; for, said he, "The Lord was very good to give me some one to love me after I had mistrusted him." And thus it is written: "A little child shall lead."—Epworth Herald.

A STORY OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

Mr. A. T. Story vouches for the truth of the following incident of the Queen's childhood, which he narrates in the London Quiver. She was at the time but seven or eight years of age, and her heart was set on a certain doll which she had seen in a shop window. She had to wait, however, until she could save the price, six shillings, out of her pocket-money. At last the day came and the coveted doll was paid for and received. The story proceeds as follows:
"And now, with the precious treasure under her arm, the little lady bade the shopkeeper good-afternoon, and was about to step from the door, when a poor, miserably-looking object of a man met her eye. He was standing but a couple of feet away, and seemed as though he were going to speak to her, attracted doubtless by the innocent kindness of her expression, and the tenderness of her blue eyes. But though his lips moved, no sound came from them.
"He stood aside to let her pass—a mute, agonized appeal in his sunken cheeks and quivering chin.
"Did you wish to speak to me?" asked the little lady, staying her steps.
"Encouraged by her winning voice, the poor tramp—for such he was—said, in trembling accents:
"I am very hungry. I would not ask for help if I were not ready to sink with hunger."
"He looked famine from his eyes.
"I am so sorry; I have no money or else—"
"His lips trembled forth a humble 'Thank you, lady,' then he shuffled on his way, hunger impersonate.
"Stay!" murmured the little owner of the new doll. There was a quiver in her childish voice and a moisture in her eyes as she spoke. 'Wait a minute, please.'
"She stopped back into the shop, and

proached the lady behind the counter, and said:
"Oh, please, do you mind taking the doll back and keeping it for me for a few days longer?"
"Certainly I will," replied the shopkeeper; "and you wish me to return you the money?"
"Yes, if you please."
"This was done, and the little lady, hurrying out of the shop, placed the whole of the money in the hands of the starving man.
"He was like one thunderstruck. Never had bounty rained upon him in such profusion before.
"The object of her bounty murmured in a low tone, though loud enough to reach her ear:
"If the Almighty made you a queen, it would not be more than your goodness deserves!"
"Then he hobbled away to satisfy his hunger."

**JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.
PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.**

MAY 9, 1897.

Naomi to Moab and return.—Ruth 1, 2, 6-22.

A DREADFUL CALAMITY.

England, and the English-speaking people everywhere, have lately been greatly interested in the welfare of the people of Armenia, and those parts of India where famine and pestilence have been raging. Great sympathy has been manifested on their behalf, and many thousands of dollars have been subscribed for their relief. This is as it should be.
Our lesson dates back to a famine which occurred several hundreds of years ago. Strange that such a catastrophe should occur in the land of which it was said that it "flowed with milk and honey." God can send his judgments upon the fairest portions of the world, when the people sin against him.

A FAMILY.

Elimelech was the head of this family. His name signifies, "My God, a King." His wife's name was Naomi, which means, "my amiable or pleasant one." Their residence was at Bethlehem, but the famine caused them to remove to Moab, in search of food. Persons in such circumstances suffer more than human language can describe. Be thankful for the supply of your temporal blessings, such as food and raiment. Parents have a right to do all in their power to provide for themselves and little ones, but what of those poor children who have none to care for them?

HARDSHIPS.

The husband and father died in Moab. The two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, married Moabitish women. This was the cause of further sorrow. Persons should never marry whose religious opinions do not harmonize. Too much care cannot be observed in regard to marriage, but, alas, how often it happens that the important matter is entered upon in the most hasty and even sometimes in the most foolish manner. No wonder that so many are miserable in the conjugal relation? In due time the sons also died, and there were thus three widows.

NAOMI'S RETURN.

Verse 6. The loss of her husband and sons made her think of home and friends, and she resolved to return to her own land. The old lady did not want her daughters-in-law to leave their country and accompany her. The conversation between these disconsolate widows is of the most simple and touching kind, and will repay careful perusal.

RUTH.

This was the name of one of the daughters-in-law, who would on no account leave Naomi, her mother-in-law. See verses 15, 16. They took up their abode in Bethlehem, but they were far from being in comfortable circumstances. Ruth went into the harvestfield, and gleaned after the reapers. The field belonged to Boaz, who was a kinsman of her husband, who, when he knew their relationship, manifested great kindness to her. In course of time she became the wife of Boaz, and the mother of Obed.
Ruth's life story, as detailed in our lesson, is one of the most captivating in the English language, and may be considered as illustrative of the Providence of God. The obligations of children to their parents, "Honour thy father and mother." Some time ago, a man died who had been supported for several years by strangers, while some members of his family were living in wealth. Shame upon them! Ruth was an example of filial piety. "They that seek me early shall find me." Imitate good examples, and live so as you may be able to say, "I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth."