

Home Calls.

When the work-day hours are closing,
And the evening twilight falls,
How the homes throughout the city
Send forth their loving calls.

Calls so low, you may not hear them,
But how many hear and smile!
And tired hands and heads so weary,
Are forgotten for the while.

The dear home sounds ring sweetly
In the ears of tolling men,
And, for love of wife and children,
They seek their homes again.

So I sit in a brooding twilight,
And watch as they homeward go,
With glad steps hurrying onward,
To the hearths that love them so.

And I long to cry out to them:
"O, guard the home-love well;
Be tender and true to your dear ones—
How long yours, none can tell!"

For I know there is one among them
Whose heart in sadness roams,
Who hears no call in the twilight,
Save the call to the Home of homes.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 14, 1896.

THE GLEANER.

BY REV. SAMUEL GREGORY.

"She (Ruth) gleaned in the field after the reapers."—Ruth 2. 3.

THE FIRST "POOR-LAW."

You know what is meant by "gleaning." It means picking up corn which has been left lying in the fields after reapers have done their work. Poor people were allowed to gather scattered ears of corn. Moses told the Israelites that they were to allow people to glean, and that farmers must leave the corners of their field unreaped for the poor. That was the first "poor-law." The custom of gleaning, which started in Palestine, prevailed in most countries until reaping machines were invented. Reaping machines do not leave much for the gleaner. So now when a reaping machine has gone over the land, you seldom see girls picking up the corn. In place of them the farmer turns a flock of geese among the stubble. The geese do the gleaning, and get themselves ready for Michaelmas or Christmas.

AN ANCIENT HARVEST-FIELD.

David's great-grandmother went into the field to glean after the reapers. Like most of our farmers, the farmers at Bethlehem were kind-hearted men. The Bible draws the picture of one of them on his farm. At the time of harvest he walked through his cornfields. As he passed by his reapers he said: "The Lord be with you!" The reapers straightened their backs, lifted their hot faces, and replied: "The Lord bless thee!" It was beautiful for "master and man" to give such pleasant "good-mornings" to each other. No wonder such a farmer as Boaz, of Bethlehem, allowed gleaners to go over his land, and carry away fallen corn in their aprons.

FRENCH GIRL-GLEANERS.

If you go to that great picture-gallery, which stands in the middle of Paris—the Louvre—you will see (in the chief room) a picture by Millet, called "The

Gleaners." Two girls wearing sun-bonnets are stooping in a field, and picking up here and there an ear of corn. They are gleaning in the field after the reapers.

"GLEANING" A FIGURE OF SPEECH.

We who live in towns do not know much about cornfields, and if we go to look at them we seldom see any gleaners. Yet all know what "gleaning" means, for the word has become a figure of speech. It represents that patient spirit which is content to do a little at a time, and that picks up good things lying around, as girls picked up corn which reapers had left scattered in the fields. Let us talk about gleaning then—such gleaning as all of us can do.

TOO PROUD TO GLEAN.

In that French picture of the gleaners (which they are so proud of in Paris), the two girls in coal-scuttle bonnets are represented as stooping down to their work. People whose backs are so straight and stiff that they cannot stoop, do not glean much. Pride spoils gleaning.

There is a pride which all should cherish. We ought to have such self-respect, that we should scorn to do mean, paltry, and wicked things. We ought to have the spirit of that young man in the Bible, who said: "How can I do this great wickedness?"

But fancy anyone too proud to learn anything good! There are many who spoil their lives by that foolishness. Always be willing to be taught! Most people can teach you something. Bend your mind to learn. Stoop over your books, and stick to them. Conceit is suitable in an ignoramus but in no one else. John Wesley used to say that to God and man his motto was: "What I know not teach thou me!"

The best of all things can only be gleaned by stooping. You know that when we go to God, we go down on our knees. We stoop low at the feet of Jesus. All pride goes, and we ask him to give to us and to guide us. What we call faith is just throwing away self-conceit, and stretching out empty hands to our Lord and Saviour—the Saviour who said: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted!"

TOO BLIND TO GLEAN.

Then a gleaner must use his eyes. You have eyes, and think you can see, but how much more you could see if you looked earnestly, and trained your sight. When I see all those signal lamps outside Cannon Street or Charing Cross railway stations, I think that if I were on a locomotive I should become muddled, and dash on when I ought to stop the train, or stop the way when I ought to go on with my engine. Yet engine-drivers and guards have learned how to use their eyes, and that is why they bring us home safely.

Let me tell you how a conjurer trained his boy's eyes. The use of a conjurer is to take conceit out of people by showing them how easily they can be deceived, and how little people really see though they think they see everything all the while. To train the boy for a performance called "second-sight," or some such nonsense, this conjurer used to go along a street, and when he came to a shop window containing a great variety of things, the man said to the boy: "We will go slowly past this window. Look at everything in the window. Then on the other side we will stop, and you must tell me all you have seen." When he began that practice the boy could only take in a few objects, but after a while the boy could run past a shop with a hundred different things in the window, take a "snap-shot" at the whole, then shut his eyes, and describe everything and whereabouts it was in the window. That is what training did for him.

When I see how foolishly some young men and women pass their time, I feel as if they could not see much worth living for. They are gleaners with their heads up in the air and their eyes shut. God has given us so many chances of learning, doing, and enjoying good things—if we could but see. Most people see when it is too late. They see what they have missed, and they sing a song about "What might have been!" and cry while they sing it. Such people when they were young were blind gleaners in the field of life.

TOO IMPATIENT TO GLEAN.

A gleaner is content to pick up one ear of corn at a time. Impatient people want a wagon-load of things at a time.

Aesop tells a fable about a crow that found a pitcher containing water. The water was too low in the pitcher for the crow to get his beak near it. Crows are wise and patient, so the crow sat down to think the matter over. Having got the right idea, he turned round and

found a small pebble which he took up and dropped into the pitcher. He looked for another, and dropped that into the pitcher. So he went on until he had dropped fifty pebbles into the pitcher, and in that way lifted the water high enough for him to get at it and drink. If it tires you to find and carry the pebbles, then you cannot get what you want.

In China they tell to boys and girls a funny far-fetched fable to teach them the same lesson. They say (though I can't believe it), that one day an old woman was rubbing a crowbar on a stone. A boy stopped to look (as boys do when anything is going on), and at last he said: "Grandmother, why are you doing that?" She said: "Well, you see, I want a sewing-needle. I haven't got a needle, but I have got a crowbar, so I thought I would rub the crowbar on this stone until it is small enough to do for a needle." That is what they put in Chinese story-books to teach the lesson of "a little at a time"—the lesson of patience.

One straw at a time, that is the way in which a gleaner fills her apron. When I was a child they taught me some verses about a gleaner. I have forgotten most of the verses, but this is one of them:

"She never leaves off or runs out of her place

To play or to idle, or chat,
Except now and then just to wipe her hot face,

Or to fan herself with her broad hat."

A hot sun, a long day, stooping all the while, and one ear of corn at a time—that is gleaners' work.

A little boy I know, said to his mother: "Mother, I don't want to try any more to be good!" "Why?" asked his mother. "Because," he said, "it tires me so!" That little man knew all about the matter. It requires patience to be "good," or to be good for anything. Plenty of people can begin, but so few know how to keep on. As when the boys and girls go gleaning or black-berrying or nutting, they all begin wonderfully, but only part of the number keep at work long enough to bring anything home. So in trying to learn good things or to do good things—in trying to be a Christian many begin and few continue. "Many are called but few are chosen."

"That gleaner-girl whom old people recollect—the girl with brown face and big sun-bonnet, with stooping back and apron full of corn—the gleaner has a lesson for us, if we will but learn it. Work! Patience! Perseverance!"

Jesus said: "The field is the world." This world is a field where God's sun shines upon us, and where God scatters his good gifts. We may all glean our share of blessing and happiness if we will. Sunday is a great gleaning day, and in the House of God and the Word of God we can find things that are for our life. If we are thoughtless, careless, and idle, we are wasting the golden daytime. Hours and moments are like stray ears of corn, which we may snatch and turn to good account. If money lay on the ground we should not pass it by and leave it there. But no money is so valuable as time—the golden time of youth. Go with hearts full of thankfulness and full of trust, and work hard and patiently. Redeem the time! Sow and reap and glean. Then when the harvest of the end of the world arrives, you will come to God rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you.

WONDERS OF THE SEA.

The sea occupies three-fifths of the earth. At the depth of about 3,500 feet waves are not felt. The temperature is the same, varying only a trifle from the ice of the pole to the burning sun of the equator. A mile down, the water has a pressure of over a ton to the square inch. If a box six feet deep were filled with sea water and allowed to evaporate under the sun, there would be two inches of salt left on the bottom. Taking the average depth of the ocean to be three miles, there would be a layer of pure salt 230 feet thick on the bed of the Atlantic. The water is colder at the bottom than at the surface. In the many bays on the coast of Norway, the water often freezes at the bottom before it does above.

Waves are very deceptive. To look at them in a storm, one would think the water travelled. The water stays in the same place, but motion goes on. Sometimes in storms these waves are forty feet high, and travel fifty miles an hour,—more than twice as fast as the swiftest steamer.

The distance from valley to valley is generally fifteen times the height; hence a wave five feet high will extend over

seventy-five feet of water. The force of the sea dashing on Bell Rock is said to be seventeen tons to the square yard. Evaporation is a wonderful power in drawing the water from the sea. Every year a layer of the entire sea fourteen feet deep, is taken up into the clouds. The winds bear their burden into the land, and the water comes down in rain upon the fields to flow back at last through rivers. The depth of the sea presents an interesting problem. If the Atlantic were lowered 6,464 feet, the distance from shore to shore would be half as great, or 1,500 miles. If lowered a little more than three miles, say 18,680 feet, there would be a road of dry land from Newfoundland to Ireland. This is the plain on which the great Atlantic cables were laid.

The Mediterranean is quite shallow. A drying up of 660 feet would leave three different seas, and Africa would be joined with Italy. The British Channel is more like a pond, which accounts for its choppy waves. It has been found difficult to get correct soundings of the Atlantic. A midshipman of the navy overcame the difficulty, and a shot weighing thirty pounds carries down the line. A hole is bored through the sinker, through which a rod of iron is passed, moving easily back and forth. In the end of the bar a cup is dug out, and the inside coated with lard. The bar is made fast to a line, and a sling holds the shot on. When the bar, which extends below the ball, touches the earth, the sling unbooks and the shot slides off. The lard in the end of the bar holds some of the sand, or whatever may be on the bottom, and a drop shuts over the cup to keep the water from washing the sand out. When the ground is reached, a shock is felt as if an electric current had passed through the line.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

NOVEMBER 22, 1896.

Hymn 19; vs. 4-6. Rev. 7. 14-17.

"To him I owe my life and breath."

"To heaven, the place of his abode."

"Since from his bounty I receive."

The verses of which the above are the first lines in each, are to be committed to memory. The advantage of doing this will not be questioned by those who hope to meet their loved ones in heaven. We cannot insist too earnestly that our young friends should make themselves familiar with those beautiful hymns. The sentiments which they contain will become good seed, which will in the near future bring forth a glorious harvest.

THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN.

Whence came they? Out of great tribulation. Tribulation may signify all manner of afflictions, sufferings, privations, persecutions, or whatever else may have been theirs while in this world. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Through much tribulation Christians enter the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

THE CHANGE THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED

They have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." White is an emblem of purity; uncleanness is an emblem of sin. Being washed in the blood of the Lamb, signifies that the saints in glory have been saved from sin, by their faith in Christ, who loved them and gave himself for them, and in return they exclaim, "We love him because he first loved us."

THEIR POSITION AND EMPLOYMENT.

"They stand before the throne of God." This is a wonderful position of honour. A wonderful change from labour and toil to stand near the throne of the King of kings in glory. They serve God day and night in the temple of glory, and are constantly in the presence of God and the Lamb, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. No language can describe their perpetual enjoyment. Hunger and thirst are forever unknown. Sickness and sorrow never come there. They are never scorched by heat, nor chilled with cold, but are forever happy, and know neither sickness nor pain.

WOULD YOU JOIN THE HEAVENLY COMPANY?

Now begin to make preparation. Break off your sins by repentance. Believe on Jesus Christ for salvation. Do not expect a meetness for heaven by any meritorious acts. You go there as sinners saved by grace. Being made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Heaven is a holy place, and none but those who are holy can pass through the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem. Come, then, dear young friends, accept Jesus as your Saviour.