

PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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FUNERAL PROCESSION.

The people of Palestine and of the East can do nothing without making a great noise. Whether it is a wedding or a funeral they fill the air with tumult. At a marriage procession the throbbing of drums and droning of pipes is almost deafening. At a funeral procession the wailing of the hired mourners is still worse. This strange piercing cry is compared in Scripture to the wailing of the dragon and the crying of the screech-owl. To this reference is made in Mark 5:38. Jesus coming to the house or the ruler of the synagogue, "seeing the tumult, and them that wept greatly, said unto them, why make ye this ado and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."

Often the whole kith and kin of the deceased join in frantic demonstrations of grief, tearing their clothes and hair and throwing dust upon their heads. At the funeral procession, this tumult is redoubled in violence.

We saw in the great city of Cairo several processions like that represented in the cut. They were often headed by crippled, blind people, who made a most pitiful wailing as they went through the streets.

This cut is one of the many which will illustrate a series of articles in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1896 on *Every-day Life in Bible Lands*. It will describe marriage and funeral customs, trades and industries, modes of travel, costumes and dresses, domestic and business life and religious usages of the people. These will throw great light on many passages of Scripture, and will be of special interest to every Bible reader. Many teachers find these articles of great service in illustrating the lessons, and many schools have taken from two to ten copies as being cheaper and more attractive than library books. The schools will be furnished in quantities of two or more at \$1.60 a year, or eighty cents for six months.

WHITTIER'S BOYHOOD.

BY PROF. BRANDER MATTHEWS.

In his boyhood Whittier had scant instruction, for the district school was open only a few weeks in winter. He had but few books; there were scarcely thirty in the house. The one book he read and read again until he had it by heart almost was the Bible; and the Bible was always the book which exerted the strongest literary influence upon him. But when he was fourteen a teacher came who lent him books of travel and opened a new world to him. It was this teacher who brought to the Whittiers one evening a volume of Burns and read aloud some of the poems, after explaining the Scotch dialect. Whittier begged to borrow the book, which was almost the first poetry he had ever read. It was this volume of Burns which set Whittier to making verses himself, serving both as the inspiration and the model of his earlier poetic efforts. The Scottish poet, with his homely pictures of life as bare and as hardy as that of New England then, first revealed to the American poet what poetry really was, and how it might be made out of the actual facts of his own life.

That book of Burns' poems had an even

stronger influence on Whittier than the odd volume of the *Spectator* which fell into the hands of Franklin had on the American author whose boyhood is most like Whittier's. Franklin also was born in a humble and hard-working family, doing early his share of the labour, and having but a meagre education, although always longing for learning. It is true that Irving and Cooper and Bryant did not graduate from college, but they could have

ever have since, every boy, and girl too, was taught to run. And as far as we can judge by the statues they have left behind them, there were very few hollow-cheated, spindle-legged boys among the Greeks. The Persian boy was taught to speak the truth, run, riddle, and shoot with the bow.

The English boy is encouraged to run. In fact, at some of the great English public schools, boys of thirteen and fourteen years of age, like Tom Brown and East at Rugby,

By playing ball every day for hours in the open air; by exercising his arms, back, and leg muscles in throwing, batting, running, and sliding; by going to bed early and giving up all bad habits in preparation for the games, a boy stores up strength, which he can draw on all his life long—that is why every boy should be an athlete. But not every boy can play football or baseball. He may not be heavy or strong enough; he may never be able to acquire the knack of catching or batting the ball. Every boy can become a runner.—*St. Nicholas*.



BLIND MEN LEADING A FUNERAL PROCESSION, CAIRO, EGYPT.

done so, had they persevered, and Emerson and Longfellow and Hawthorne did get as much of the higher education as was then possible in America. But neither Franklin nor Whittier ever had the chance, it was as much as they could do to pick up the merest elements of an education.—*St. Nicholas*.

RUNNING—FOR BOYS.

BY S. COVILLE, JR.

EVERY boy should learn to run. In Greece, in the days when men and women took better care of their bodies than they

can cover six and eight miles cross-country in the great hare-and-hound runs. Every boy is turned out twice a week, out of doors, and made to run, and fill himself full of pure fresh air and sunshine, and gain more strength and life than any amount of weight-pulling or dumb-bell work in stuffy gymnasiums would give him. See the result—the English boys, as a whole, are a stronger set than American boys. Every English school-boy is to some extent an athlete. And that is what all boys should be. Not because football, baseball, and tennis are valuable in themselves, but for the good they do in strengthening boys' bodies.

A FORGIVING DOG.

When the dog tax was first imposed in France, people set to work to get rid of their useless dogs. A Frenchman had an old Newfoundland dog, which he coaxed to the river side, told him to lie down, tied all his four feet together with a rope, and pushed him into the Seine. The dog in his struggles loosened the rope, and with great difficulty, panting for breath, scrambled up the steep bank. There stood his master, stick in hand, to drive him back. He struck out at the dog, and then, coming to close quarters, gave him a violent push, in doing which he caught his own balance and himself fell into the water. His hopes of life would have been very few indeed if the dog had not been the "better man of the two." But the dog, for getting the treatment he had just received, plunged of his own accord into the river, where he had so nearly met his death, and spent his remaining strength in saving his would-be murderer. It was a hard struggle, but he came off conqueror, and the two walked home together, the one triumphant, the other, let us hope, repentant.

A FORCIBLE NOTICE.

SMOKERS are too apt to disregard the rights of their immediate neighbours.

George and Henry Grafton, to fill their time during vacation and to make a little money, set up a candy and popcorn store, with their parents' permission, in an unoccupied shop on the village street.

"Now," said George, "we shall have a good many ladies among our customers; and it won't do to let the men smoke in here."

"Oh, no," said Henry, "we'll put up a big sign, 'No Smoking Allowed.'"

"I guess we'd better be a little more polite in our notice," said George, "so that we sha'n't offend any of our smoking customers."

The boys put their heads together to invent a polite "no-smoking" notice, and at last, with a pleasing sense of having done exactly the right thing, hung up the following neatly lettered inscription:

"Customers will please take Notice that if they wish to Smoke in Here they will please either extinguish their Pipes or else Go Outdoors."

When a friend is in trouble don't annoy him by asking if there is anything you can do; think of something appropriate and do it.