

plants, and Greenland might be what its name indicates. The absence of icebergs off the coasts of Newfoundland and Iceland would result in a much warmer climate in those islands, where now the crops often fail.

Ice, too, plays an important part in the economy of nature. Thus, if water never froze, snow, hail, and hoarfrost would cease. The loosening of soils and the disintegration of rocks by the frost, and many other now vital effects, would be lost. In short, the absence of ice would be on the one hand an incalculable disaster, and on the other hand a great boon.

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, JUNE 4, 1898.

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PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JUNE 12, 1898.

FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

It has been beautifully said that in this miracle our Lord "turned the desert into a banquet hall." The multitude had followed Jesus from the towns and villages, and when the night was come they had nothing to eat, for, said the disciples, we are in a desert place. Andrew said, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fishes." These were not big four-pound loaves such as we have, but little thin cakes, like small pancakes, which he had brought probably for his own meal, and two of the small fishes of the Sea of Galilee, it is likely not larger than our herring or perch. Well might Andrew say, "What are they among so many?"

But Jesus demanded that they should sit down by companies upon the green grass. What a beautiful touch of nature that is! The word "company" is the same used for describing flower beds and seems to allude to the bright-coloured dresses which the people wore. I once saw a great picnic on an Eastern holiday, and the people by hundreds sitting on a hillside in their dresses of white and yellow and purple and red looked like great flower beds. The sight made me think of the multitude whom our Lord fed on the hillside. They each had some little provender, as thin cakes, onions, and other vegetables. They kindly made room for myself and the horse on which I rode, and fed the horse some stalks of lettuce.

We learn from this passage that a little with God's blessing is better than a great deal without it—that God can multiply the little according to our need, and supply all our wants out of the richness of his fulness. We note, too, what a generous giver God is. Not only did the whole multitude of five thousand eat and were filled, but the fragments that remained were a great deal more than they had to begin with.

We notice, also, that though Christ could so multiply the loaves and fishes at a word, yet he allowed nothing to be wasted. He said, "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." Let us learn herefrom to trust our heavenly Father not only for our daily bread, but for every good thing that we need, to give thanks for his bountiful provision, but not to presume upon his goodness by wasting what he gives us.

## THE COST OF A DINNER.

The interdependence of man is well illustrated by the following statement made by a Chicago paper:

Recently a gentleman who is fond of arithmetic made up his mind that he would find out how much a dinner really cost. This gentleman asked how much a simple dinner that he was eating cost, and he was told seventy-five cents.

He contradicted this and then made out the following statement about the cost of that dinner: The pepper, he said, came from ten thousand miles away. It grew on a little bush about eight feet high, which must have had a growth of at least five years. The pepper was picked green; it had to be dried in the sun, and this meant employing women. It took one ship and one thousand miles of railroad to bring the pepper to the United States. The flour of which the bread was made came from Dakota; some one owned the land, and that meant the investing of capital, and then he had also to pay wages to the workingmen. The flour had to be ground, and the building of the mill and the plant, or machinery, meant more money invested. The millers had to be paid, coopers had to be paid for making the barrels, and,

Well, Mary, tell us what 'furlough' means."

"It means a mule," said Mary.

"Oh, no," replied the teacher, "it doesn't mean a mule."

"Indeed it does," said Mary. "I have a book at home that says so."

"Well," said the teacher, now thoroughly interested, "you may bring the book to school, and we will see about it."

The next day Mary brought the book, and in some triumph opened to a page where there was the picture of a soldier standing beside a mule. Below the picture were the words: "Going home on his furlough."

## A HOPELESS CASE.

A teacher in a Sunday mission-school at the west end of Boston had a boy in her class who seemed to be proof against every good influence. It was a wonder that she secured his attendance for any length of time; but by her tact and kindness she held her other pupils, and he came apparently for company's sake, and for the fun and mischief he could stir up among the other scholars.

He gave no signs that her teachings had touched his moral nature—or, in



FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

of course, the wood of which the barrels were made had to be cut and sawed and shaped, and this meant the employing of more men. Then the flour had to be shipped over the railroad and handled again by cartmen before it came into the house.

The tea on the table came from China, and the coffee from South America. The codfish had to be brought from Maine.

The salt came from the Indian reservation in the northwestern part of New York State. The peaches in the cake came from the Spice Islands in the Indian archipelago. The canned peaches came from California, and they, too, represented the employment of capital and labour. The little dinner represented, directly or indirectly, the employment of five hundred million dollars of capital and five million men.

## A FURLOUGH ON FOUR LEGS.

The children of the reading class were reciting, and as they read, the teacher asked the meaning of various words. Finally the word "furlough" was encountered.

"What does 'furlough' mean?" asked the teacher.

There was no immediate reply, and the teacher asked the question again. A little girl held up her hand.

fact, that he had any moral nature. He grew apparently more unprincipled as he grew older, until all she had done for him seemed wasted pains, but she continued to treat him kindly, and never forgot him in her prayers.

One day she heard of his arrest for complicity in a recent burglary. She did what she could to secure him legal counsel in his trial, and through the two years' imprisonment that followed occasionally visited him. He never gave any indication of penitence. His sullen, defiant temper greatly discouraged her; but her faith and love were invincible.

He disappeared after his release. All who knew him supposed he was dead or lost under a feigned name somewhere in the criminal herd of the cities.

Nearly thirty years passed. The lady went to California. In the meantime she had married. Her children were grown, and she, with her husband, was visiting friends in the Pacific States. In one city where she stayed a question of political reform was agitating the people, pending a change in the municipal government. Her host and hostess were to entertain one of the candidates for the mayoralty. "He is our man," they said, "and we hope to elect him, for he is an earnest Christian, and stands for high principle in public and in private life."

The gentleman came, and was about to

be introduced to the visitor, when, to her surprise, he spoke her name. She could not recognize him in the handsome, bearded man before her, but he was her bad boy of the Boston West End Sunday-school.

"I lived a reckless life for several years after I left Boston," he told her, "but I was not able to forget your great patience and kindness, nor some of the things you said to me. Under God I owe what I have to day of true manhood to you."

## The Dog Under the Waggon.

"Come, wife," said good old farmer Gray, "Put on your things, 'tis market day—And we'll be off to the nearest town, There and back ere the sun goes down. Spot? No, we'll leave old Spot behind." But Spot he barked and Spot he whined. And soon made up his doggish mind To follow under the waggon.

Away they went at a good round pace, And joy came into the farmer's face: "Poor Spot," said he, "did want to come, But I'm very glad he's left at home; He'll guard the barn, and guard the cot, And keep the cattle out of the lot." "I'm not so sure of that," thought Spot, The dog under the waggon.

The farmer all his produce sold, And got his pay in yellow gold, Then started homeward after dark, Home through the lonely forest. Hark! A robber springs from behind a tree—Your money or else your life," said he, The moon was up, but he didn't see The dog under the waggon.

Spot ne'er barked and Spot ne'er whined; The farmer all his produce sold, He dragged him down in the mire and dirt, And tore his coat and tore his shirt, Then held him fast on the miry ground. The robber uttered not a sound—While his hands and feet the farmer bound, And tumbled him into the waggon.

So Spot he saved the farmer's life, The farmer's money, the farmer's wife; An, now a hero grand and gay, A silver collar he wears to-day; Among his friends, among his foes, And everywhere his master goes, He follows on his horny toes,— The dog under the waggon.

## WHEN YOU GO FISHING.

When you go fishing, boys, always kill the fish as soon as they are taken from the water by a sharp blow with a stick on the back of the head.

They keep better, says "Our Dumb Animals," eat better, and are in all respects better than those that suffer just before dying.

The best fishermen in Europe and America know this—the suffering of any animal just before dying always tends to make the meat unwholesome and sometimes poisonous.

## THE DARK SKIN ACCOUNTED FOR.

A problem that has troubled some people is announced as settled by The Christian Educator, which says:

"It is an established fact that a race of people living in a warm climate have much darker skin than one living in a cold climate. The nearer one lives to the equator the less clothes one is compelled to wear; the flesh, being unprotected from the burning rays of the sun, becomes greatly tanned; the longer it is exposed the darker it becomes. Probably after the confusion of tongues, the colour of the tribes, migrating from one climate to another, in the next generation, was not noticeable to the eye, but in the succeeding generations it naturally became more marked. The skin that was unprotected became the darker."

## GOOD FOR MANY THINGS.

What the palm-tree does for the tropics, the reindeer does, to a certain extent, for the frigid zone. He furnishes food, clothing, bowstrings and cords, knife-handles, and, beyond anything that the palm can boast of, he furnishes swift locomotion where there are neither horses, boats, nor cars.

He travels ten miles an hour, and draws two or three hundred pounds. His fur in winter is a white and greyish-brown. In summer he wears a very dark coat. He lives on a kind of white lichen in winter, often scraping it up from under a depth of snow. His eyes and ears are quick, but his nose is sharper than all.

There are 1,425 characters in the twenty-four books Dickens wrote.