

PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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[No. 1.

STORIES OF THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

The following three poems are taken from Longfellow's Miracle Play in "The Golden Legend," which in turn derives them from the apocryphal gospels of the infancy and childhood of our Lord. There are about fifty apocryphal gospels, some entire, others in fragments, of others we have nothing but the name. Some of these are of ancient Syrian origin, some old Coptic or Egyptian, some are in Arabic. There were also apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, Epistles and Revelations. While possessing no canonical authority, they are curious as showing the views very early held about our Lord and the apostles. In their childish legends and miracles they differ in a world-wide manner from the inspired narrative of the Scriptures.—Ed.

In the legend the little Jesus makes sparrows of clay and claps his hands, when they all fly off. When the pitcher which Jesus is carrying breaks, he brings the water in the corner of his robe. When the couch which Joseph is making for a customer proves too short, Jesus stretches it to the proper length. These puerile stories are given with much variety in early art, and are in striking contrast to the simple account of the Scriptures, which sums up the boyhood of Christ in the words, "And he was subject unto them. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."



NAZARETH.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

The Rabbi Ben Israel, with a long beard, sitting on a high stool, with a rod in his hand.

RABBI.

I am the Rabbi Ben Israel,
Throughout this village
known full well,
And, as my scholars all
will tell,
Learned in things
divine;
The Kabala and the Tal-
mud hear
Than all the prophets
prize I more,
For water is all Bible lore,
But mishna is strong
wine.

Come hither, Judas Is-
cariot,
Say, if thy lesson thou
hast got
From the Rabbinical book
or not:
Why howl the dogs at
night?

JUDAS.

In the Rabbinical book it
saith
The dogs howl, when
with icy breath
Great Samael, the Angel
of Death,
Takes through the town
his flight!

RABBI.

Well have ye answered,
every one!
Now, little Jesus, the car-
penter's son,
Let us see how thy task
is done.
Canst thou thy letters
say?

Aleph. JEWS.

RABBI.

What next? Do not stop yet!
Go on with all the alphabet.
Come, Aleph, Beth; dost thou for-
get?
Cock's soul! thou'dst rather play!

JEWS.

What Aleph means I fain would
know,
Before I any further go!

RABBI.

Oh, by Saint Peter! wouldst thou
no?

Come hither, boy, to me.
As surely as the letter Jod
Once cried aloud and spake to God,
So surely shalt thou feel this rod,
And punished shalt thou be!

*[Here Rabbi Ben Israel shall
lift up his rod to strike Jesus,
and his right arm shall be
paralyzed.]*

CROWNED WITH FLOWERS.
Jesus sitting among his playmates
crowned with flowers as their King.

BOYS.

We spread our garments on the
ground!
With fragrant flowers thy head is
crowned.

While like a guard we stand around,
And hail thee as our King!
Thou art the new King of the Jews!
Nor let the passers-by refuse
To bring that homage which men use
To majesty to bring.

*[Here a traveller goes by and
the boys lay hold of his gar-
ments.]*

BOYS.

Come hither! and all reverence pay
Unto our Monarch crowned to-day!
Then go rejoicing on your way,
In all prosperity!



WOMAN OF NAZARETH.



CARPENTER'S SHOP AT NAZARETH.