

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Nutting.

Jack Frost had been on a visit here,
This morning the ground was white;
From many a tree he had plucked the
leaves,
That for days had been so bright;
His fingers have opened the nutshells
brown,
And have sent the ripe nuts clattering
down.

Come, boys and girls, to the woods away!
away!

What better fun can there be,
Than to search for nuts in the rustling
leaves,
Beneath the old walnut tree,
While the air is crisp, and clear are the
skies,
And clad in her richest robes Nature lies?

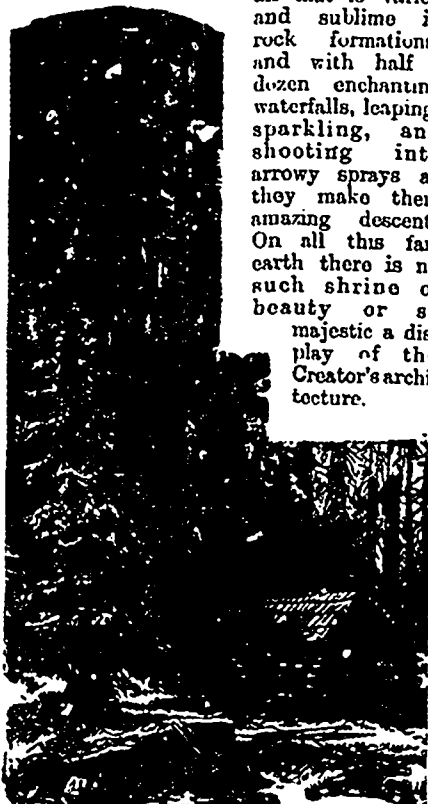
And when the cold winds of winter blow,
And the ground with snow is white,
We'll bring the hidden treasure out,
And sit in the bright firelight;
And the nuts we'll crack with jest and
song,
And brighten the winter evenings along.

THE BIG TREES OF CALIFORNIA.

BY THE REV. HUGH JOHNSTON, D.D.

Why do so many Canadians go to Europe for rare sights and scenes before they have studied fairly the resources and wonders of their own continent? The traveller need not go to Switzerland for bold and rare mountain effects, for the Canadian Rockies will afford panoramas which cannot be rivalled in the Old World, from the Alps to the Himalayas. He need not sail up the Rhine for grand river scenery, for nothing can excel that of the golden-sanded Fraser, in British Columbia, as it breaks through the rocky battlements of the Cascade range. He need not coast along the shores of classic Greece to find an archipelago, with isles like crystal gems set in a silver sea. One has but to navigate that wealth of waters, Puget's Sound, or the Gulf of Georgia, to find for four hundred miles along the shores of the youngest and most distant province of our own Dominion, an inland sea studded with islands of every form and beauty—a Western Cyclades. And if he wants a sublime Apocalypse, a picture that shall live in the memory and haunt the soul like a vision of angels, or a scene of fairy-land, he has but to make a pilgrimage to the wonderful Yosemite—a valley shut in by walls of yellowish granite, rising perpendicularly from three-quarters to a mile in height, having

all that is varied and sublime in rock formations, and with half a dozen enchanting waterfalls, leaping, sparkling, and shooting into arrowy sprays as they make their amazing descent. On all this fair earth there is no such shrine of beauty or so majestic a display of the Creator's architecture.



GARIN IN REDWOOD GROVE.



TUNNEL THROUGH BIG TREE.

The Pacific coast has a fauna and a flora of its own. It is almost at the peril of one's reputation for veracity that he records some of the wonders of vegetation, especially as they relate to flowers, fruits, plants and trees. It is an old saying that a traveller must not remark more than half that he has seen if he does not wish to be disbelieved. I suppose our ladies, who take such pains to cultivate the rare and beautiful fuchsia, will open their eyes to hear that there they climb up to the house-top and have trunks as large as one's arm. On the Fraser River they grow beets, some of which weigh one hundred pounds each. But the biggest of all things, in the way of botany, are the mammoth trees of the groves of Mariposa. We felt that all the forests we had seen in this country were but underbrush, when in British Columbia we saw monarchs of the forests, the fir tree rising occasionally to the height of three hundred feet, and the cedar measuring a circumference of forty feet; but how their pride and glory were forgotten in the presence of the famous Big Trees of California! Fancy a tree which required five men twenty-five days to fell it, boring it off with pump-augers, and then taking three days to make the proud thing fall after it had been completely severed from the trunk, such was the breadth of its base. The late Bishop Kingsley computed that on the stump of that particular tree a house could be built for a newly-married couple, giving them a good sized parlour, dining-room, kitchen, two bedrooms, a pantry, two clothes presses, and then have a little room to spare. Think of the hollow trunk of another tree through which you could ride on horseback without endangering your silk hat, or another so large that you could drive a stage-coach, filled with passengers inside and outside, through its trunk. Imagine, if you can, the size of one of these fathers of the forest when it contains more than

one-half a million feet of sound inch lumber, or another which would make a thousand cords of four-foot wood, with a hundred cords of bark, which, burning at the rate of a cord a month, would last a frugal household just ninety-one years. There are several groves of these mammoth trees. There are three Mariposa groves within two miles of each other. One of these groves contains eighty six trees.

The Tuolumne grove contains ten trees. The Calaveras grove has over ninety mammoth trees, and one of the fallen trees must have been four hundred and fifty feet high, and forty feet in diameter.

The Big Tree is a "Sequoia" related in the closest manner to the redwood. Dr. Seeman called it the "Sequoia Gigantea," and it bears that name with botanists, though Prof. Lindley gave it the name "Wellingtonia Gigantea."

These

MAHMOOTH TREES

grow in a deep fertile soil, and stand in the midst of other trees which would be considered giants if set down among the trees of our forests. What a new idea of the magnificence of nature one gets as he glances at one of these immense trunks, and then looks up and up to try to comprehend their height. Sublime sight! Each tree fills you with wonder as you gaze upon it. These trees measure from seventy to a hundred feet in circumference. The bark is spongy, is formed in layers, reddish brown in colour, and very thick, often measuring not less than eighteen inches. The wood is soft, elastic, straight-grained, light when dry, and of a bright cinnamon brown colour, which gives gaiety to the forest, making "sunshine in the shady place." It is very durable, very much like our red cedar. What struck us as remarkable was the size of the cones. We picked up the cones of smaller conifers; they were half as long as one's arm,

and very much thicker, but what do you suppose is the size of the cones of these gigantic trees? Not larger than a hen's egg. The leaves, too, are very small, and of a bright green colour. The seeds are very tiny, not more than a quarter of an inch long, one-sixth of an inch wide, and thin as writing-paper. An apple seed would weigh down a dozen of them. It takes 50,000 of them to weigh a pound! and yet these little tiny germs have wrapped in them such magnificent structures. What a lesson! The smallest of all seeds producing the greatest of all trees. Thus God proceeds from the least to the greatest!

The age of these trees is variously estimated according to the different methods of counting the rings—probably many of them are not less than three thousand years old. Twenty-six centuries have passed since Rome was founded, yet before Romulus was heard of these trees were growing. When Plato opened his academy in the groves of Athens; when the beautiful Esther was Queen of Persia, and Mordecai prime minister; nay, when Solomon was in all his glory, they were springing up. They were waving in proud majesty when the shepherds of the Judean hills heard the song of the angels, and the glad announcement that Christ was born in Bethlehem. They stood, the giant cedars of God, when the Christian Church was founded. What tides of human history have rolled away since they first thrust their green spires from the ground! What mighty sermons in those trees! Thirty centuries seemed to be looking down upon us from their lofty tops. As long as they remain upon the earth they will be the wonder of the world, and long generations coming after us will gaze upon them as among the marvellous works of God.

'CAUSE HE MEANT TO.

Lord Charles Beresford is the British admiral commanding the powerful fleet which guards the Mediterranean Sea for Queen Victoria. When he was a boy his teachers found him very stupid. He either couldn't or wouldn't learn, and all idea of sending him to the university had to be given up. On his thirteenth birthday his father determined to start him in life. Collier's Weekly reports the conversation. The purpose which the boy showed has carried him almost to the head of the navy.

"What is it to be, my boy the army, the navy, or the church?"

"The navy, sir."

"And why the navy, boy?"

"'Cause I'd like to be an admiral, like Nelson."

"Pshaw, like Nelson! Why Nelson?"

"'Cause I want to."

"But even if you were to join the navy, why do you think you will ever become an admiral, Charlie?"

"'Cause I mean to," was the blunt reply. He had his wish and entered the navy.



SECTION OF BIG TREE.