

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## OUT IN THE STORM AND AT HOME BY THE FIRESIDE.

WHEN the wind is whistling round the house and the snow covers all the earth and comes blowing down in wild gusts from the skies, flying wickedly into the faces of the unfortunate people who have to face the storm, how cosy it is to get beside the bright fire and sit there dreaming and watching the sparkling coals and feeling the pleasant glow of the fire in our faces! The dreary moaning or loud howling of the wind only makes us feel all the more contented with our comfortable surroundings. How happy the children in our picture look sitting by the fireplace! The book is thrown aside for the far greater enjoyment of building castles in Spain and telling each other wonderful stories of the strange things to be seen in the coals.

But a glance at the picture above reminds us that there is a pitiful as well as a bright side to the bitter winter snow-storms. This is "hard times" for the little birds who cannot find the worms for food when the ground is buried in its white mantle, and they are often either frozen to death or starved.

Many boys and girls remember the poor little birds, and each morning gather a handful of crumbs and throw them on the snow for the birds' breakfast. These thoughtful boys and girls are soon known by the birds, who come flocking around, greedily picking up the crumbs as they are thrown out for them. It is a very pretty sight to watch them hopping on the snow, picking up the crumbs, and to see how saucy the little things become. Sometimes they almost will hop over one's feet so very friendly do they become.

## THE HERO OF THE "BAL TIC."

BY LAURA DAYTON EAKIN.

"I'll give you five minutes, you young rascal!" said the captain taking out his watch.

Dead silence fell on the crowd, save for the sobbing of the women. The boy so roughly addressed was on his knees, with his manacled hands clasped and his eyes lifted to heaven. Perhaps he was praying, I do not know; but after a moment, he reiterated quite calmly what he had said before:

"I will not tell a lie. I promised my mother. I did not take the money. I cannot confess, because I know nothing about the crime."

There was rather an elderly man, one of the steerage passengers evidently, peering from behind the captain's broad back. Nobody noticed the strained, wild look in his eyes, nor the twitching of his muscles, as he caught the little lad's brave words. After a little, he pushed his way around until he could get a full view of the wretched little fellow's face. Then he stood still, gazing at him.

"Three minutes more!" said the captain, "and you go down into the hold again. Come boy! Once for all, tell us what became of Dick Johnson's money."

The boy swayed to and fro in his anguish.

He had been in that awful cell in the vessel's hold for three days and nights already, with nothing but bread and water to eat. The foul odours seemed to have permeated his whole system. How could he be let down again by that cruel rope passed under his arms! How could he return to the rats and slimy things ready for their second

the money had never left his person, but when one night he thought to count it over, revelling in imaginings of what it would buy, it was gone! Nobody had been about the bunks save this poor child, whose duty it was to put them to rights, and they were all convinced that in some inexplicable way he had stolen it. I will

"I took it," he said. "There it is!" Then he folded his arms.

They crowded around the child, and the women kissed him, and thanked God for his deliverance; and when the captain went to grasp his hand, it fell limp and lifeless from his grasp, and he sank an unconscious heap upon the floor. When he had quite recovered, the captain sent for him to come into the saloon, and there a little girl presented him with a purse in testimony of the passengers' regard for his brave conduct, and on the card attached were these words:

"For the hero of the *Baltic*."

When the *Baltic* ran into port, the officers of the law took possession of the real criminal. After a few weeks he was tried and found guilty; but through the captain's influence, which he was urged to exert in the man's favour by the lad he had so wronged, he was let off with a light sentence. Let us hope he may repent sincerely, and turn from his evil ways forever. We are glad he had manliness enough to at last declare the innocence of the boy.

## HOW TO READ WITH PROFIT.

READING is companionship, education, culture. It upbuilds and furnishes and beautifies the soul. It develops confidence, enriches conversation, and cultivates grace. The knowledge of good books "is the food of youth, the delight of age, the ornament of prosperity, the comfort of adversity." It is an open door to the best society, a stepping stone to the highest fame, a crown of honour that outshines the sun. These things being true, it is one of life's necessities that the young should read good books and not weary therein. The following suggestions will help to profit in reading:

1. Plan your reading. Select the books to be read far in advance. Prefer books that are old enough and good enough to be classical, attractive if possible, pure always. Books with beards are better than beardless books.
2. Vary your reading. Follow romance with history, history with biography, travel, art, science, philosophy, religion.
3. Limit your reading. Know a few books well rather than many books indifferently. Intensive is better than extensive reading.
4. Fix your reading. To this end read carefully, weigh thoughts, talk them over to yourself and with others, try to remember them.
5. Time your readings. Have a book hour each day if possible. Especially, however, utilize fragments of time for a few pages of reading.
6. Enrich your reading. This do by looking up all allusion to history, poetry, art, mythology, persons, places, etc.
7. Preserve your reading. Own, if possible, every book you read; mark choice passages in them; make comparisons of them; often commune with them.

These seven things remember, namely: plan, vary, limit, fix, time, enrich, and preserve your reading will be one of the most profitable investments of your life.



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horrid carnival! He could say he threw the money, Dick Johnson's bag of English gold, into the ocean, or that he burnt it in the engine fires. He could confess his mother's son a thief and a liar, but would he? Even the captain's breath came fast, and the mate's cheeks paled as he watched the minutes tick away. A week had passed since the sailor missed his treasured coins. The key to his chest in which he had placed

not tell you what he had suffered meanwhile at their hands. Now it had come to the captain's ears.

"Let him go!" he said, returning his watch to his pocket, and the grim old sailor reached for the rope. But a voice from behind cried:

"Wait!" And the man from behind the captain came close up to this little hero. He threw down the gold before them.