

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. V.

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 14, 1885

No. 23.

WHAT THE MOTHERS SAY.

YES, I know there are stains on my carpet,
The traces of small muddy boots;
And I see your fair tapestry glowing,
And spotless with blossoms and fruits.

And I know that my walls are disfigured
With prints of small fingers and hands;
And that your own household most truly
In immaculate purity stands.

And I know that my parlour is littered
With many old treasures and toys;
While your own is in daintiest odor,
Unharm'd by the presence of boys.

And I know that my room is invaded
Quite boldly all hours of the day,
While you sit in yours unmolested,
And dream the soft quiet away.

Yes, I know there are four little bedsides
Where I must stand watchful each night,
While you go out in your carriage,
And flash in your dresses so bright.

Now, I think I'm a neat little woman,
I like my house orderly, too,
And I'm fond of all dainty belongings;
Yet would not change places with you.

No, keep your fair home with its order,
Its freedom from bother and noise,
And keep your own laudible leisure;
But give me my four splendid boys.

THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

The camel is well called the "Ship of the Desert." Supplied by nature with wonderful store-places for food and drink, it can subsist for a long time with but very slight nourishment. The hump which we in our childhood days imagined was especially provided to afford a seat for the rider, is a reservoir of fat from which the camel draws nourishment, so that sometimes when the animals come in from a long journey, the hump is greatly diminished. The countries adjoining the desert are almost as effectually separated as if a sea rolled between, and were it not for this "Ship of the Desert," the separation would be greater. The desert is the camel's home. He can eat the scanty herbage that springs up here and there, and which no other creature would deign to touch. His foot is so adapted to the sandy ground that he can travel without difficulty where a horse would fall exhausted on the yielding soil before half his day's journey was accomplished. But stranger still is the wonderful provision which enables these patient creatures to toil beneath the burning sun for days without drinking. They have been used in explorations in New Mexico and California, and the commander of one expedition testifies that camels have carried water for the mules used by the men sometimes for more than a week without once tasting it themselves.

THE NEEDLE'S EYE.

THERE is perhaps no passage of Scripture more difficult of comprehension to the young mind, under the present idea of a needle, than the one "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When a

great riches and possessions, and was the greatest of all the men of the East. The thrift and economy of the industrious and saving servants were approved, while the one who received the one talent, was reproved and punished for his slothfulness and neglect, and the one talent was taken from him and given to the one who had the ten

ordinary mind of the present age has any conception. But the students of oriental literature find that there were in the cities of the East, especially in Jerusalem, large gates, in which were small and very low openings, called metaphorically "needle's eyes," just as we talk of windows on shipboard as "bull's-eyes." Our scholars who have never been to sea may not know the meaning of bull's-eye. They are small round windows in the ship's sides not more than perhaps eight inches across, quite round, and made of a solid piece of thick glass set in an iron frame, and hung with strong iron hinges so that they may be opened in good weather and shut during storms to keep out the water. These entrances were too narrow for a camel to pass through them in the ordinary manner, or if loaded. When a loaded camel had to pass through one of these entrances it knelt down, its load was removed, and then it shuffled through on its knees.

"Yesterday," writes Lady Duff Gordon, from Cairo, "I saw a camel go through the eye of a needle, that is, the low arched door of an enclosure. He must kneel and bow his head to creep through, and thus the rich man must humble himself."

This shows that it is not impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, and renders this passage not inconsistent with other portions of the Scripture.—*Select d*



THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

THE LITTLE BLACK HAND.

If you ride through the streets of Tokio in one of those queer overgrown baby-carriages in which everybody in Japan rides, among other sights you might notice the squares of paper pasted over many of the doorways of the poorer houses. These pieces of paper are called "gomafuda," and are either prayers, charm or pictures of a favourite idol, with mystical characters underneath to show from what temple or on what occasion the precious bits of paper had been obtained.

But most frequently you would see the impression of a little black hand with all the fingers spread out as if to ward off something; and I am sure, like myself, you would wonder what such a picture could mean. I was puzzled a long time over it, and finally asked some Japanese, and found that the impressions were those of a child in the house who had reached the sacred age of five or ten years, and was therefore gifted with some peculiar power to ward off evil. If the impression of the little hand is seen outspread on any part of a house, the evil spirits, which bring disease

Sabbath-school scholar, it was to our mind impossible for a rich man to enter heaven, and inexplicable why the mere fact that a man is rich, should debar him from heaven; especially when the Lord gave Solomon riches and honour, so that in these he exceeded all other kings of the earth, and after Job's afflictions doubled his possessions, so that he was twice as rich as before, though before he had talents, thus increasing his riches, and making it more difficult for him to enter the kingdom of God. These, to the young and active mind, seeking for knowledge and a right understanding of the Scriptures, appear to be inconsistent and irreconcilable with the idea that a rich man cannot enter the kingdom of God; for it is certainly impossible for a camel to go through the eye of any needle, of which the