

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## The Four Funny Men.

Some funny men built them a castle so high,

Way up in the top of a tree.  
That only the squirrels could pass their house by,  
And only the wild birds could see!

No door did they have to their lofty abode,  
No blinds and no windows there were!  
The outside a sheeting of bayonets showed,  
But the inside was padded with fur

These funny men slowly grew larger inside,  
And the walls of their castle grew, too!  
For, save to grow plump, and to slumber beside,  
These fellows had nothing to do!

Now, what did they wait for, these four drowsy men,  
In their castle so secret and high?  
The squirrels they knocked and they knocked at their den,  
But they never got word of reply.

One day came Jack Frost, who, in galloping by,  
Saw those bayonets bristling about,  
So he broke in their walls with his finger-tips sly,  
And the drowsy men all tumbled out!

Oh, what then became of the four funny men?  
And whom do you guess they were?  
Have you thought of four chestnuts whose castle and den,  
Is their own snug and warm chestnut burr?

## 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 snowstorms. 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."

"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 while, 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 cap-

tain, 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 the money had never left his person, but when one night he thought to count it over, revealing 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 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. But a voice from behind cried:

tried and found guilty; but through the officers of the law took possession of the real criminal. After a few weeks he was 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 for ever. We are glad he had manliness enough to at last declare the innocence of the boy.

## AN EXPERIENCE

BY DR. S. W. RICHARDSON.

I remember when I was a young man, having to walk several miles one very cold day when snow was deep on the ground, and a heavy cutting sleet blew in my face in the sharpest manner. I had a companion with me, and we trudged along bravely, forgetting even the cold in talking of the reception we should meet with when we arrived at our destination where we had good and hearty friends to receive us. We had arrived within four miles of the place towards which we were bound, when by an unlucky chance we came upon a neat little wayside inn, the landlord of which had prepared, and had quite ready for all passing travellers, as well as for his regular customers, a store of hot mulled ale. I did not really require anything of the kind, for I had breakfasted well, and had devoured a pasty on my journey; but the temptation was too great to be resisted so I went with my companion and treated him and myself to a pint of the perilous stuff, of the evil of which I had then had no suspicion. The warmth-giving drink, as we thought, disposed of, we resumed our journey, but we had not resumed it ten minutes before I felt the injury that had been inflicted on me, and saw the injury that had been inflicted on my friend. We both stood as if we were smitten, or as if we were spell-bound. The cold cutting breeze and sleet came across us as though it would bar our passage. I felt as if I trod on wool, and as if every step forward was two backward. Added to this was the sense of the oppressive chill or coldness, as if my very bones were cold. We were both active enough, happily, to fight out the struggle, and in half an hour or so, by keeping to our task, we began to feel better, and at last we got to our journey's end. It seemed to me as if I had passed almost through the peril of death from cold, and I have since learned that the symptoms I felt were the precise symptoms felt by those who go through Arctic service when they have proceeded "armed," as is so absurdly said, against cold by a ration of grog.

## ONE AT A TIME

When I was a little boy, helpin' mother to store away the apples, I put my arm around so many o' them and tried to bring them all! I man aged for a step or two. Then one fell out, an' another, an' another, an' two or three more, till all were rolling over the floor. Mother laughed. "Now Daniel," says she, "I'm goin' to teach you a lesson." So she put my little hand quite tight around one. "There," she said, "bring that, an' then fetch another."

I've often thought about it when I've seen folks who might be doing ever so much good if they didn't try to do too much all at once. Don't try to put your arms around a year, and don't go troublin' about next week.

One day at a time, one hour, one minute—yes, one second—is all the time we get at once. So our best course is to do the next thing next." Daniel Quorn.

The bitter experiences of life, like bitter draughts of medicine, are often a very fine tonic.



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

tain, "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 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

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

"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