

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK



COASTING IN NORWAY.

## A LITTLE SACRIFICE.

BY C. T. W.

In a grand palace lived the dearest mother in the world. At least, I am sure all her children thought so, and they were many.

The domains of the palace stretched far and wide, including lofty snow-capped mountains, and green little hills; large rivers, and silver-tongued brooks; great gray rocks, and tiny smooth pebbles.

There were many others beside this dear old mother, whom we will call Mother National, and her daughters, living in the grand palace, and, in fact, all over the vast domain. And if you will believe it, a large share of them did not like Mother National and her daughters at all. In fact, many hated her; "But," said she to the daughters, "we must do right, and please God, and if we help to get hurtful and evil things out of the palace, perhaps even the haters will love us after awhile."

So they came all together every year, and planned where they should go, and what evil each should try to lessen through the next year. And while they were talk-matters over, some prayed for them, and blessed them, and some gibed and jeered, and the haters hated harder than ever, and

said all manner of hateful things; but it made no difference to the daughters, who prayed together, clasped hands, and with little white badges, worn that all might know whose daughters they were, went east, west, north and south again, to begin once more their earnest work.

The greatest evil in the palace was slavery. Many and strong were the slaveholders and their chains, and though the slaves, worn with their toils, often struggled to free themselves, their captors only drew the chains tighter, and laughed at the poor, wretched victims, and meanwhile set traps for the feet of bright, unwary boys, and made them also slaves.

This evil the daughters were fighting with might and main, teaching the children to look out for the traps, and trying to break the chains of the slaves, and that is the reason the wicked slaveholders hated them.

Many were the ways devised by Mother National to help conquer this evil. One year several daughters met together, and in the heart of the palace domains planted a little tree. Carefully they watched and tended it till it began to grow rapidly, and to bud and blossom. Then the blossoms and leaves began to fall, and the breezes to waft them far and wide.

As fast as they fell came others to take

their places, and as they floated on the breeze they brought a pure, sweet influence to all who stood in their path. Whoever picked up one of these leaves or blossoms might find on it an uplifting message written, and many were the feet turned aside from dangerous places, by following one of these fluttering leaves.

Other daughters kept lovely flower beds, and sent the rich blossoms into prisons and hospitals, where were slaves who had been hurt, or, in desperation at their wrongs, had hurt others.

Still others visited these slaves with help and encouragement, while some of the sisters gathered the children about them, and told them how to avoid all the snares that might be set, and taught them from God's word.

Many, many ways these helpful daughters had of working, and many were the bright dollars it took to send them about on their errands of mercy, so large were the palace domains.

One day came to them all a letter from Mother National "Dear children," it said, "you are giving much, can you give a little

more? The family purse is thin, and the demands upon it large, and some of the money has been lost by the carelessness of a trusted messenger. What shall we do? I will go without new gloves for the present, leaving the money that would have paid for them in the purse; what will my daughters be willing to do?"

Well, how do you think those daughters answered? Did they say, "Oh, dear! I can't do any more!" No, indeed! One laughed as she wrote back, "Here, mother, is the price of a new bonnet. I can trim over the old one."

Another said, "I'll give a new dress, which I don't need as badly as I thought I did."

One gave up butter for a week, and another sugar. The sister who tended one branch of the great tree, sold a choice blossom just ready to blow away, and sent the money for that to the family purse.

And so, by little and little, the Self-Denial Fund grew, and even the small children helped, until the purse grew plump again, and Mother National was happy.

## "WHITE AS SNOW"

The snow is noiselessly falling  
In whitened flakes from the sky,  
Draping the earth with a mantle  
Of purity from on high;  
Covering the leafless branches  
Of the trees with a garb of white,  
Transforming them into beauty,  
And objects of real delight.

I think as the crystal snow-flakes  
Make the earth a vision fair,  
Of the wondrous passage quoted  
By the ancient seer Isaiah:  
"Although your sins be as scarlet"—  
I have sinned, all this I know;  
"Must I always bear its impress?"  
"They shall be as white as snow."

Can it be? My eyes glance outward,  
And as far as I can see,  
Only glimpses of rare whiteness,  
As an answer come to me;  
I look upward—I see clearly—  
Christ the sinless Saviour dies,  
Pleads his blood for my redemption,  
Gives himself, my sacrifice.

Though the years have long since vanished  
Since the Master spoke to men,  
I can hear the echo ringing  
Down the centuries again:  
"Although your sins be as scarlet;"  
Oh, that all the world might know  
The fulfillment of the promise:  
"They shall be as white as snow!"

—Ella A. Small.

