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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XX.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 6, 1900.

No. 40.

The Happy Life.

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will,
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Who God doth late and early pray
More of his grace than gifts to lend,
And entertains the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friend.

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall—
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And, having nothing, yet hath all.

THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN.

I.

Japan is an ancient and extensive empire, consisting of about four large and many small islands, said to be about 4,223 in all. The empire comprises an area estimated at 47,697 square miles, with a population in 1890 of 40,072,684.

Japan is said to possess a written history of over two thousand five hundred years, and its sovereigns to have formed an unbroken dynasty since 660 B.C., the present emperor being the hundred and twenty-first of his race.

Within the last few years Japan has made unparalleled progress in civilization, and the adoption of Western manners and customs. The feudal system under which the country was governed has been abolished, and the first national Parliament, the outcome of the constitution granted by the emperor, met in the autumn of 1890.

RESOURCES.

Japan is very mountainous, and not more than one-sixth of its area is available for cultivation, though agriculture, on which they bestow great care, is the principal occupation of the Japanese. The soil is productive, teeming with every variety of agricultural produce. Among the vegetable productions may be noted the camphor-tree, paper mulberry, and a lacquer-tree which furnishes the celebrated "lacquer" of Japan. The tobacco-plant, tea-shrub, potato, rice, wheat and other cereals are also cultivated. Copper, iron and sulphur abound; gold and silver mining is prosecuted on a small scale. It possesses a fair supply of middling coal.

The coasts are extremely rich in fish, and possess many fine harbours. It has an army of nearly 250,000 men.

In the open country rice and wheat fields abound, everywhere indicating skilled and careful agriculture.

CUSTOMS.

Meals are served on small, square tables, about a foot in height, one table being provided for each person, who sits, of course, on the floor. The meal over, the tables are removed.

Frequent bathing, in water of a high temperature, is a habit of the Japanese. The bath is heated by a charcoal furnace, connected with one side of the tub. It is not always deemed needful to change the water for each bather, and guests at hotels find it difficult to secure absolute privacy during their ablutions.

Writing of the social condition of the Japanese, Mr. MacIay expresses the conviction "that, generally speaking, the Japanese men make kind and affectionate husbands, and the women make virtuous and exemplary wives and mothers, and the children are certainly the happiest little lumps in the world; their parents fondle and spoil them most effectually, and at the same time, never lose their control over them." Though the



THE CITADEL OF OWARI CASTLE.

husband has absolute control over the person of his wife, he does not seem to abuse his power, as a general rule, though, of course, exceptions to the rule occur.

RELIGION.

The primitive religion of Japan is Shintoism, which is the worship of the invisible by a simple pastoral community.

Buddhism, brought by missionaries from China early in our era, was eagerly received by Japan, and to-day the number and magnificence of its temples show the hold it took on the nation.

The Buddhists are the champion monastery-builders of the world. Their love for nature, which is a characteristic idea of Buddhism, was prominently seen in the choice of sites for their monasteries.

Christianity was first introduced into Japan in 1549, by Spanish Jesuits, who in a short time counted their converts by thousands. But interference with things temporal, intriguing and conspiracy, brought banishment to the Jesuits, and the decree of 1587 with its edict of extermination of all Christians.

In 1853 two treaty ports were opened to foreigners, and before very many years were past, missionary stations were everywhere formed, and Japan was assiduously introducing Western civilization.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Regarding the social condition of the Japanese, the women, though they have more liberty than any other Asiatic women, are far from enjoying the privileges of women in Europe or America. And that they are treated no worse than they are is due more to the inherent gentleness of Japanese manners than to any recognition of what is due to women.

Except in the houses of native Christians, or Japanese who have lived abroad and become thoroughly impregnated with Western ideas, a wife or daughter is merely an upper servant. In theory the wife of every man, from the Mikado downwards, performs the offices of a valet to him. Women of quite high rank keep their husbands' clothes brushed and mended, and see that everything they may require is to hand. It is the custom for Japanese ladies to make their own clothes and those of their children, and their husbands, too, when the latter do not wear European dress.

Except when she is exchanging hospitalities, a woman devotes herself to the care of her household, of her children, of her husband, and her husband's parents, if she is so unfortunate as to have them. For the Japanese woman the mother-in-law has terrors unknown in Europe. The nation is so given to

patriarchal households that it is quite the rule for a son to bring his wife home to live in his father's household. There, especially if she be the first daughter-in-law, she may live a life of utter drudgery. She is expected to wait on every one in the house except the servants, to be a sort of housekeeper under her mother-in-law, and the old people often treat their daughter-in-law with all the severity and tyranny possible to their mild and philosophical nature. A wife has no redress unless she is in the station of a servant or has powerful parents. If the former she simply gets uneasy and goes into service again.

CHIEF CITIES.

One of the earliest points of attraction to the visitor in Japan, is Yokohama, the commercial capital. It is a cosmopolitan city, almost all nationalities being represented, hence it is no the most favourable place to study Japanese life. The streets are wide and gas-lighted, and the bay filled with shipping, a greater part of which flies the national flag of Japan, for besides a large coasting fleet, Japan possesses many war vessels, all manned and officered entirely by Japanese.

Seventeen miles inland is Tokyo, the capital, a city of two and a half million inhabitants. The city is interspersed with so many temples and groves that it occupies an area at least equal to London, England, with its 5,000,000 of a population.

The castle or citadel of Tokyo is the largest in Japan, and is arranged on the general plan of Japanese castles (there are about one hundred and fifty scattered through the country), a triple system of moats and embankments, one inside the other, with a rugged hill in the centre. At Tokyo the outermost line is ten miles in circumference, a large part of the metropolis being built between the first and second walls.

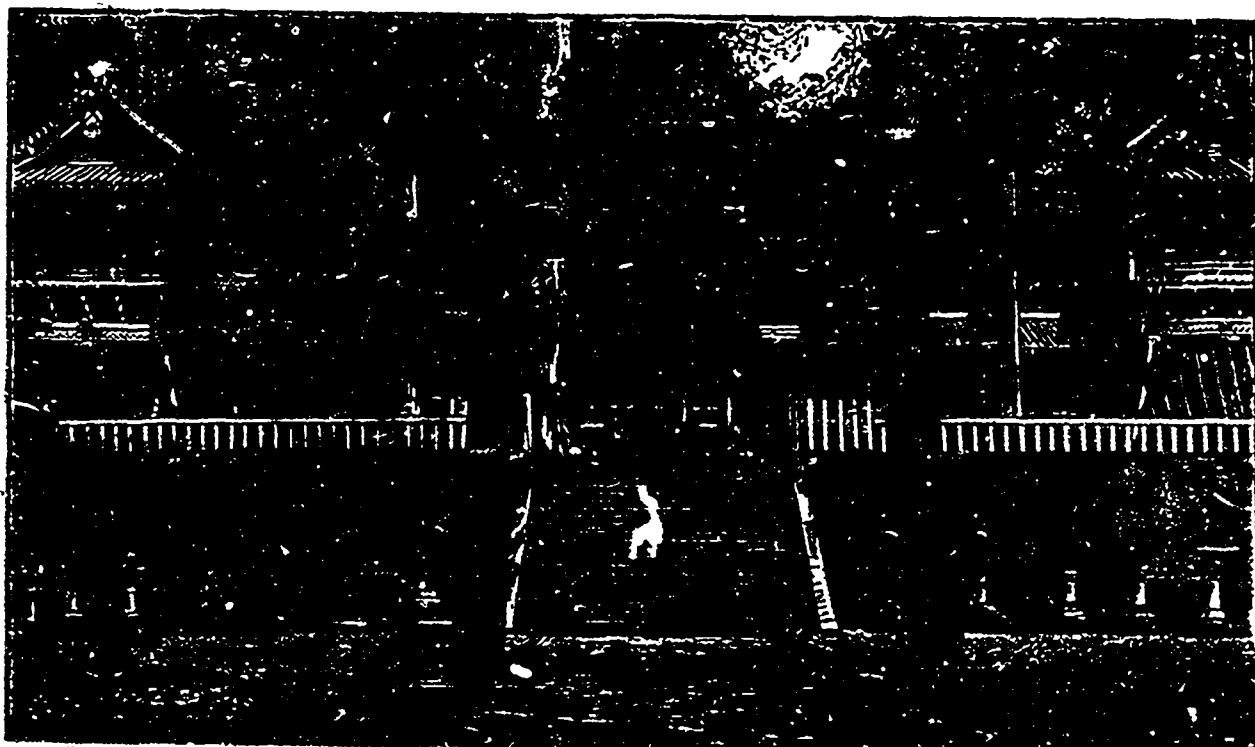
MISSIONS.

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States sent its first missionary in 1859. In 1867 the number of missionaries increased, and the people, beginning to distinguish between Romanism and Protestantism, gave more reverent attention to the truth. In 1873, the grand influx of all denominations occurred, new stations were formed, and a brighter day dawned for Japan.

It was in 1873 that our own church sent its first heralds to this distant field, the opening of which has been of such large blessing to the work at home.

THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE.

J. G. Paton, one of the great missionaries of the century, was one of eleven children. How much he owes to the faithful home training of his old Scotch father he has himself told us "The very discipline through which our father passed us was a kind of religion in itself. If anything really serious required to be punished, he retired first to his closet for prayer, and we boys got to understand that he was laying the matter before God, and that was the severest part of the punishment for me to bear. I could have defied any amount of mere penalty, but this spoke to my conscience as a message from God. We loved him all the more when we saw how much it cost him to punish us, and, in truth, he had never much of that kind of work to do upon any one of all the eleven. We were ruled by love far more than by fear."



VIEW OF THE THIRD TERRACE, NINKO TEMPLE.

Hymn: "Oh, Haste."

BY FANNY CROSBY.

There comes a wail of anguish
Across the ocean wave;
It pleads for help, O Christians,
Poor dying souls to save;
Those far-off heathen nations
Who sit in darkest night,
Now stretch their hands imploring,
And cry to us for light.

We have the blessed Gospel;
We know its priceless worth,
We read the grand old story
Of Christ the Saviour's birth,
Oh, haste, ye faithful workers,
To them the tidings bear—
Glad tidings of salvation,
That they our light may share.

Go plant the cross of Jesus
On each benighted shore;
Go wave the Gospel standard
Till darkness reigns no more;
And while the seed you scatter,
Far o'er the ocean's foam,
We'll pray for you and labour
In mission fields at home.

Slaying the Dragon.

BY MRS. D. O. CLARK.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE.

The result of the parish meeting was a nine days' wonder in Fairport, and furnished a topic of conversation for weeks. Party feeling ran high, but the opposition dwindled steadily but surely. The tidal wave of public opinion had turned, as Deacon Ray predicted, and it was in Mr. Strong's favour. The large donation party, and the numerous gifts left behind for the pastor and his wife, spoke volumes. The Judge was too angry at his defeat to appear very often in public. He sent Reuben Palmer a notice the day after the parish meeting, telling him that he could have a week in which to raise the mortgage on his house. Otherwise the mortgage would be foreclosed. The Judge suspected that Reuben and some of his other allies had turned traitor to him, and he was not far from right. Tom Kinmon's speech had put courage into the hearts of the cowards, and the mode of balloting had made it easy for this class to do its duty.

One night, a few weeks after this, Mr. Strong was called to the Cove, late in the evening, to visit the dying daughter of one of the fishermen. As he passed the Maypole, sounds of drunken merriment reached his ears. The windows were not screened, and as he passed he could see John Chapman in the centre of the room, half tipsy, attempting to make a speech, greatly to the amusement of the crowd. Charlie Chapman was there also, with a glass of liquor in his hand. Poor boy! Just starting on the road to ruin. No, not just starting! The first steps were taken in his father's kitchen when the great mug of cider was passed around. It is only a step from cider drinking to beer and whiskey drinking.

So thought the minister, as he walked on. Could he have known all that was transpiring in that sink of iniquity, he might not have felt so unconcerned as to his personal safety.

"I drink this grog ter the downfall o' that cussed parson," shouted Peter MacDuff, as he held high over his head a glass full of poor whiskey.

"That's right! Go ahead! Them's my sentiments!" responded his companions.

"Why, MacDuff, don't you like the minister?" asked the landlord with an insinuating smile.

"No," cried the fisherman, uttering terrible oaths and curses. "He's a-tryin' ter take from us poor coves the only thing that makes us feel good an' forgit our troubles. I hates that man," he shouted. "He's a-cheatin' me out of my rights. He's been a-tryin' fur years ter git my secret, an' he dogs me round, an' talks agin me, an' makes my family hate me, an' I won't stand it another day. The cussed dog better look arter himself ef he don't want ter git hurt," and Peter drew an ugly-looking jack-knife from his pocket, and commenced sharpening it on his boot.

"Give me another drink," and he threw a silver coin on the counter. The glass of liquor was eagerly drained, and the effects of it began to be manifest. MacDuff raved about the minister, and cursed him for ferreting out his secret.

"I tell you, boys, the secret's mine, an' the parson hed better look out, or I'll

git him," and the fisherman shook his fist at an imaginary antagonist.

"He's crazy as a loon," said Matthews. "Pete's dangerous when he gets like this. Ter tell the truth, I wouldn't care ter meet him ter-night out of the village, ef I was alone. He's gitting his jack knife purty sharp fur some purpose. I say, Pete, put that knife away. Do you mean ter murder your friends?"

An evil look gleamed in the fisherman's eyes. "I means ter try this blade on that cussed parson, who is a-tryin' ter do it. I tell you, boys, he's a thief. He's bin a-tryin' ter git ay secret, an' I b'leve he's got it," and Peter looked anxiously in his overcoat pocket.

"Vot isch your secret, mein goot friend?" inquired Carl, in a conciliating voice, his curiosity getting the better of his good sense.

"It's the tin box of—of—I can't tell you," shouted the drunken man. "What you askin' me fur? Are you one of the parson's string? Dog, I'll kill you!" and MacDuff sprang, knife in hand, upon the inoffensive German.

This was carrying matters farther than Landlord Chase desired, and he interfered. "If you've got any fighting ter do, MacDuff, you do it outside the Maypole. What d'yer mean carryin' on in this way? Git out of here, quick!"

Partially sobered by these words, the fisherman staggered out of the door, protesting that he meant no harm, but thought he had got hold of the parson.

"Do you suppose he means ter assault Mr. Strong?" inquired Steve Barton.

"Oh, no," laughed Chase. "Pete's a reg'lar fightin' cock when he's full, but I never knew him ter do more than threaten."

"The parson's a-bed an' asleep now," added Matthews, "an' it's time all honest folks were home, I think. So, landlord, I will reduce your score by one. I declare on it! Those youngsters will play billiards all night, I do b'leve. But it ain't none of my bizness. I ain't their pa."

In the meantime Mr. Strong had reached the Cove and had found Skipper Griffin's daughter very low with consumption. It was a question whether she would live till morning. She was a sweet Christian girl, and had greatly endeared herself to her pastor. She had been the first-fruits of his labours in Fairport, and to her the right hand of fellowship had first been given. She had been sick for nearly a year, and owing to her physical condition doubts as to her conversion and final happiness troubled her. She desired to see her pastor once more, that his words of faith and courage might help to illumine the dark valley which seemed so dark to the dying girl. The words of prayer had been spoken as few could speak them. Arnold Strong was a tower of strength on occasions like this. Tender, sympathetic, with magnetism in his touch, he had soothed the last hours of many a Christian, and the last voice they heard on earth was the voice of this faithful under-shepherd. It was so in this case. Comforted by her pastor's words and prayer, Alice Griffin fell asleep never more to waken on earth.

It was about midnight when Mr. Strong left this house of mourning. The night was cold and blustering, and not a star relieved the inky blackness of the sky. Buttoning his overcoat snugly about him, he hurried homeward. A low fiendish chuckle close at hand startled him. The minister was no coward, but the lateness of the hour and the trying ordeal through which he had just passed, threw him off his balance. Before he had time to turn around a blow was dealt him by a powerful hand. It was intended to strike his head, but providentially it fell upon his shoulder.

"I've got you now, an' I'll gif' it ter you. Take that!" and MacDuff aimed another blow at the minister, but the latter was too quick for him, and the weapon only grazed his arm. Mr. Strong had not practiced wrestling when a collegian in vain. He grappled with his powerful assailant, ridding him at once of his dangerous weapon. The battle was waged only a brief while. The drunken fisherman was no match for the herculean muscle and calm brain of the minister. MacDuff was soon sent reeling to the ground.

"Are you satisfied?" inquired the minister.

"No!" yelled the fisherman, in rage and mortification. "An' I'll be even with you yit."

Without wasting any more words upon the miserable drunkard, Mr. Strong pursued his way without further hesitation. As he turned down Parsonage Lane, he saw a lamp burning for him, and he knew his faithful little wife was watching for him. "God bless her!" he murmured, a strange giddiness creeping over him and benumbing his senses. He opened the front door, walked into

the sitting-room, and then did what he had never done before in his life—fainted.

(To be continued.)

TWO KINDS OF FUN.

BY SYDNEY DAYNE.

"Oh, what jolly fun!"
"Yes, it was. To see that little tad running after us—"

The boys came in with a rush after an hour's brisk play after school. Their sister Bertha was ready, as usual, at the library table to encourage the short half hour of study which, once over, left the two with nothing on their minds till the next day.

"What was all the fun?" she asked, when coats and caps had been laid aside.

"Oh," said Ned, "it was that poor little rat of a Jimmy Murphy. When we boys were coming home from school and had got to the top of the hill, there was Jimmy with a big sledload of branches and roots he had got out of the woods; and just as we came on with a whoop, he had stopped—amp round a little and rub his hands to warm himself. We all pounced on his load and started it down the hill, and Jimmy came running after, squealing at the top of his voice."

"As if he could have done anything against so many of us," put in George, as Ned paused to laugh at the recollection. "We sent it ahead of us, and near the bottom it took a turn and ran—as slick!—right into the creek, breaking into the ice. The ice was thin, you know."

"The last we saw of him," resumed Ned, "he was shaking his fists at us."

Bertha did not laugh, as the boys expected she would.

"Is Jimmy Murphy that little fellow about you, size I have seen near the shanty down by the creek?"

"Well, I don't think he's quite as tall as I am," said Ned, who was proud of his height.

"He always looks as if life were a pretty hard struggle for him," continued Bertha.

"It must be," put in mother, who was lying on the sofa. "His mother is a widow, and I have seen Jimmy doing things which needed almost a man's strength."

The two boy faces grew a little grave. "You said he appeared cold," Bertha's comments went on. "I suppose he was not half clad for such weather. No intentions on—or overcoat?"

"No," said Ned, his voice a little lowered.

"So benumbed as to have small chance of looking out for his load when all you boys set upon him—a dozen or more against one, I think you said?"

"What a way of putting it! No fault found, yet how differently the whole thing looked! Could the most severe reproach have made them feel more like cowards?"

They settled to study without any of the usual gentle urging. Later in the evening, after their lessons were learned, Ned carried his sober face to his sister.

"I—hate to think about that poor little Jim," he said. "It didn't look so to me till you began to talk. We—really, Bertie—we didn't think—"

"No, dear," she said, as he paused; "I am sure there was not one of you boys who would have been deliberately cruel if he had stopped to think. The trouble is," she went on, "boys are easily led when once there is some one for them to follow. Now, if there had been any one there to say: 'Hello, Jimmy! you've got more to do than your share. We'll take hold and help you out,' then, I feel safe in saying, there was not a boy among you who would not have been ready to give poor Jim a helping hand."

"Bertha, you are great!" exclaimed Ned, with an admiring look.

Half an hour after school next day a sled brigade wended its way toward the small shanty, in the rear of which Jimmy could be seen cutting up such wood as he had recovered after yesterday's onslaught.

As he caught sight of his tormentors, he started to go into the house with an armful of wood. But with a shout they prevented his escape.

"Ho, Jimmy! drop that wood!"

It was impossible to forbear the mingling of a little roguish fun with the atonement for their unkind dealings. With shouts of glee they rushed on the dismayed boy and bound him hand and foot with their scarfs.

Then as he gazed in helpless perplexity, sled after sled was drawn up. They were well loaded with stove lengths of seasoned wood. Half a dozen axes were soon flying busily at the splitting. Then another descent was made on Jimmy, and he was released.

"Now, Jimmy, we can't have you idling here any longer while we're all working so hard. Here's an armful ready. Carry it into the house."

Jimmy's face beamed with quick appreciation of the situation. As the pile of split wood rapidly increased, he carried it in until he announced that there was no more room inside. Then active hands joined in piling the remainder against the back of the house.

As the merry crew at length took leave, Ned said to Jimmy:

"Now, Jimmy if ever we find you on the hill with that wretched green wood, unless you have dry wood at home to mix with it, we'll serve you just as we did yesterday."

To this day Jimmy has never been able to determine in his own puzzled mind from which day the kindness of the boys dated.—S. S. Visitor.

THE BEST WAY.

We sometimes hear business men say that it is impossible to be strictly honest if one is to be successful. But there never was a statement wiser of the truth. God makes this plain in every part of his word. We get our morning paper at our railroad news-stand, settling the account every Monday morning. Sickness had disarranged the course of things, and we fancied three weeks had elapsed without payment, and handed in that sum. The following Monday the newsman said, "Your account is square. I looked it up in my book, and you only owed for two weeks when you paid for them." "I should never have known the difference." "That may be," was the answer, "but I should, and I've found in my experience that honesty really is the best policy." We clip from an exchange the following incident, which illustrates the same truth:

A young man in a Boston dry-goods store was doing his best to sell a customer some goods. He had a quantity on hand which he much desired to dispose of, as they were not of the freshest style, and the man seemed inclined to take them. When the goods had been examined, and the bargain was about to be concluded, the customer inquired, "Are these goods of the latest style?"

The young man hesitated. He wanted to sell the goods; but he could not tell a lie, and replied, "They are not the latest style of goods, but a very good style."

The man looked at him, examined some other goods of later style, and said, "I will take those of the older style, and some of the new also. Your honesty in stating the facts will fasten me to this place."

The young man not only sold his goods, and kept conscience, but he also retained a customer whom he might never have seen again if he had not spoken the exact truth.

CONSECRATED TO HIS WORK.

As the world goes, the first question in making choice of a calling is, "Which one pays best?" But earth and heaven measure human work in very different ways, and devotion to a right service is never represented by the dollars it earns or by the honours it brings.

Dr. S. A. Steel, of St. Louis, says that he began his career as a preacher with a fortunate lesson. One Saturday, while a student in Henry College, he was riding over the mountains to fill a Sunday appointment at a village church, when he fell in with Dr. White, a veteran minister.

Dr. White was a man of fine appearance, eloquent, scholarly, and high-bred, but the humble work he was engaged in had his whole heart.

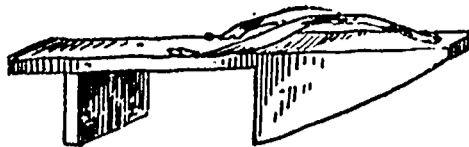
The two men travelled side by side, conversing pleasantly together. Dr. White made some reference to a call he had received to the presidency of a college.

"You have accepted the call, of course," said his young companion.

"No; I have declined it." The position was one of high honour, influential, conspicuous, and commanding a much larger salary than his present support. Young Steel could not disguise his astonishment at such a refusal. But the doctor's reply silenced him. Gazing far away over the panorama of lovely valleys and majestic hills, he said, gently,

My brother, I would rather preach Jesus to these simple-hearted people living in these mountains than be President of the United States."

Twenty years afterward Dr. Steel had forgotten he says—his college lessons in psychology and logarithms and Greek roots, but the lesson that the brave old clergyman's answer had taught him never faded away.



JAPANESE PATTERN.

Hard Lessons.

BY KATH W. HAMILTON.

Poor, tired little student! His head droops low.

The wearisome history pushed aside, Its kings, and countries, and battles forgot,

While he drifts afar on slumber's soft tide—

Away to the beautiful land of dreams, Where knowledge falls softly like gentle dews,

And the things worth knowing grow low on vines,

In bright rosy blossoms to pick and choose.

A beautiful land where schoolrooms and rules

Have vanished in sunshine and open air,

Where a boy has only to roam at will, And gather up wisdom everywhere;

Where history is charming stories told By voices that whisper in every breeze;

Geography the new places one finds, And dates are the kind that grow on the trees.

"Easy learning here!" drones the sleeping child,

And the father smiles as he draws to his breast

The unconscious form, and with tender care

Bears the little dreamer away to rest. So, for us all, whose life-lessons are hard,

Will the book slip aside and rest draw near,

So, too, will our Father bear us away, To live in a land where tangles grow clear.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

LESSON II.—OCTOBER 14.

PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.

Luke 14. 15-24. Memory verses, 21-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Come; for all things are now ready.— Luke 14. 17.

OUTLINE.

1. The Invitation, v. 15-17.

2. The Excuses, v. 18-20.

3. The Rejection, v. 21-24.

Time.—Winter of A.D. 29-30.

Place.—A Pharisee's house.

LESSON HELPS.

15. "And when"—Jesus was dining at the house of a chief Pharisee. (Luke 14. 1.)

"One of them"—Some critical guest. "This was, without doubt, one of the rich friends of the Pharisee host, whose remark gave the Saviour occasion for delivering the Parable of the Great Supper."—Lange.

"Sat at meat"—Strictly, reclined. "These things"—

Jesus' previous conversation. (Verses 7-14) "In the kingdom of God"—"Either in the future life or the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, the millennial days, which many hoped soon to see."—Sadler.

16. "A certain man"—Symbolizing God. "A great supper"—The privileges of the Gospel. "And bade many"—Primarily, the Jewish nation; secondarily, all humanity. (1) We are all invited guests.

17. "His servant"—The prophets, Christ, and the apostles all seem to be meant, also modern Christian workers.

At supper time "This undoubtedly represents the 'fulness of time' (Gal. 4. 4), when the Messiah came."—Riddle. "Come"—If a sheik, bey, or emir invites, he always sends a servant to call you at the proper time. (2) The feast is still spread.

18. "They all"—"They seem to have been the gentry of the city, which we suppose to be Jerusalem. 'This' 'they' would seem to include the Pharisees, the present hearers of our Lord, and even the self-congratulating individual to whom the parable was addressed."—Whedon.

"With one consent"—"From the same motive, in the same spirit. The excuses differ both in matter and in manner, but all of them spring from worldliness in some form."—Riddle.

woman."—Hall. "I cannot come"—"The man who had the most plausible excuse returned the surliest and most peremptory answer."—Vincent.

23. "The highways and hedges"—"The men thus brought in can hardly be any other than the wanderers of the outlying Gentile world, or the pariahs of social life, on whom even the publicans looked down with scorn."—Plumptre. (3) There is room for the world's greatest sinners. "Compel them"—"Not by force, by persecution, which is contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel, but by arguments, by persuasion, by the force of love and entreaty, by persistent and untiring efforts, by the attractions of the feast, by the goodness of him who gave it."—Trench.

HOME READINGS.

M. Parable of the Great Supper.—Luke 14. 15-24.

Tu. Wisdom's call.—Prov. 9. 1-10.

W. Invitation despised.—Matt. 22. 1-10.

Th. Refusing to hearken.—Zech. 7. 8-14.

F. Refusers rejected.—Isa. 65. 1-12.

S. Supper of the Lamb.—Rev. 19. 4-9.

Su. Free invitation.—Rev. 22. 8-17.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Invitation, v. 15-17.

Describe, if you can, how an Eastern feast differs from one in our country.



FARM-HOUSE, JAPAN.

"To make excuse"—Literally, to beg off. "A piece of ground"—"Better, perhaps a farm."—Farrar. "I must needs go"

"To see to its being put under cultivation."—Hall. "Have me excused"—

"The very form of expression involves the consciousness that his excuse of necessity was merely an excuse. There is, too, an emphasis on the 'me'—it may be the duty of others to go; I am an exception."—Cambridge Bible.

19. "Five yoke of oxen"—"The number was one which came within the reach of any peasant farmer of modern competence."—Ellicott. "To prove them"

"To try his new oxen in his own work, and got them accustomed to the new master and new set of drivers and new work."—Hall.

20. "I have married a wife"—(See Deut. 24. 5.) "He could not interrupt his wedding feast till the days were over. Nor could he bring his bride to a feast of men; nor could she break over the customs that bound a newly married

What would be thought of a man, either in the East or here, who disregarded an invitation to "a great supper"?

What did the guest mean when he spoke of "eating bread" in "the kingdom of God"?

To what did Jesus say "a certain man" invited many?

How did this man repeat the invitation?

What beautiful invitation is given to all by Jesus? Golden Text.

What servants of God have been sent to us, all through our lives, to bid us come to the feast of the Gospel?

2. The Excuses, v. 18-20.

How were the invitations received? What was the excuse of the first man?

What was the real cause of his neglect? (He was full of pride in his possessions.)

What was the excuse of the second man? What was the real cause of his neglect? (He was full of life's business.)



RIVER BOAT, JAPAN.

What reason did the third man give for his refusal to come?

What does this represent? (The power of social influence.)

Are similar excuses found to-day? What special temptations have rich people? busy people? people in society?

What excuse, if any, have you ever sent back to God for not coming to the feast of the Gospel?

3. The Rejection, v. 21-24.

How did "the master of the house" feel when his invitations were slighted?

Whom did he tell his servant to bring to the feast?

Do Christians always welcome to their churches the outcasts from "the streets and lanes" of the big cities?

Who else was brought in to the feast? Do we always welcome the outcasts of the country?

What special temptations beset sick people? wretchedly poor people? despised people? bad people?

What is said about those who were first bidden?

To what nation was the invitation first given?

Is it ever safe to reject God's invitation?

Do many people know when the last opportunity comes?

Having received Christ, is there anything further for us to do?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That God invites all to come?

2. That men make all sorts of excuses to stay away?

3. That the outcast is welcomed?

4. That even the Most High abides by the decision of each soul?

The man who can afford to get drunk is too rich.

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