

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

TORONTO, JUNE 10, 1893.

[No. 23]

Vol. XIII.]

SEAGULLS.

As one of the great ocean steamers was rushing along on her way across the broad Atlantic Ocean and was already some hundred miles out at sea, a little boy ran up to his mother and cried:

"O mother, get me some biscuits too."

"Why, Freddie," replied his mother, "what do you want the biscuits for?"

"To throw out to the pretty birds," Freddie said. "Oh, come, mother dear, and see the pretty white birds flying after us. See how they dip down and pick up the biscuits on the water. What kind of birds are they, mother, and where do they sleep away out here so far from land?"

"They are seagulls, my child," replied the mother. "They just sleep floating on the water—no matter how rough it is. They sometimes follow ships hundreds of miles, picking up anything that the cook throws overboard. They are found on all large bodies of water—the big fresh-water lakes as well as on the ocean—but they are thickest around the fishing banks. They gather in hundreds about the vessels where the fish are being cleaned. As the waste parts of the fish are thrown overboard the seagulls dash down with hoarse cries and great flapping of wings, tearing at the pieces and fighting over them, but the fishermen pay no attention to them.

We show one of these fishing schooners that has been disabled in a storm and is left to her fate. The seagulls can be seen flocking around by hundreds, darting down upon the pieces of fish that have been washed out of the sinking vessel.

If our picture could make you hear them as well as you can see them, you would want to close your ears and run away.

OYSTERS ON TREES.

The other day I heard somebody speak of "oysters hanging upon the branches of trees on the borders of the Chesapeake Bay."

"That sounds like a fairy tale," thought I to myself.

I determined to investigate. So I said: "I always supposed oysters grew under the water. I never knew they hung in clusters on tree branches like apples. Curious sort of oysters those must be which grow on trees along the Chesapeake!"

"Chesapeake Bay has the best kind of oyster," said the Talking Man. "The rea-

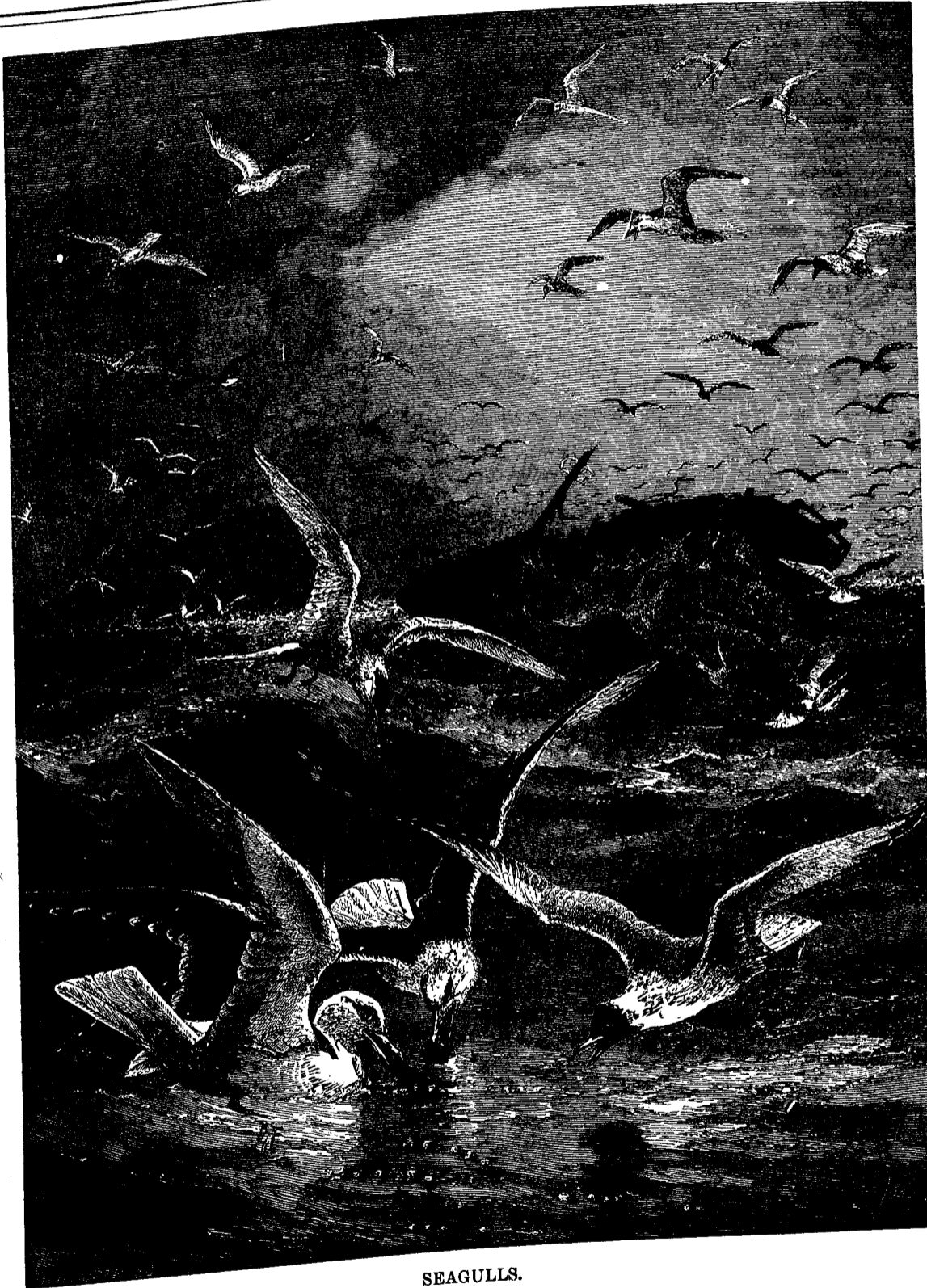
son they are sometimes found growing on tree branches is this: The spawn of the oyster floats about in the water, tossed by wind and waves. It has the quality of attaching itself firmly to any solid substance it touches. Sometimes it might be the bottom of a ship, a rock, or a tree branch. You know the bottom of a ship often needs scraping on account of the shell-fish adhering to it.

Now, the branches of trees often droop into the water. They do it along the bor-

ders of the Chesapeake the same as on the banks of any other river or bay. At high tide such branches will be covered with water, and when the tide goes back, the branches come to the surface again.

"The spawn sticks to those boughs when they are beneath the waves. In a few days the tiny oysters begin to develop, and before long, at every low tide, the branches can be seen hanging out, with little oysters growing all over them.

"Sometimes a branch which is often un-



SEAGULLS.

der water will be nearly covered with small oysters. It looks very odd, of course, but it's a common enough sight down there.

"Grow? They don't grow very large, to be sure. To attain perfection an oyster must be always under water, and these hang half the time out of it. When they are exposed too long to the hot sun, they die. Their weight often causes them to fall off.

"Little oysters are sometimes transplanted. Not off tree branches, but from the beds at the bottom of the bay. They are planted in oyster beds in other places, where, in a couple of years, they grow to maturity.

"It sounds funny to talk of picking oysters off trees," said I, "or even seeing them grow there."

"Funny enough. But they do grow there. I've seen it lots of times," said the Talking Man. "That's the way queer stories get about. Somebody hears of a thing and doesn't understand the sense of it. And most people never stop to ask what it means. They either repeat the story for a marvel, or say they don't believe it."—*Harper's Young People.*

A WORD TO BOYS.

If we are to have drunkards in the future, some of them are to come from the boys to whom I am now writing, and I ask you if you want to become one of them? No, of course you don't! Well, I have a plan that is just as sure to save you from such a fate as the sun is to rise tomorrow. It never failed, it never will fail, and it is worth knowing.

Never touch liquor in any form. That is the plan and it is worth putting into practice. I know you don't drink now, and it seems to you as if you never would. But your temptation will come, and it will probably come this way. You will find yourself sometime with a number of companions and they will have a bottle of wine on the table. They will drink and offer it to you. They will regard it

as a manly practice, and very likely they will look upon you as a milksop if you don't indulge with them.

Then what will you do? Will you say, "No, no! none of that stuff for me!" or will you take the glass with your common sense protesting, and your conscience making the whole draught bitter, and then go off with a hot head and skulking soul that at once begins to make apologies for itself and will keep doing so all its life? Boys, do not become drunkards.



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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JUNE 10, 1893.

AN OPEN LETTER TO BOYS.

BY META LANDER.

II.

THERE is another point to which I want to call your attention, for some of you will by-and-bye desire to get situations as book-keepers, or to become art students. Professor Oliver, of the Naval Academy, says he can invariably recognize the user of tobacco "from his tremulous hand and absolute inability to draw a clean, straight line." I know of a merchant, who used to test the handwriting of every boy who applied to him for a situation, and in this way always detected tobacco users and sent them away.

Now, I want to say some things about cigarettes, which are becoming more and more the delight of boys, and which, according to tobacconists who ought to know, "are coming to overshadow all other branches of the business."

Do you care to know how they are made? I think I can enlighten you. An Italian boy only eight years old was brought before a justice in New York City as a vagrant, or, in other words, a young tramp. But what did the officer charge him with doing? Only with picking up cigar-stumps from the streets and gutters. To prove this, he showed the boy's basket, half full of stumps, water-soaked and covered with mud.

"What do you do with these?" asked his Honour. What do you think was his answer? "I sell them to a man for ten cents a pound, to be used in making cigarettes." Not a particularly agreeable piece of information, is it, boys?

In our large cities there are a great many cigar-butt grubbers, as they are called. It certainly is not a pretty name, though very

appropriate; for it is applied to boys and girls who scour the streets in search of half-burnt cigars and stumps, which are dried and then sold to be used in making cigarettes.

But this isn't all, nor even the worst of it. These cigarettes have been analyzed; and physicians and chemists were surprised to find how much opium is put into them. A tobacconist himself says that "the extent to which drugs are used in cigarettes is appalling." "Havana flavouring" for this same purpose is sold everywhere by the thousand barrels. This flavouring is made from the tonka-bean, which contains a deadly poison. The wrappers, warranted to be rice paper, are sometimes made of common paper, and sometimes of the filthy scrapings of rag-pickers bleached white with arsenic. What a cheat

to be practised on people! Think of it, boys, the next time you take up a cigarette, and drop it—as you would a coal of fire. The latter would simply burn your fingers; but this burns up good health, good resolutions, good manners, good memories, good faculties, and often honesty and truthfulness as well.

A bright boy of thirteen came under the spell of cigarettes. He grew stupid and subject to nervous twitchings, till finally he was obliged to give up his studies. When asked why he didn't throw away his miserable cigarettes, the poor boy replied, with tears, that he had often tried to do so, but could not.

Another boy of eleven was made crazy by cigarette smoking, and was taken to an insane asylum in Orange County, N.Y. He was regarded as a violent and dangerous maniac, exhibiting some of the symptoms peculiar to hydrophobia.

The white spots on the tongue and inside the cheeks, called smoker's patches, are thought by Sir Morell Mackenzie to be more common with users of cigarettes than with other smokers.

"Does cigarette-smoking injure the lungs?" asked some one of a leading New York physician. For his answer, the doctor lighted a cigarette, and inhaling a mouthful of smoke, blew it through a corner of his handkerchief which he held tightly over his mouth. A dark-brown stain was distinctly visible. "Just such a stain," said the doctor, "is left upon the lungs." If you ever smoke another cigarette, think of the stains you are making.

There is a disease called the cigarette eye, which is regarded as dangerous. A film comes over the eye, appearing and disappearing at intervals. And did you know that boys had been made blind by smoking cigarettes? How would you like to part with your sight, and never again behold the light of day or the faces of your friends?

Shall I give you two or three pictures? A writer greatly interested in young people—Josiah Leeds—describes a pitiful spectacle which he saw—a pale, woe-begone boy, seemingly less than ten years old, standing at the entrance of an alley, without a hat, his dilapidated trousers very ragged at the knees, his hands in his pockets, shivering with cold, yet whiffing away at a cigarette.

Dr. Hammond says: "I saw, in Washington, a wretched-looking child, scarcely five years old, smoking a cigarette and blowing the smoke from his nostrils. His pale, pinched face was twitching convulsively, his little shoulders were bent, and his whole appearance was that of an old man."

Cases of epilepsy, insanity, and death are frequently reported as the result of smoking cigarettes, while such physicians as Dr. Lewis Sayre, Dr. Hammond, and Sir Morell Mackenzie, of England, name heart-trouble, blindness, cancer, and other diseases as occasioned by it.

We also learn that several leading physicians in Philadelphia unanimously condemn cigarette-smoking as "one of the vilest and most destructive evils that ever befell the youth of any country," declaring that "its direct tendency is a deterioration of the race."

What can we do, dear boys, to protect you against this dreadful foe? How can I adequately set forth the perils of this tobacco-habit, to which you are drawn, not only by the example and the persuasions and sometimes the ridicule of other boys,

but by various snares set for your unwary feet?

Would that I could persuade you not even to glance at the temptation which comes in offers of pictures—if only you comply with certain miserable conditions.

"If!"

Will you not settle that "if"

now and forever with an emphatic No?

Will you not deliberately resolve: "I will never touch another cigarette; I will never use tobacco in any form"? This will be your best gift to a loving mother and sister. And it would give me greater pleasure than I can express to receive such a pledge from you. I would put your names down in a book and keep it always as a precious memorial.

FARMING IN CHINA.



FARMING SCENE IN CHINA.

[We have pleasure in printing herewith, a number of interesting articles on "Farming in West China," by one of our devoted missionaries in that country. They will be followed with great interest by our readers—Ed.]

West China produces in her more fertile regions four crops in a year.

Sze-Chuan is considered the most fertile province in China, and the amount of produce she is capable of putting upon the market to feed her millions is simply marvellous.

In Central China, along the great water highway, home impressions of the fertility of the soil and the occupations of every possible inch for production receives a severe shock. Long stretches of territory visible in low water as well as higher tracts are unused or indifferently cultivated. The west however fulfils the highest expectation. So anxious are the Westerners to produce that they scrape the rocks and make beds of earth of various sizes in the hollows. Thus green patches of vegetables often greet the eye, high up barren hillsides, forming pleasant contrasts with the dark, frowning rocks.

Three things characterize the Western Chinese farmers. They thoroughly work the soil, keep their farms clean and tidy; and carefully transform everything into fertilizers.

The plains for miles resemble a well-kept vegetable garden. A weed has but to show its head to lose it. Two instruments are used in working the soil, the plough and the ubiquitous hoe.

Chinese ploughs are very primitive, such as might have been used in Abraham's time. It consists of a handle, a beam and a slightly curved iron ploughshare nailed to a shaft. The whole outfit stands thus—A Chinaman with one hand holds the plough, with the other flourishes a whip, while from his mouth a hissing sound proceeds which answers to our chirp. The plough is attached to a cross-bar which in turn is fastened by rope traces to a wooden hame around the neck of a powerful-looking creature called the Water Buffalo, whose long soraggy horns lie parallel with his back, giving him a wild look, and whose nose sniffs the air as soon as a foreigner comes within smelling distance. The peculiar odour that emanates from a foreigner—this is not intended to reflect upon the cleanliness of foreigners—is quite repulsive to these animals, who take their bath regularly, and one of two impulses fills their breasts—either to rush at the stranger or hasten from his presence.

A Chinese plough makes a furrow about six inches deep and five wide. The hoe is the most conspicuous farming implement in Western China. Men usually work in companies. A dozen men stand in a row and their hoes keep time as they dash them into the soil. Women are not exempt from this labour, especially if they have large feet.

The grain is cut with a large, slightly curved knife, bound up into sheaves and placed in stooks. The threshing machine is a very simple arrangement. A heavy box two feet high is carried into the field.

The threshers take up a small bundle of grain and dash it against the inside of the box. This is repeated until all the grain is loosened from the stalks. One cannot help but contrast the advancement of civilized nations in time and labour-saving machines, with the primitive style of the Chinese. Standing on the plains near Brandon, Manitoba, the writer saw a steam thresher pouring forth a bag of wheat a minute. On the Chen-tu Plains two men would scarcely thresh a bag in half a day. The grain is cleaned in the old-fashioned way, by tossing into the air and permitting the breezes to carry off the chaff. It was a surprise and also a pleasure, while passing through some districts to find that some one had seen a western fanning-mill, and had constructed a few as nearly like it as memory would permit. China is slow to begin improvements, but that there is a movement in her stagnant waters is quite evident from the many foreign things that are yearly being introduced and utilized.

GEO. E. HARTWELL.

A Modern Prodigal,

BY

Mrs. Julia McNair Wright.

CHAPTER V.

ACHILLES STILL MOURNS PATROCLUS.

SLOWLY went the days with the prisoner. The seasons changed and he scarcely knew it. Sometimes from the prison-yard he lifted his eyes to a sky of steadfast summer blue, or caught a waft of air from meadows newly mown. The violets of April were forgotten in the splendour of the roses of June, the roses were supplanted by the regal pomp of the dahlias; ripened grain succeeded to ripened grass; the birds, which had sung the pæans of their return, now sung their "wa gang" lyrics sad and clear, and in the slow monotony of his prison Thomas Stanhope held no communion with nature in those changeable pageants. His communion was with his own heart, and with the past. Penitence is a salutary, but not a joyful, mood of the soul; in its deeper shadows lies that intense bitter remorse which is the penitence of the world without hope. So, marked only by change of labour, by the recurrence of meals, by the hours of going to bed and getting up again, moved the days of Thomas Stanhope. As he worked, what ghosts of past opportunities wasted, of happiness and fortune squandered, rose to mock and rebuke him! A good name, plenty of friends, a modest little competence, a home, a fair, kind wife, children of good promise—to thee he had sacrificed all these, O Moloch of alcohol! How he gnashed his teeth, remembering what had been, and what might have been. Love, honour, fortune, home, all ended in—a ten years' sentence. However, there are some of our perverse human race who will have none of a door of hope, except in the valley of Achor, and when youth is past.

Meanwhile, this being the fortune of the prisoner, what was the fortune of his home?

Mercy in her sorrow and apathy of misery found herself seized and carried along by the strong currents of her children's hopeful energy. These children had the vigorous nature of old Deacon Stanhope, full of indomitable zeal, fond of work, of triumphing by main strength over adverse fate. They were in the rebound of the first freedom, the first possibilities of their lives. All the want and mortification and loss of their past stung them to acquire something for themselves, to have, and to



IN MISCHIEF.

IN MISCHIEF.

"OR, dear! oh, dear! what is this naughty fellow about? Surely he cannot be thinking of gathering a bouquet. No he has no use for the pretty flowers; it is merely in play, because it amuses him, that he so ruthlessly destroys them. Now all this was not so very bad for the playful, unthinking puppy; but what do you think, dear young readers, of boys and girls who act in this way? Is not such conduct on their part very sad and wicked? And yet children, and sometimes not very young children either, will often be guilty of just such conduct, and when called to account declare they "meant no harm by it." But see, dear young friends, what an idle excuse. We have reason and good sense to direct us, and it will not do to go stumbling through life doing things unintentionally, harming where we ought to help and making a nuisance of ourselves generally. Annoying as puppy's antics are, we can afford to laugh at them, through he may be brought to grief for them by some one by-and-bye. But when boys and girls perform such pranks, there is only one side to the picture and that is a pretty serious one, which should be seriously held up to their view.

RUSSIAN PERSECUTION.

The dreadful persecution of the Stundists, a body resembling the Methodists, continues in Russia. A Commission was appointed to consider the best means of checking the growth of Stundism, and the recommendations of that Commission, which have just been published, are of incredible and almost unparalleled atrocity. In addition to all the ferocious methods with which we are already painfully familiar, it is actually suggested that "those who have exhibited mental aberration as the result of religious teaching" are to be placed in lunatic asylums, and

that the ecclesiastical authorities are to compel those suffering "undue religious excitement" to enter a monastery until they are restored to a healthier and more normal state. So far as we are aware, there is nothing in the darkest records of the Romish Inquisition quite equal to this. We cannot imagine how any Government which makes the least pretence to civilization can calmly and unblushingly sanction such atrocities. The Czar of Russia will not succeed where Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar failed. We shudder when we think of the Divine wrath which the Czar and his advisers are heaping up for themselves and the unhappy people of Russia. May God open their eyes before it is too late.

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER.

OLD TESTAMENT TEACHINGS.

B.C. 397.] LESSON XII. [June 18.

MESSIAH'S KINGDOM.

Mal. 3. 1-12.] [Memory verses, 8-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.—Mal. 4. 17.

OUTLINE.

1. The Messenger, v. 1-4.
2. The Witness, v. 5-9.
3. The Blessing, v. 10-12.

TIME.—Perhaps about B.C. 397.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINKS.

Malachi lived in or after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. He was the last of the prophets, and the last lesson of this quarter points us to the Messiah.

EXPLANATIONS.

"My messenger"—John the Baptist. (See Mark 1. 2.) "The messenger of the covenant"—The angel of the covenant. "The day of his coming"—Here, as elsewhere, the results of the first and second advents are presented together. "A refiner's fire"—A fire which is so hot as to melt silver or gold, and enable the dross to be separated from the pure metal. "Fullers' soap"—Substance that removes all filth and traces of impurity from the garment, and bleaches it white. Soap of the modern sort was unknown in Bible times. "Sit as a refiner"—The refiner must watch his precious metal, and be ready to remove the dross and impurities at just the right moment. "The Levites" were the leaders of the religious life of Israel. "Sorcerers"—Wonder-workers, who pretended to have superhuman power. "Magicians," "witches," necromancers, clairvoyants, "seventh sons of seventh sons," spiritualistic mediums, and all who by trickery and fraud impose on weak intelligence and immature conscience are the modern counterparts of those men and women. The word "adulterers" here refers, probably, to those who hazarded the purity of their faith by intermarriage with heathen. "False swearers"—Those who bear false witness against men for gain. "Hireling"—Employee. "Tithes"—The tithe was a tax of one-tenth of the fruits of the farm and of the increase of flocks and herds, which was applied for the support of the Levites, for the public worship, and for the poor. "The devourer"—The locust.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The need of the natural heart?
2. The final doom of the wicked?
3. That robbery of God brings a curse?
4. That consecration to God brings a blessing?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Who was Malachi? "The last of the Old Testament prophets."
2. What did he foretell? "The coming of the Saviour."
3. What did he say in the Golden Text? "They shall be mine," etc.
4. Who was the messenger sent before the face of the Lord? "John the Baptist."
5. By what other name did Malachi call the Messenger of the covenant, the coming Saviour? "The Sun of Righteousness."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The unchangeableness of God.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

What do you call this mystery? The mystery of the Holy Trinity.

What do you mean by mystery?

A truth which man's reason could not discover, and which God, by degrees, makes known.

POLICE MONKEYS.

In Hindostan, where three varieties of sacred monkeys enjoy the freedom of every town, these four-handed pensioners often assist the police in enforcing the riot laws by charging *en masse* for the scene of every dog fight and schoolboy scuffle. They will rescue worried cats, and for greater security will deposit them on the next roof, or will suppress rowdiness in general. The stout Rhesus baboon, for instance, is physically as well as morally qualified to quell the aggressive disposition of the fiercest cur.

On the platform of a public warehouse the British residents of Agra a few years ago witnessed a scene which put that character trait in even a stronger light. A little street Arab had spread his pallet in the shade of a stack of country produce, and had just dropped asleep, when the proprietor of the Planter's Hotel strolled up with a pet leopard that had learned to accompany him in all his rambles. A troop of tramp monkeys had taken post on the opposite end of the shed, and, like the beggar boy, seemed to enjoy a comfortable *siesta*; but at sight of the speckled intruder the

whole gang charged upon the platform like a squadron of *spahis*, and instantly forming a semi-circle about the little sleeper faced the leopard with bristling manes, evidently resolved to defeat, at all hazards, the unexpected purpose of his visit.

The Heart of a Tree.

WHAT does he plant who plants a tree? He plants a friend of sun and sky; He plants the flag of breezes free; The shaft of beauty towering high; He plants a home to heaven anigh For song and mother-crown of bird In hushed and happy twilight heard— The treble of heaven's harmony— These things he plants who plants a tree.

What does he plant who plants a tree? He plants cool shade and tender rain, And seed and bud of days to be, And years that fade and flush again; He plants the glory of the plain; He plants the forest's heritage; The harvest of a coming age; The joy that unborn eyes shall see— These things he plants who plants a tree.

What does he plant who plants a tree? He plants in sap, and leaf, and wood, In love of home and loyalty And far-cast thought of civic good— His blessing on the neighbourhood Who in the hollow of his hand Holds all the growth of all our land— A nation's growth from sea to sea Stirs in his heart who plants a tree!

A CINDERELLA COACH.

A RANCH owner in Goleta, Santa Barbara Co., Cal., had growing upon his place some enormous squashes, one of which was so large that he had it hollowed out to make, as he said, a Cinderella coach for his little girl. He was expecting a visit from an eastern friend, and, after the guest came, accompanied by his little girl, was showing him over the ranch. Giving his daughter a sly look which she understood, she slipped away and ran and got into the squash. As he was going over the field he said to his friend, "You may not believe it, but sometimes we have little girls in our squashes, and I shouldn't wonder if there is one in this one." So saying he tapped the squash, the sides fell apart, and out from the middle sprang his little girl. It is said the eastern gentleman was so astonished that his hair turned white! Probably it was white before, but the rest of the story is true. This squash was over three feet in length and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds.—*Congregationalist*.

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