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LEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

EGYPTIAN DONKEY BOYS.

ONE of the most characteristic features of life in Cairo is the hundreds of donkey boys that throng the streets. At almost every corner, near every hotel they abound. A tourist can scarcely appear on the street but half a dozen will swarm around him, all shouting at once and urging the merits of their respective donkeys—"Mine very good donkey, him name 'Prince of Wales,'" or, if he thinks you are an American, "him name 'Yankee Doodle,'" or, perhaps, "him name 'Grand Old Man,'" or, "him name 'Lily Langtry.'" In Upper Egypt the donkeys have more aristocratic names, and I often had the pleasure of riding on the back of Rameses the Great, or, Tothmes III., namesakes of some of the mightiest of the Pharaohs.

The boys are bright-witted, wide-awake, handsome fellows, who speak a little English and a smattering of perhaps half-a-dozen other languages besides. The donkeys are generally shaven or branded in fantastic designs, and the donkey boy will run behind whacking the poor beast with his staff, and the more you ask them to "go easy," the more they beat him and make him go the harder. A gallant Irish major in our party used to say that "he was the heaviest man in the company and always got the smallest donkey," and sometimes, he would declare that "his donkey was a hundred years old," so slow and crippled was its gait.

The picture of the boys and donkey and the handsome architecture in the background are all very admirable reproductions of life in Cairo.

In the *Methodist Magazine* for 1893, the Editor will give a series of papers on "What Egypt Can Teach Us," with numerous graphic illustrations and explanations of the hieroglyphics, wall and tomb paintings, and quaint costumes and customs of that land, also a series of articles on "Tent Life in Palestine and Syria," similarly illustrated with admirable engravings of the scene in Palestine. These will be of special interest to Sunday-school teachers, indeed, to all Bible students.

"MIND THE DOOR."

Did you ever observe how strong a street door is,—how thick the wood,—how heavy the chain,—what large bolts it has,—and what a lock? If there was nothing of value in the house, or no thieves outside, this would not be needed; but as there are precious things within, and bad men without, there is need that the door be strong, and we must mind the door.

We have a house. Our heart, dear readers, may be called a house. Bad things are for ever trying to come in and go out of our hearts. I will describe a few of these visitors.

Who is that at the door? I know him! It is "anger." What a frown is on his face! How his lips quiver! How fierce



EGYPTIAN DONKEY BOYS.

he looks! I will hold the door and not let him in, or he will do me harm, and perhaps some one else.

Who is that swiftly coming after "anger?" Surely it is his twin-brother. Yes, it is "cruelty," sometimes called "bloody cruelty," for he delights to shed blood. The dumb, defenceless dog, or the helpless sparrow, are favourite objects for him to stone and maim. Keep out, keep out!

Who is that? It is "pride." How haughty he seem! He looks down on everything as if he thought it were too mean for his notice. Ah! wicked pride! I will hold the door and try to keep you out.

"Here comes a stranger. By his sleepy look and slow pace I think I know him. It is "sloth." He would like nothing better than to live in my house, sleep and yawn the hours away, and bring me to rags and ruin. No, no, you idle drone, work is pleasure, and I have much to do. Go away, you shall not come in.

Sometimes but not so often as we could wish, good visitors come to the door. Surely this is one! What bold, but gentle guise. What Christ-like look! "Pity," the sworn enemy of "cruelty," who at his frown, shrinks back ashamed. Blest "pity," in his loving offices, "dropping as the gentle dew from heaven!" Come in, come in; abide with me.

But who is this? What a sweet and winsome smile! What a kind face. She looks like an angel. It is "love." How

happy she will make us if we will ask her in, we must open wide the door for you! Others are coming. Good and bad are crowding up. How brazen faced and bold the wicked are, how timid and easily turned away the good! Therefore watch well the door. Choose carefully your visitors, for they are they which mould the character and shape the life. Remember the words of the wisest of men: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4: 23). The purity of the heart is a treasure above price. So, dear children, you'll "keep the heart," if you mind the door." *Children's Messenger, London.*

THE CRAB AND THE MONKEY.

A JAPANESE STORY.

ONCE upon a time there was a crab who lived in a hole on the shady side of a hill. One day he found a bit of rice cake. A monkey, who had just finished a persimmon, met the crab, and offered to exchange its seed for the rice. The simple minded crab accepted the proposal, and the exchange was made. The monkey ate the rice cake, but the crab backed off home, and planted the seed in his garden.

A fine tree grew up, and the crab was delighted to think of the nice fruit he was to have. He built a nice new house, and used to sit on the balcony, watching the persimmons. One day the monkey came along, and being very hungry, he exclaimed:

"What a fine tree you have here! Could you give me one of those nice ripe persimmons? I will not trouble you to pick it, I will go up for it myself."

"Certainly. Will you please throw down some to me? We will enjoy them together."

Up went the monkey, but he had no idea of throwing fruit down to the crab. He first filled his pockets, then he ate all the ripest persimmons as fast as he could, and threw the seeds at the crab.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the crab, pretending to enjoy the fun, so as to outwit the monkey. "What a good shot you are! Do you suppose you could come down from that tree headforemost?"

"Yes, indeed," said the monkey, "of course I can," and immediately turned around and started down the tree. Of course all the persimmons dropped out of his pockets. The crab seized the ripe fruit, and ran off to his hole. The monkey, waiting till he had crawled out, gave him a sound thrashing and went home.

Just at that time a rice mortar was travelling by with his several apprentices a wasp, an egg, and a seaweed. After hearing the crab's story, they agreed to assist him.

Marching to the monkey's house and finding him out, they laid a plot to dispose of him when he came home. The egg hid in a hole in the hearth, the wasp in the chest, the seaweed near the door, and the mortar over the lintel. When the monkey came home he lighted a fire to steep his tea, when the egg hatched, and scattered his face that he ran howling away to the well for water to cool his face. Then the wasp flew out and stung him. In trying to drive off the wasp he slipped on the seaweed, and then the rice mortar, falling on him, crushed him to death. The wasp and the mortar and the seaweed lived happily together ever afterward. This is a sample of what happens to greedy and ungrateful people.

A Faithful Witness.

When the late Professor Elmshie preached his first sermon, his mother, unable to be present, wrote to a friend whom she knew would be among the hearers, to know how her boy got on. His text was "Behold, I stand at the bar and knock," and we may guess the character of the sermon from the following beautiful lines, the lady's reply to Mrs. Elmshie's question:

"He held the lamp of truth that lay
So low, that none could miss the way,
And yet so high to bring in sight
That picture fair, 'the World's Great
Light.'

That hung up—the lamp between—
The hand that held it scarce was seen."

"He held the pitcher, stooping low,
To lips of little one below;
Then raised it to his very saint,
And both him drank, when sick and faint;
They drank—the pitcher thus between—
The hand that held it scarce was seen!"

"He blew the trumpet, soft and low,
That trembling sinners need not fear;
And then, with louder note and bold,
To raze the walls of Satan's hold,
The trumpet coming thus between,
The hand that held it scarce was seen!"

"But when the Captain says: 'Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant, come!
Lay down the pitcher and the lamp,
Lay down the trumpet, leave the camp,
The weary hands will then be seen,
Clasped in those merciful ones—nought be-
tween."

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 17, 1892.

THE FIRST AND GREATEST SCHOOL.

Words will never make a boy religious; speech will never persuade to faith. It is character that day by day unfolds before him, plays upon him with its nameless forces, works around him with its plastic hands. It is that character, and that alone, that will shape the boy and determine his life. I have in my time learned of many masters, have loved to go into the ancient classic time and seek from men that there lived the secret of the search for truth, or the discovery of the fittest speech in which to present the living thought; I have learned of masters in my own land, living and dead; through voice that uttered and through words; I have learned of men who represented great scholars and continued the traditions and methods of great thinkers of a past generation; but the longer I live, one thing becomes ever the more obvious to me—the greatest influence that entered my life, entered into it amid the obscurity, and the silence, and the sweetness, and

severity of home; and were I to select two persons out of all that ever lived round and about me, the two would be a man who died before I was born a humble man who owned but a small farm, but strove to do his duty to his God, to his neighbour, to his home, to his family. But that man's daughter was my mother, and she loved her father and thought of him as the kind of man she would like to make her son to be, and she managed to bring out of the past the image of the man whose name I bear, till it lived in me, till it became a kind of regulative principle, shaping thought and out guiding speech, and at this hour I know only these as the two pre-eminent persons that have formed my character and life—the grandfather I never saw, and the mother who was his daughter.

THE CIGARETTE.

The Milwaukee school board is going to make "a thorough investigation of cigarette smoking among the pupils." The president of the board declared that the habit prevailed to an alarming extent, and that something must be done to break it up. That is the right course to take. Let parents, teachers, legislators and judges unite in this crusade against the deadly habit. But will boys ever take seriously (boys are not prone to take things seriously anyway) the efforts of men to abolish cigarette-smoking, while the same men practise cigar smoking? Boys are pretty wise in their generation, and on a Sunday morning not long ago we heard a boy (a Sunday-school scholar) criticising the bad example of a man (a conspicuous worker in the same school) who approached the church while puffing a cigar. He was really an excellent and useful young man, but may it not be that he was unconsciously causing little ones to offend, and to offend, too, in something possibly more injurious, if not more unbecoming—cigarette-smoking. Will boys give much heed to the admonitions and laws of men against the hurtful habit of cigarette-smoking, when the same men practice, or protect or apologize for the more hurtful practices of drinking and gambling? What does the boy of average smartness (and that is pretty smart) think of the preaching of a newspaper against cigarettes when at the same time a defender of the licensed saloon and the licensed race-track? If the battleship, Christian Civilization, is going to fight the devil successfully, we must clear the decks more effectually.—Standard.

PEBBLES AND PEARLS.

"Yes," said Mabel, "the ocean is just grand. I never tire of looking at it. I do love the water, whether in ocean, river, lake or brook. How much there is of it, and how useful to our needs. I'd never tire of it as I do of some people—like Mr. Hobson, for instance, who drinks his wine and boasts of his riches. He laughed the other day when he saw my badge, and asked what good it did to wear that? I told him I wore it to show my colours. He meant to look very wise when he said that temperance societies, and especially children's, were all nonsense, for we could never expect to accomplish anything. I told him we were learning something new every day, and asked him if he remembered how David slew the giant. He said of course he did; he used nothing but small pebbles, but he didn't see what that had to do with the matter. Very stupid of him, I must say; but I had to explain that he might call our children's societies young David's if he liked. David used only small pebbles from the brook; but small things are not to be despised, for we are laying up stores of pebbles to help to kill our giant. He didn't know what I meant, and I had to tell him that our pebbles are real solid facts and truths that we learn every week at our meetings. If we get our minds filled with them it will be easy enough to tell to others by-and-by. We'll get ourselves right first."

"He laughed at that, and said: 'Oh, a pebble is too common a thing altogether for dainty young girls like you; why not go about collecting pearls?' I thanked him and said, we would get both. So pebbles and pearls, which shall be to us bits of truth and wisdom, are what we are after."

THE DREGS OF THE CUP.

BY ALICE JACKSON.

THE following incident was related by an evangelist in the north of Scotland:

"I often met, in the course of my ministry, a woman of middle age, pleasant, cheerful, and most earnest and self-denying in her visits from house to house amongst the poor in their scattered cottages. Her quiet unobtrusive labour excited my admiration, and I felt a desire to know more of one so whole-hearted in her devotion to the Master. An opportunity soon occurred. We met one day at the cottage of a sick woman quickly 'wearing away' to the land 'o' the leal.' Our visit over, we left the house together, and as our way lay in the same direction, it afforded me the opportunity I had sought. We spoke of the distress around us, and at last I said, 'You seem devoted to the work amongst the people here, never weary of ministering to their necessities.'"

"She answered, 'Whatever little bit of service I may be allowed to do for any of his suffering ones, I do it gladly for his sake; how can I help giving up my whole heart to him who lived and died for me?'"

"May I ask how you were brought to the knowledge of the exceeding greatness of his love?'"

"It is many years ago," she replied; "I was just a lassie living with my parents in our cottage on the hillside, when one day a pedlar called at the door with his basket of wares. He was an honest man in his dealings, and my mother supplied her needs from his store. I was young and full of mirth, and amused myself for some time, as I thought, with his serious talk. The day was warm, and I asked him if he would like a glass of milk. He said he would be thankful. I brought it to him, and waited to take back the cup, after he had finished, but instead of giving it to me he still kept it in his hand, and looking me steadfastly in the face, said earnestly, 'If I were to offer you the dregs at the bottom of the cup, would you think I was doing you a great honour?' I answered, 'No, indeed; I should think you were just making game of me.' He repeated very solemnly, 'And how are you treating the Almighty God? You are young now, full of health and mirth, living only to amuse yourself: if you live on like this until you are old and gray-headed, and have no more strength to take pleasure in the world, do you think it will be fair to the loving Lord to offer him the dregs of your life? Do you think that he will think it an honour if you bring him the worst part of your life and devote your best part to the service of sin?' He gave back the cup and went on his way, but his words had struck home, and before I left the doorstep I determined to give my heart to Christ, and devote my life to his service. The promise is that those who seek me early shall find me,' and from that hour he has guided me with his counsel. I have never seen the pedlar since, but I thank God for those few earnest words."

A GOLD MEDAL.

I SHALL never forget a lesson I received when at school in A—. We saw a boy named Watson driving a cow to pasture. In the evening he drove her back again, we did not know where; and this was continued several weeks. The boys attending the school were nearly all sons of wealthy parents; and some of them were dunces enough to look with disdain on a scholar who had to drive a cow. With admirable good nature Watson bore all their attempts to annoy him.

"I suppose, Watson," said Jackson, another boy, one day, "I suppose your father intends to make a milkman of you?"

"Why not?" asked Watson.

"Oh, nothing. Only don't leave much water in the cans after you rinse them; that's all."

The boys laughed; and Watson, not in the least mortified replied, "Never fear. If ever I am a milkman I'll give good measure and good milk."

The day after this conversation there was a public examination, at which ladies and gentlemen from the neighbouring towns were present. Prizes were awarded by the principal of our school, and both Watson and Jackson received a creditable number;

for in respect to scholarship they were about equal. After the ceremony of distribution, the principal remarked that there was one prize, consisting of a gold medal, which was rarely awarded, not so much on account of its great cost as because the instances were rare which rendered its bestowal proper. It was the prize of heroism. The last medal was awarded about three years ago to a boy in the first class who rescued a poor girl from drowning. The principal then said that with the permission of the company he would relate a short anecdote:

"Not long since some boys were flying a kite in the streets, just as a poor lad on horseback rode by on his way to the mill. The horse took fright and threw the boy, wounding him so badly that he was carried home and confined some weeks to his bed. Of the boys who had unintentionally caused the disaster, none followed to learn the fate of the wounded lad. There was one boy, however, who witnessed the accident from a distance, who not only went to make inquiries, but who stayed to render service."

"This boy soon learned that the wounded boy was a grandson of a poor widow whose sole support consisted in selling the milk of a cow of which she was the owner. She was old and lame; and her grandson, on whom she depended to drive her cow to the pasture, was now helpless with his bruises. 'Never mind,' said the boy, 'I will drive the cow.'"

"But his kindness did not stop there. Money was wanted to get articles from the apothecary. 'I have money that my mother sent me to buy a pair of boots with,' said he, 'but I can do without them for awhile.' 'Oh, no,' said the old woman, 'I can't consent to that; but there is a pair of heavy boots I bought for Thomas, who can't wear them. If you should only buy these we should get on nicely.' The boy bought the boots, clumsy as they were, and has worn them up to this time.

"Well, when it was discovered by the other boys at school that our scholar was in the habit of driving a cow, he was assailed every day with laughter and ridicule. His cowhide boots, in particular, were made matter of mirth. But he kept on cheerfully and bravely, day after day, never shunning observation, driving the poor widow's cow and wearing his thick boots. He never explained why he drove the cow, for he was not inclined to make a boast of his charitable motives. It was by mere accident that his kindness and self-denial was discovered by his teacher.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, I ask you, Was there not true heroism in this boy's conduct? Nay, Master Watson, do not get out of sight behind the blackboard. You are not afraid of ridicule; you must not be afraid of praise."

As Watson, with blushing cheeks came forward, a round of applause spoke the general approbation; and the medal was presented to him amid the cheers of the audience.—The Children's Queen.

"CLEAN INSIDE."

WHEN the first missionaries in Madagascar, a large island near the east coast of Africa, had converted some of the islanders there, a Christian sea captain asked a former chief what it was that first led him to become a Christian. "Was it any particular sermon you heard, or book which you read?" asked the captain.

"No, my friend," replied the chief, "it was no book nor sermon. One man, he a wicked chief; another man, he drunk all day long; big chief, he beat his wife and children. Now, this chief, he no steal; drunken Tom, he sober; big chief, he very kind to his family. Every honest man gets something inside him, which make him different: so I become a Christian, too, to know how it feel to have something strong inside of me, to keep me from being bad."

"Now, that old chief had the right idea of Christianity. He had got something new and strong inside of him. He had a new motive; it was the desire to be true and pure."

At one of the ragged schools in Ireland a minister asked the poor children before him, "What is holiness?" Thereupon a poor little Irish boy, in dirty, tattered rags, jumped up and said, "Please, your reverence, it's to be clean inside." Could anything be truer?



PLEASANT CHILDREN IN EASTERN EUROPE.

The Story of a Hymn-Book.

CHAPTER XIII.

OLD ENGLAND AGAIN.

WHEN the lifeless body of poor Tim Dooley was removed from the field, and laid in a soldier's grave, his few personal belongings were returned to Washington, the headquarters of the regiment.

Thus, in due time, baptized with blood, as I had been many times baptized with tears, I was returned to the possession of Chaplain Hobday.

Then followed the emancipation of the slave, the disorganization of the Confederacy, and the victory of the Federal army. At the close of the war Mark returned to his business in Philadelphia.

After all that he had passed through, he felt a strange and intense longing to see the old country once more. His firm gave him a commission to Europe, which enabled him not only without expense, but with much advantage to himself, to cross the Atlantic.

What a strange experience to Mark Hobday was that voyage! When he last floated on those waters it was as the poor ship-boy, hardly-treated and ill-fed and ill-cared for. Now he was a first-class passenger, enjoying the comfort, and even luxury, of the saloon of the good ship Scotia. Ten short days, and then Mark Hobday stood again on his native shores. It was not long before he made his way from Liverpool to London, and thence to his native town beneath the chalk downs of Kent.

His father and mother were alive, though showing marks of advancing years. They did not know their son, who had become transformed into a tall, gentlemanly man. Indeed, it was not till Mark had spent many an evening by the fireside of his parents, relating his adventures, and reminding them of the escapades of his boyhood, that old Hobday and his wife could really believe that he was their own son.

What gave Mark the deepest joy and satisfaction was to find the change that had passed over his parents. His own letters, and the visits and attentions of Henry, — now the Reverend Henry Duncan, — and friends whom Duncan had interested in the old people, had been greatly blessed. "The Revolving Boat," was now altogether forsaken, and Mr. and Mrs. Hobday regularly attended the house of God. The mother indeed had joined a class of adults who were being taught to read by a kind lady, in order that she might be able to read her Bible; and the tough old mariner had several times been seen quietly kneeling in a corner of the schoolroom at the weekly prayer meeting.

It was also Mark's great happiness to meet again his old friend and Sunday-school teacher, Henry Duncan. Duncan, whose ministerial charge was in London, came down to see his friends during the time of Mark Hobday's stay in the old town. What a joy it was to him to see Mark, and to hear the story of his life since they parted. With what intense interest did

he look on my pages, on the hymn-book which had crossed ocean and continent, and which had been stained with tears and blood!

When Henry Dun in a short period of release from arduous clerical toils came to a close, a promise was made by Mark to visit him in his London home. Mark's business required him to visit most of the large manufacturing centres. It was an understanding, however, that after his commercial round he was to visit Mr. Duncan before returning home to his parents.

But before that proposed meeting took place, a variety of unexpected adventures were to befall the humble subject of these memoirs of a Methodist hymn-book.

On the morning that Mark started somewhat early for London, when his portmanteau had been packed and strapped, just as he was leaving his room, he espied me lying side by side with his pocket Bible on the dressing-table. Hastily seizing us both, he placed us in the large pocket of his loose wrapper, and bidding his father and mother good-bye, started for the station. The coat was taken off in the railway carriage, and thrown over his knees. On arriving at London Bridge, the morning had brightened, the sun was shining with some little warmth and brilliancy, and Mark threw the "coat" over his arm as he followed a boy across the station-yard to the cab stand. Just as he stepped into the cab, a little jerk of the arm so turned the pocket in which I was placed that I fell out noiselessly upon the mud. The cabman was instructed, the boy received his penny, and away went Mark, all unconscious that he was leaving poor me behind. Before the cab had reached the rear end of the unceasing traffic across the bridge, I was discovered by the keen eyes of one of those little urchins who picked up their living in the streets, and rapidly conveyed beneath his ragged jacket, to be taken to the shelter of the nearest archway and quietly inspected.

Doubtless little Bob Cutler hoped he had found a well-filled pocket-book, and perhaps his first feeling was one of disappointment when he discovered I was only a hymn-book. But on second thoughts a glow of pleasure was felt, as, with a sniff on his intelligent yet "old" and dirty face, he said, "This'll jest do for Liz, she's allus a singin' hymns, and now she'll have a whole book on 'em."

It was not long before I was carried to Fig-court, Pope's-alley, and placed in the hands of little Bob's sister Liz.

Lizzie Cutler was a girl of about eighteen years of age, and she lay smitten with mortal disease.

Her dwelling in that fragrant locality, Pope's-alley, was a poor dirty room on the ground floor, almost destitute of furniture. Mrs. Cutler made what money she could by the manufacture of collar-boxes. As her occupation entailed the use of much strong-smelling glue, and the room was close and dirty, and the grimy window would not open, the atmosphere which poor Liz breathed was neither pleasant nor wholesome.

She was laid on a dirty pallet in a corner of the dark and squalid room. Her white, thin face showed out in striking contrast against the long, flowing black locks which covered her pillow. Every now and again a terrible fit of coughing would seize her, for which reason she was almost continually propped up, as any other posture was suffocation. Her mother could obtain few comforts, or indeed necessities, for her sick daughter at any time. She was an idle, dirty, shiftless creature, and, worse than all, was addicted to drink, and when once she began drinking, she would never pause until every penny had been parted with, and everything capable of conversion into money conveyed to the "leaving shop."

The chief gleams of light and comfort that came to poor Liz came by the way of her brother, little Bob Cutler. If he had "good luck," and "light" of papers — well, he was sure to think of Lizzie, and brought her many a savoury penny worth (at which, dear reader, your nose would have

turned aside in disgust) from the neighbouring cook-shop.

Lizzie and Bob had both attended — in a very fitting way, it must be confessed — the mission school in No. 19, Fig-court. But even on their occasional attendances they had picked up sundry crumbs of heavenly comfort. It was the recollection of stray texts and hymns that was Lizzie's chief solace when left, as she often was, alone for hours. Then the minister or his wife, or the kind, sensible Bible woman, looked in now and again to see the dying girl. These good friends had made several attempts to improve the poor sufferer's condition, but the habits of the mother made their efforts abortive. Sheets and blankets which they had supplied had been pawned by Mrs. Cutler, as she falsely said for bread, but in reality for drink. The very caretaker now on the bed bore in large letters the singular impress "Lent by the Paragon-place mission." Such were the precautions which Christian philanthropy had to take in order to preserve its charity from being diverted to the pawnshop and public-house.

When Bob reached No. 19, Fig-court, Pope's-alley, he found Lizzie alone. The mother had gone into the city to take some finished work. Bob produced his prize with intense satisfaction, and soon the thin fingers of the girl were turning over my leaves. She was not a good reader, but her face lit up with a smile as here and there her eyes fell upon a familiar line.

"O Bob," she said, "here is 'O for a heart to praise my God;' and still turning over, presently she discovered "Rock of ages, left for me," and there at that glorious hymn of Toplady's she was content to pause.

For many a day I was poor Lizzie's cherished and constant companion. Once more it was my happiness to minister to the sick and suffering. And I could not so much regret my separation from my old friend Mark Hobday, though I was sure he would grieve at his loss, when I found how much heavenly light and music I brought to poor Lizzie Cutler's dying bed.

My new friend grew worse daily. Sometimes she was too weak and ill even to read a line from my pages. But even then her lips would be constantly repeating in a whisper some of the sweet words of my hymns. But the verse which came as the refrain of every other strain was "Rock of ages, cleft for me."

As I have said, little Bob Cutler was a scholar in the Paragon mission school. It was now nearing the end of the year, and sundry intimations were given respecting the Christmas tea and treat which the children of the schools always received. Bob was in high glee one day when he bounced into the little dark room at No. 19, Fig-court, with a ticket for the great occasion in his hand. Even Lizzie's pale, suffering face was for a moment covered with a smile as she saw the boy's delight. "Yes," cried Bob, "Mr. Duncan said I was to be sure and come, and he said, too, that if you wasn't able to come you should have some cakes and the rest of it sent to you."

"Mr. Duncan!" Had I heard aright? As Bob finished speaking, and proceeded to relieve his pent-up feelings by a most demonstrative and inelegant *pis de soil*, the door opened and a gentleman entered.

"I did knock," he said, "but there was so much noise you didn't hear me."

He was a tall gentleman in a black coat and white cravat; it was, yes it was, no other than my old friend Henry Duncan. Oh, to be so near to him, and for him not to think of me!

Yes, Henry Duncan was the hard-working minister in charge of this wretched and wretched district. Dismissing Bob for a game in the court seeing that a law officer of excitement he was hardly capable of self-command, Mr. Duncan rose and prayed with the sick girl.

The Christmas tea party for the children came off the next week. It was a royal treat for Bob. There were mountains of cake, to say nothing of bread and butter, almonds and raisins, oranges, nuts; a grand Christmas tree, sparkling, so Bob said, with a thousand candles, music and singing, and clapping, and, best of all, a magic lantern.

And there was pictures of America, of the Rocky Mountains, and the Mirror Lake, and the Yosemite Valley, and the

big trees, and the wonderful waterfalls, and the gentleman who described them had been there himself, and he talked to these poor children so kindly, telling them how he had been a poor sailor boy, and how their good minister, Mr. Duncan, used to be his Sunday-school teacher.

All this and much more did little Bob Cutler, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, tell his sister when he came home. And I knew that Mark Hobday had been to his friend Henry Duncan's school treat and I got there.

But my place was at the side of poor Lizzie, whose hours were rapidly running out. This very week, in spite of her daughter's extreme illness, Mrs. Cutler was "on the drink." When she got into the mood she was callous and reckless. Lizzie must have perished from neglect and starvation but for the kindness of neighbours and friends.

It was on the day after the tea meeting, Lizzie lay in a doze, rather the slumber of exhaustion than of repose. Bob was away trying to earn a penny.

Mrs. Cutler came into the room and looked round to see what there was that might be "parted with" for a little more liquor. The room was altogether bare, and there was not even a flat-iron on which to raise a penny. Suddenly her eye fell upon me. I had lost, as may be supposed, my original freshness and beauty, but I was still a comely and respectable volume.

In a moment or two, grasped beneath the woman's shawl, I was on the way to the stall of the wooden-legged bookeller in London-passage. Here a bargain was made, which resulted in Mrs. Cutler carrying off eightpence, having tried in vain to extract a shilling. And in the course of an hour I was arranged with a motley company of second-hand books on the board against the wall, amidst Wesleyan Hymn-books, 1s. 6d. The cold December wind blew around me, a spot or two of sleet fell upon me. My next neighbour on one side was "Prisoners of Death," and on the other a novel, "Fanny, or Virtue Rewarded."

How long should I stay here, and what next was to be my fate? Now my old friends and owners, Henry Duncan and Mark Hobday, would not see me again. Several times was I taken up and turned over, and put down again as "only an old hymn-book."

My cover was whole and sound, not a leaf was missing or out of place, but my binding was faded, and my pages stained with finger marks, and salt water, and tears, and blood. No wonder those who knew nothing of my history despised me.

But a shadow falls over the stall. A tall gentleman is listlessly poking up here and there a volume. Presently his eyes fall upon me. As he takes up into his hand, the blood rushes into his face. He unconsciously raises his hat and smoothes back the hair from his brow. The forehead and the eyes are familiar to me, though the lower part of the face, concealed by the strong curling mustache, appears strange. What is it that, as a revelation, brings Oakshade, and The Heralds, and Farmer Wilmore, and my first dear mistress Alice, all before me!

It is none other than Father Goodthing! How I doubted before, no doubt's laugh as he opens my pages, and with his strong hand shakes me, reads my inscription: "Love Him, from her father and mother, on her 21st birthday, with love and prayers."

"It is my dear mother's book!" It had been her gift to him, but he will speak of it as his own book. The price was sixpence, and I had a shilling and a half for it. I was now in the possession of my dear father, though he had bought me for a shilling and a half. I was sold to him for a shilling and a half.

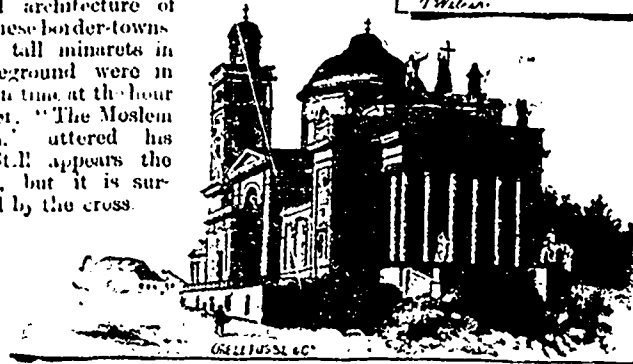
How little did my father imagine the scenes that were to be had and passed since the Metropolitan sank in and channel.

How long I was actually at home again. Yes, my own dear mistress, the Alice Wilmore of old again looked with glistering eyes upon my pages. The face was still the same, though the hair had grown long, and the eyes were dimly veiled with the mists of old age.



SCENES IN EASTERN EUROPE

The whole of Eastern Europe from Vienna to Constantinople has, in the architecture of the towns and cities and costumes and customs of the people, striking evidence of the war that for hundreds of years was waged between the crescent and the cross. Army after army of the fierce Ottoman soldiery swept over these borderlands and near almost every stream and mountain pass, fierce battle has been fought between the Christian and the Moslem hosts. The upper part of our picture shows the half Oriental architecture of one of these border-towns. On the tall minarets in the foreground were in the olden time at the hour of prayer, "The Moslem muezzin," uttered his call. St. E. appears the crescent, but it is surmounted by the cross.



ARCHITECTURAL GROUPS AND COSTUMES OF EASTERN EUROPE.

The lower cut is of a Greek or Catholic church, crowned with many crosses and having on its lofty pedestal figures of the apostles, like most of the churches of Eastern Europe. The quaint figure in the margin indicates the bright colours and queer costumes which one meets in these border-lands. This beautiful engraving is one of many which will illustrate the Editor's papers on "Eastern Europe" in the forth-coming volume of the *Methodist Magazine*.

LESSON NOTES.

CHRISTMAS LESSON.

LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 25.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Luke 2: 8-20. [Memory verses, 11-14.]

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.—Luke 2: 10

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The coming of Jesus Christ is the proof and promise of God's love to men.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

In the same country. In the fields near Bethlehem *Abiding in the field*—which could easily be done in December, as often very pleasant weather and good pasturage is found all through that month. Note, that the angels came to the shepherds while they were performing their regular duties. *Sorely*—Expressly *City of David* Bethlehem, so called because David was born and spent his early life there. So foretold in Mic. 5: 2. Mary and Joseph were descendants of David, and in the same line. Jesus was the King who fulfilled the promises made to David. *Christ*—The Messiah, the anointed; i.e., one set apart by God for a special work. Note, that Jesus lived in heaven, the eternal Son of the Father, before this. (See John 1: 1-3, 14; Heb. 1: 1-3.) *A sign*—By which to know when they had found the right babe. *Manger*—A stone trough in which the cattle were

fed. The inns were unfurnished lodging-places, not like our hotels. *In the highest*—In the highest places, in the highest straits, in the highest degree. *Good will toward men*—Christ, the Son of God, coming to earth to die for men, is the highest proof of God's love, good will, toward men. *Returned*—To their work with their flocks.

Find in this lesson—

1. The greatest event in the world.
2. A proof of God's love to us.
3. Some reasons why we should love Jesus.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

1. Where and when was Jesus born? "In Bethlehem of Judaea, 1893 years ago." 2. Who was he? "The Son of God in heaven, and of Mary on earth." 3. Who announced his birth? "The angels, to the shepherds in the field." 4. What did the angels say? (Repeat the "Golden Text.") 5. What did the shepherds do? "They found the Saviour, and proclaimed him." 6. What did Mary do? "She kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

Which were the ancient commandments thus quoted?

Deuteronomy 6: 4, 5; Leviticus 19: 18.

What, then, do you learn by all these commandments?

Two things: my duty towards God and my duty towards my neighbour.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

ONE fine summer day a hare was laughing and jeering at a tortoise because he went along so slowly. But the tortoise offered to run a race with her any day, and to beat her, too. "Very well," said the hare, and they started at once. The tortoise jogged along at a slow and steady pace, but never stopped for a moment. The hare laughed at him, and said: "Go on, Mr. Tortoise, I shall soon catch up to you; so I think I will take a nap for a few minutes." Meanwhile the tortoise plodded on, but the hare overlept herself. Suddenly she jumped up, rubbed her eyes, bounded along the road, and reached the winning-post just in time to see the tortoise there before her.

A Christmas Thought.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

Oh! Christmas is coming again, you say,
And you long for the things he is bringing;
But the costliest gift may not gladden the day
Nor help on the merry bells ringing.
Some getting is losing, you understand,
Some hoarding is far from saving;
What you hold in your hand may slip from
your hand;
There is something better than having;
We are richer for what we give;
And only by giving we live.

Your last year's presents are scattered and gone,
You have almost forgotten who gave them;
But the loving thoughts you bestow live on
As long as you choose to have them.
Love, love is your riches, though ever so poor,
No money can buy that treasure;
Yours always, from robber and rust secure,
Your own, without stint or measure;
It is only love that can give;
It is only by loving we live.

For who is it smiles through the Christmas morn,—
The light of the wide creation?
A dear little child, in a stable born,
Whose love is the world's salvation.
He was poor on earth, but he gives us all
That can make our life worth the living;
And happy the Christmas-day we call
That is spent for his sake—in giving;
He shows us the way to live;
Like him, let us live and give.

NEW ENGLAND'S FIRST SABBATH.

THE first Christian Sabbath in New England fell upon the 10th of December, 1620. On Saturday afternoon, in a storm of snow and rain, the faithful few who had crossed the ocean in the *Mayflower*, left the ship to seek a shelter somewhere on the bleak coast. Under the lee of a rise of land they kindled a fire, and there spent the holy hours of God's day. On the next day they touched, with weary feet, the rock made famous as the landing place of the pilgrims.

Xmas List No. 4.

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