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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XIX.

TORONTO, AUGUST 19, 1899.

No. 33.

Jack's Resolve.

If I were the king of a country as wide
As the sky on a bright summer day,"
Said Jack, with a nod, as he hunted about
In a wearied-to-death sort of way,
And my wealth and my power were
Limitless quite,
To do just the thing I might choose,
Do you know what I'd get with the gold
That I had?
How that wonderful power I'd use?
I would give the last cent that I had in
The world,
And I'd add my crown to the cost,
For a pencil," said he—then he paused
With a smile—
"For a pencil that 'couldn't' get lost!"

THE GREAT CHARTER.

BY HARRIET D. SLIDELL MACKENZIE.

Many pieces of old paper are worth their weight in gold. I will tell you of one that you could not buy for even so high a price as that. It is now in the British Museum, in London. It is old and worn. It is more than six hundred and sixty-six years old. It is not easy to realize how old that is. Kings have been born and died, nations have grown up and have wasted away, during that long time. There was no America—so far as the people who lived at that time knew—when this old paper was written upon. America was not discovered for nearly three hundred years after it. A king wrote his name on this old paper; and though he had written his name on many other pieces of paper, and they are lost, this one was very carefully kept from harm—though once it fell into the hands of a tailor, who was about to cut it up for patterns, and at another time it was almost destroyed by fire.

Visitors go to look at it with great interest. They find it a shrivelled piece of paper, with the king's name and the great seal of England on it; but they know that it stands for English liberty, and means that—as the poet Thomson wrote, in the song, "Rule Britannia"—

"BRITONS NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES."

"It is called the Magna Charta," which means simply the "Great Paper." There have been other great papers, and other papers that have been called "charters," but this one is known the world over as the "Great Paper."

As you look back into English history you will see that all the way along our ancestors have been striving with their might to be free. They were willing to have kings, but they wished to have them reasonable and not tyrannical. They had always to be on the watch; for every once in a while a king would arise who would try to take away some right or privilege which they had gained.

One of the modes of trial by "ordeal" was to put the prisoner into the water, and if he floated he was considered innocent, but if he drowned he was thought to have been guilty! Now I am sure that if I had to be tried in that way I should think it very hard, for it would make me out guilty the first time, and there would be no chance for another trial. I have no doubt that the "ordeal" removed many bad men from England, but I fear it removed some good ones too.

King John stands out among the sovereigns of England as one of the very worst. He was a bad son, and rebelled against his father, though his favourite child. He murdered his nephew, Arthur of Brittany, striking him down with his

own hands, and then pushing him head-long into the river Seine. And he was one of those who betrayed his brother Richard into a long imprisonment in Germany.

AS A KING HE WAS NO BETTER.

From the beginning to the end of his reign he was false and cruel; and no one, not even the highest and noblest, was safe from fines and taxes of the most tyrannical kind. Their only hope was in giving bribes to the sovereign, who, you know, should have been their protector and not their tormentor. There is no country in Europe in which the people are now treated in this way except Russia. One man actually was forced to pay for the privilege of eating his breakfast!

The great barons of England were many of them furious because they were treated in this way by the king, and joined in making a league by which they bound themselves to force the king to give them their rights. They waited until 1214. In that year, John called upon them to follow him to France, to fight against the French king. They had

When John heard what the barons had sworn to do, he fled to London, and shut himself up in a place that he thought safe. The barons had drawn up a charter, and they followed him to London to show it to him. It was the sixth of January, and he thought it would be safe to say that he would grant the charter at Easter, for he felt sure that he could raise an army in the meanwhile large enough to beat Langton and all the barons.

When Easter arrived, the barons met at Stamford. There were two thousand knights, followed by their esquires. I should like to have seen them as they rode about, their armour glistening in the spring sun, their banners flying, and their chargers neighing as they sniffed the air, which must have seemed to be filled with

THE STIMULUS OF FREEDOM.

They had the charter with them, and John, who was at Oxford, sent to see what it was like. When he found out its terms he was wild with fury, and sent word that he would never sign a paper that would make him a slave. He

that would avail on either side were power and force, and the king had already given way to them. The king almost immediately took his pen and wrote his name on the charter, and said that he did it on account of his pious regard for God, and his desire to benefit his people, though we know that he did not entertain any very pious motives at the time.

The Magna Charta was, as some one said,

THE GREAT PUBLIC ACT OF THE NATION

after it had realized that it was a nation—the completion of a work for which they had been labouring for a hundred years. It has been the foundation of English liberty ever since.

It begins by saying that the king grants these rights to his subjects "for the health of his soul." The charter then proclaims the liberty of the church and the liberty of the people.

"No freeman," it says, "shall be seized, or imprisoned, or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin. We will not go against any man, nor send against him, except by legal judgment of his peers.

"To no man will we sell, or deny, or delay right or justice.

"No scrutage or aid—taxes—shall be imposed in our realm save by the Common Council."

But the best thing in the Magna Charta was that it

PROTECTED THE POOR.

It was declared that no man, whose goods were forfeited, should lose his means of making a living. The freeman was to keep his "contentment," or tools, the merchant his merchandise, and the villain, or serf, his "wainage"—his oxen, plough, and waggon. Foreign merchants might travel in England, and sell and buy as they pleased. And the towns were to have and use "all their liberties and free customs."

So a council of twenty-four nobles was then chosen to watch this king whom no man could trust, and to make war upon him if he broke his compact.

After the charter was signed and sealed, it was published throughout England, and sworn to at every town. The barons rejoiced; and Robert Fitzwalter wrote

letters calling upon the knights of England to come with arms and horses to a great tournament, at which the prize was to be a large she-bear.

During the rest of his life—only little more than a year—he tried in vain, by the help of the Pope's curse and by foreign soldiers' swords, to escape from these "over-kings," who would not suffer him to go back to his old habits of forcing money from Jews by pulling out their teeth, carrying off and poisoning young girls, starving women and children, and crushing old priests under coopes of lead. It was in a last attempt against his people's freedom that he saw his baggage, with the royal treasure, his crown, and the provision for his army, all swept away by a sudden rising of the tide. A few days later he died in Newark, saying, "I commit my body to St. Wulstan and my soul to God," the God whose laws he had rebelled against for so many years.

His son, Henry III., was crowned soon afterwards, and immediately made to swear to maintain Magna Charta, which was from that time the foundation of English law.

Thus was accomplished the great work of the English barons of the twelfth century.



SIGNING THE MAGNA CHARTA.

started, but left him at a certain point in the journey, saying that the terms of their allegiance to him did not compel them to serve him more than forty days. John thought that he would conquer the French first, and then go home and subdue the rebellious barons, but he made a wrong reckoning. He was beaten by the French king, Philip II., at the battle of Bouvines, in 1214, and he was glad to escape with his life. It was one of the greatest battles of the time.

Archbishop Langton had already taken up the part of the liberties of the people by warning the king against his arbitrary course, but John had told him, "Mind your Church, and leave me to govern the State."

This had not restrained Langton, and he had pledged his support to the old Saxon laws, with certain changes that had been made by the Normans. The barons solemnly vowed to conquer or die.

After the battle of Bouvines, John returned to England. It was towards the end of October, and about the middle of the next month, Langton called the barons together again—this time at Bury St. Edmunds—and they knelt at the altar of their old Saxon saint, to swear new to force the king to deal justly with the people.

thought that the king should be able to do what he pleased, and that the people had no rights that he was bound to respect.

John's answer roused the whole country, and the wretched king found himself powerless before the anger of the nation that he had wronged. He was powerless, however, and he said once more that he would sign the hated paper, though he did not speak of it in this way. He said, instead, that he was ready and willing to grant the demands of his "loving subjects" whenever they should appoint the time and place. They appointed the fifteenth of June as the time, and the Meadow of Council, or Runnymede, as the place.

To this meadow, consecrated to freedom by ancient associations, which lies off the Thames, below Windsor, came John, with a small train of twenty-four bishops and nobles, in their armour and robes. Of this small number there were but two who really wished success to the king. The others were, heart and soul, on the side of the barons.

The king encamped on the left bank of the river, and men from each of the contracting parties met on a little island between the hosts. It was not a time for discussion, for the only arguments

Your Gifts.

By EMMA C. DOWD.

If you have the gift of seeing, ever look for beauty in all your friends is plain not your duty.

If you have the gift of hearing, list to what is met; Shut your ears to everything that is not good and sweet.

If you have the gift of talking, use but pleasant words; Let your speech be glad and cheery as the songs of birds.

—Youth's Companion.

OUR PERIODICALS:

Table listing various periodicals such as Christian Guardian, Methodist Magazine, and others with their respective prices.

WILLIAM BRIGGS, Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto. R. H. HARVEY, 217 St. Catherine St., Montreal.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK. Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, AUGUST 19, 1889.

HE STOPPED THE TRAIN.

Train No. 30 on the Indianapolis and Vincennes Road, in charge of Conductor F. W. Russel, of Indianapolis, was tearing slow toward Indianapolis at the rate of fifty miles an hour.

Then it was that a Dorsey saw there was something red between the rails, and he threw on emergency brakes and opened the sand-box.

About eight hundred yards distant, was a house, and toward it Frank started with the baby, to meet a man running toward him like an insane person.

MINING A MILE UNDER THE SEA.

The entrance to the shaft is in the side of the cliff, and by the time three perpendicular ladders have been scaled down one is on a level with the sea.

noise, they say, was most perceptible, and the roaring, when the Atlantic was one of his wider moods, was the horror of the workers.

THE STREET-ARAB'S TRUST.

The following pathetic story is told by John B. Gough. A poor old of a street boy in London who had had both legs broken by a dray passing over him.

"No, I never heard of him." "Bobby, I went to mission-school once, and they told me that Jesus would take you to heaven when you died, and you'd never hunger any more, and no more pain, if you axed him."

"Bobby, hold up your hand, and he'll know what you want when he passes by." They got the hand up; it dropped, they tried to hold it, it slowly fell back.

STORY OF A PARROT.

Bayard Taylor relates the following about a parrot once owned by a lady in Chicago. When the great fire was raging, an owner said that she could rescue nothing except what she instantly took in her arms.

When the great fire was raging, an owner said that she could rescue nothing except what she instantly took in her arms. There were two objects equally dear, the parrot and the old family Bible, and she could take but one.

"Your going," my boy, he said, "was a wrong move; you ran a tremendous risk of moral ruin; when we have made a mistake in life, we should stick to it, and good we can from it, and I think degree, simplicity, purity, integrity, homely life will always shine fairer to you."

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The Birds in Church.

By E. S. DENZIEB. God's happy children of the air On leafy boughs are swaying, While beings fall with forms divine Are in the churches praying.

Cathedral grand with vaulted skies The songs of birds are filling; The wide extended plains of heaven Are with their rapture thrilling.

They chant the anthems of their God, And worship him with singing; Who listens to their songs can hear The chimes of heaven-strings.

In divers notes of sweetest tone Their lays to us come stealing; They seem to draw us to the skies, While in our pews we're kneeling.

We bow before the Lord in prayer, Our love to him expressing; The prayer is said, we rise, and lo! We see a slight distressing.

From bough to bough, from tree to tree, The birds, no longer sitting, All broken and crushed and cold and dead, On ladders' hats are sitting.

Their songs without now never heard, The minstrels dead or dying; Within the sinners, vain with pride, Their God to praise are trying.

They sing aloud their hymns of praise, And think that God is hearing; While on their shapesees hats in truth Five million birds they're wearing.

And now no chirping music will On airy wings is swelling, The voiceless birds to church have gone To find an alien dwelling.

Moethinks could all these lifeless birds Our hearts with song be filling, A plaintive voice to us would say, "Why don't you stop this killing?"

An answer bold in haste is made, "What cares a bird for living?" Just this, dear friend, to live the life That God to it is giving.

No fearful voice, no whispered song, Can end without his knowing; Spare them, the birds whose songs do set The world to music going.

A BOY OF TO-DAY

By Julia MacNair Wright. Author of "The House on the Bluff," etc.

CHAPTER IX. WHAT THE HAND FINETH TO DO-DO.

When "the minister" heard that Heman had forestalled his threatened summons and had come home, he quickly called him to take tea with him.

"Your going," my boy, he said, "was a wrong move; you ran a tremendous risk of moral ruin; when we have made a mistake in life, we should stick to it, and good we can from it, and I think degree, simplicity, purity, integrity, homely life will always shine fairer to you."

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kindness of heaven. He has a great fault, nurtured by the straits of his early life. He sets far too high a value on money on the possession of property.

"Now, Heman, you have had a lesson early, follow safe, honest, open ways of making a living, and you'll have to do wisely. It leads you into wider paths, follow them, only be sure it is his leading. If he keeps you in 'the simple round, the common task, fulfill it with diligence, and you'll get to God, and the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire." Now, that's advice, and a little private sermon. Tell me what you propose to do since you are a free man.

"Uncle Ritas and I mean to start on building a shop right away. We've money enough for lumber, doors, windows, and materials, and I'll have it all the while. I'll have one door going into the kitchen so we can get some heat that way. I'm going to get every bit of day's work I can, and work at the shop when I've nothing else to do. I'll have work in the orchard, wood-lots and corn-fields pretty soon."

"Lawyer Brace will want a boy to light his office fire and keep the office clean this winter after the first of November. You'll have to go to him. Our church will also want some one to build fires in the stoves Sunday, and on Wednesday evenings, and to sweep, dust, oil, kitching, and clean the stoves on Saturday. I think you could do all that well, Heman, you are thorough in what you undertake. Those two places would bring you three dollars a week. After November first I want to take those two places, and on Saturday work you have time for beside, and go to school during the week. We shall have a very excellent teacher here, from November on. Just Mr. George. You need not need a winter more a study. Heman, you need to study history, grammar, and book-keeping."

Heman did not like study. He had taken a metaphysical course in pleasure in the thought that "he was done going to school." Uncle Ritas was largely to blame for this. However, Heman's little journey into the world had taught him many a useful lesson. He had seen vice and poverty; in proportion to one's ignorance it is hard to make a living; the man who knows something well is the man wanted. There are degrees of education, and a man could do well to pleading a case in the Supreme Court, and in every line of labour we find the skilled and the unskilled workman; the excellence of knowing something had gone up with Heman.

"Book-keeping" had a pleasant business-like sound. Yes, he would like to know how to keep books; history he had always liked well, and as for grammar he could learn that further. Knowledge of its mysteries. It was useful to assent to the minister's proposals; Heman felt that he and Uncle Ritas had been making a mistake in life, and he would like to behave them to rehabilitate themselves. Aunt Drexel and Espey were highly delighted with the minister's plan, they discussed it at the supper table.

"School" and "grammar," but said nothing; Ritas had made many mistakes lately, and was beginning to distrust himself as adviser and manager. Espey said, "What the world wants, Heman, is honest men that will do some kind of honest work, in a thorough, honest way. It doesn't so much matter what the work is, as that it is honest. It is done the more valuable the man is. The more he knows the more good he can do. I suppose nobody can know all the learning that is in the world." Heman said, "Yes, Espey, and I think a man had better stick into the kind he can use best, and get all he can of it."

"Yes," said Heman, slowly; "but you see—I do know a good deal about horses, and I can do that well."

"Hm—m" and added, "There he goes again!" A Suggestion—"What is the way is the name of those things with wings on their heads?" asked Mr. Bopps, who could not think of the word "cherub" to save him.

"Miles!" suggested Mrs. Bopps, in all innocence.



STREET BEGGAR, CHINA.

CHINESE POVERTY.

This half-naked street beggar is an illustration of the extreme poverty common in China.

A Chinese proverb says, "Even a child may not eat ten idle years of food." The mother must work to keep the wolf from the door but why may we not have the little, useless children to train? "Because," the mother replies sadly, "I cannot afford to have the children study. The boy, though small, can rake fuel for the fire and manure for the field. My wee girl can already spin, mind the baby, and wait upon me." If little hands drop their small work, older ones must take it up; and so sharp and cruel is the haste with which in this poor family consumption treads upon the heels of production, that little jaws must cease to grind, and stomachs to crave, if little hands cease to labour. "Well, we will feed your children while they study." "That is very kind of you," she says, "but they have no decent clothes. Every one will make fun of them if they go in such tatters to school."

Some of the poorest of our Christian widows hire themselves out to work for rich families by the season. They dare not miss one day from the harvest, or from the cotton field, for their coveted meeting and lesson, lest their places be filled by others, and they lose the chance of gleaning at the end of the season. We know of doors where the only weapon to keep the wolf at bay is the little shining needle of the mother. She must have her stint done to-night. You speak to her, she answers you without looking up, for, as the saying runs:

You raise your head, you lose one stitch, you lower your head you lose another. How fast her needle flies, though night has come, the children are all curled up fast asleep, and it is so piercingly cold her hands are numb. It seems a marvel each time she sees to thread her needle. Her lamp! let us rather say her corner of Egyptian darkness! Her eyes are fast giving way under the continual night work and the daily smoke. Some melancholy day will see her quite blind. Then poverty will hold the family in a still sterner vice. Pray, where is her education to come in?

The possible depths of Chinese poverty may be shown by two examples: one of a family where the wedding of their son found them too poor to buy a fifteen-cent mat for the k'ang of the bride. They borrowed one. The new wife, who had a comfortable bed quilt as a part of her dowry, felt guilty to be warm while her new mother-in-law shivered under a tattered excuse for a comforter. After the rest were asleep, the bride would steal out to the other room, put her nice warm covering over her new mother, and go back to her own comfortless bed to shiver. In another village, a dispute as to who should bear the expense of less than two cents' worth of oil an evening, has been known to break up a religious meeting. "But the people are not all as poor as that," says your new mission-

ary, whom no doubts appal and no facts suppress. Unwittingly she thus brings you to the third obstacle:

The multiplication of manual labour. Rightly to understand Chinese life we must turn our backs on the great facts of political economy, and move the hands of the world's great clock back to the times of our great-grandmothers. We long to give our Chinese sister a Christian training. Christian training is instruction, or building up. It is first, as a preparation, intellectual. Even a divine Christ must be intellectually apprehended to be revered. We must wake up our sister's mind, but that is a work of time, and her time, alas! has already so many calls upon it. "Why, how is that?" says the new missionary. "With such a small house, no elaborate cooking, no fussy dressmaking and millinery, no pillow-shams and no church fairs, one would think she might have oceans of time." We will invite her to come and study with us a month.

Intense longing and regret flit across her face. Her "Outside," as she quietly calls her husband, "needs a new blouse." "Well, bring the shears and we will help you. Fle upon such a miserable little obstacle as that, to blockade the way to the kingdom of heaven! Here is the sewing-machine all threaded; bring us the cloth."

Nay softly, O sanguine Occidental! The cloth is out there in Nature's lap, tucked away in the cotton-pods. The woman brings it in, four catties of cotton, a great lapful of hard white wads. Her skillful fingers and feet are soon flying at the cotton gin. After four hours of hard work the seeds are disposed of, and the gin goes back to its corner. Next comes the musical clang of her bow. A whole day of patient, steady labour is needed to reduce those little hard wads

to a snowy, fleecy mountain of picked-up cotton. Next comes the cheerful hum of her little spinning-wheel. She is never idle, seek her when you may. But five days slip by before the thread is all spun. We watch and sigh. Next, out comes the clumsy old loom. How monotonous the click-clack of its cradle! How slowly the shuttle goes, though our friend is reputed a good weaver! Five days more have glided away into the eternal past, when a piece of cloth, twenty-five feet long, poor, coarse and narrow, drops from that antiquated loom. Eleven days and a half out of her month gone, and we have only just got to the shears! Another day sees the garment done.

The new missionary cannot sew for all the Chinese women, furnishing time and foreign thread; but she means to see this one experiment through. The woman is a bright one; her mind is being wasted. We will polish it, quicken it, set it fermenting with new ideas; in short, make yeast out of her, with which to leaven a great mass. Then no one will begrudge the day's work and the foreign thread.

"Come and begin to-morrow," she says, as the woman sews on the last button.

"Thank you so much, I should be so glad," says the woman, "but I cannot possibly. My mother-in-law needs a new quilt, my boy has no stockings, my two little girls have no wadded drawers, and my father-in-law needs a new pair of shoes."

"How long does it take you to make him a pair?"

"Five days."

"And you make the shoes for the whole family?"

"Of course," replies the woman, wondering if the queer new teacher supposes that shoes grow.

"How many pairs will keep all seven of you shod for a year?"

"About thirty."

"And how many wadded garments do they need?"

"Good years we have each of us two, that is fourteen in all, and it takes me a month of steady work, with four or five days more, for the bedding, and half a month for the summer clothes."

"Over two hundred days of clear, solid sewing!" ejaculates the new missionary, "even if you never had an interruption! And the cloth for all these jackets and drawers, comforters, stockings and shoes, does it all lie out there, eleven days away from the shears?"

"Why, yes; where else could it be?"



CHRISTIAN CHINAMAN PREACHING.

The wind is all out of that missionary's sails. They only flap dejectedly "Time?" she thinks, "Time? Why one person ought to be appointed to eat for a Chinese woman, and one to sleep for her, while a third does her breathing! What a mistake to have an 'Outside' at all. One should be all kernel and no shell. Or, for the freedom of those happy lands, where one might at least find an old maid to educate!"

CHRISTIAN CHINAMAN
PREACHING.

The great work of evangelizing China must be carried on largely by the Chinese themselves. All the churches in Christendom can scarcely hope to do more than furnish sufficient missionaries to plant the germs of the Gospel in different parts of that vast empire, in the hope that God will raise up native missionaries to carry on the good work, and this hope has not been disappointed. There have been several native missionaries who have proved very eloquent and successful in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their countrymen. The picture annexed shows one of these standing in a doorway, and proclaiming to a group in the street the unsearchable riches of Christ. They seem to be very intelligent and docile hearers, and doubtless the seed thus sown in many places is followed with very blessed results.

FOR
LOVERS OF NATURE.Some Suitable Books for
Summer.

Botany.

The Story of Plant Life. By Julia Mac-Nair Wright. Illustrated, cloth, 50c.

How to Know the Wild Flowers:

A Guide to the Names, Haunts and Habits of Our Common Wild Flowers. By Mrs. William Starr Dana. Illustrated by Marion Satterlee. Cloth, \$1.75.

How to Know the Ferns.

A Guide to the Names, Haunts and Habits of Our Common Ferns. By Frances Theodora Parsons. Illustrated by Marion Satterlee and Alice Josephine Smith. Cloth, \$1.50.

A Guide to the Wild Flowers.

By Alice Lounsbury. With 61 colored and 100 black-and-white plates and 54 diagrams, by Mrs. Ellis Rowan. With an introduction by Dr. N. L. Britton, Emeritus Professor of Botany, Columbia University. Cloth, net, \$2.50.

Rambles Among the Wild Flowers.

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