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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

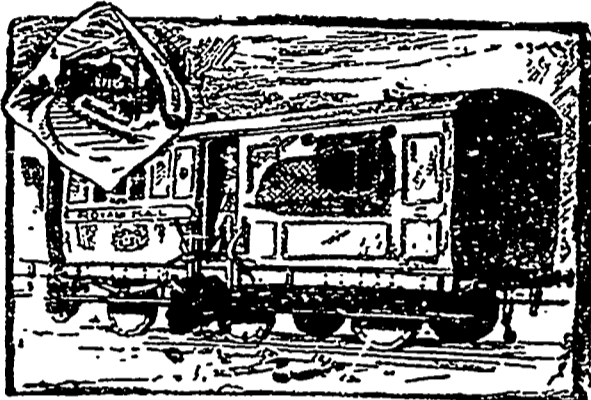
Vol. XVII.]

TORONTO, OCTOBER 30, 1897.

No. 44.

Heimgang.

"Heimgang!" So the German people
Whisper when they hear the bell
Tolling from some gray old steeple,
Death's familiar tale to tell;
When they hear the organ dirges
Swelling out from chapel dome,
And the singers chanting surges,
"Heimgang!" Always going home.
"Heimgang!" Quaint and tender say-
ing.



TRAVELLING POST-OFFICE.

In the grand old German tongue,
That hath shaped Melancthon's praying,
And the hymns that Luther sung;
Blessed is our loving Maker,
That where'er our feet shall roam,
"Hail we journey toward God's acre,
"Heimgang!" Always going home.

HER MAJESTY'S MAIL.

BY MISS MAY TWEEDIE.

The most graphic pen, or brilliant im-
agination, must fail in attempting any
adequate picture of the condition of
society without the modern post-office.
As our morning letters arrive and are
handed in at the breakfast table, specu-
lation arises as to their origin; a well-
known hand is recognized, interest is ex-
cited by the contents or the well-springs
of emotion are opened—joy is brought
with the silvered note, or sorrow with
the black insignia of death; and thus ab-
sorbed in the matter of the letters them-
selves, no thought is spared to the past
and present labour which has given them
wings or directed their flight.



HASTE! HASTE! POST HASTE!

Notwithstanding the fact that the
post-office is pre-eminently a people's in-
stitution, and that from the universality
of its operations it becomes familiar to
the rich and the poor, the educated and
the illiterate, yet its internal manage-
ment and organization are comparatively
unknown.

It is difficult to realize that through-
out the United Kingdom—which to
younger countries seems a type of almost
immortal civilization—the public high-

ways were for a long time little more
than tracks worn out of the surface of
the virgin land, following principally
the natural features of the country, and
giving evidence that they had never
been systematically made, but were the
outcome of a mere habit of travel. They
would not admit of the use of a stage-
coach with any degree of comfort or
safety. Great men only, who could
afford the necessary expense of a foot-
man to run on either side of the coach
and support it in rough
places, adopted this
method of travel.

No one felt more keen-
ly the deplorable con-
dition of the roads than
the post-boys, who were
obliged continually to
travel over them, and
whose occupation must
have been anything but
light or agreeable. Cow-
per brings them vividly
before us in the "Task".

"Hark! 'tis the twang-
ing horn!
He comes, the herald of
a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots,
strapped waist, and
frozen locks;

News from all nations lumbering at his
back,
True to his charge, the close-packed load
behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one
concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
And, having dropped the expected bag,
pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted
wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of
grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to
some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy."

Doubtless the temptation of the ale
house, combined with the frequent bad
roads and bad weather, explains the
vexatious delays which induced letter-
writers to inscribe on their missive,
"Be this letter delivered with great
haste—haste—haste! Post haste! Ride,
villain, ride—for thy life—for thy life—
for thy life!"

In 1715, six days were required to per-
form the journey between London and
Edinburgh, which rate of speed con-
tinued for forty years. Scotland, in the
year 1715, could not boast of a single
horse post, all the mails being
conveyed by foot
posts.

In 1796 the num-
ber of men em-
ployed in the Lon-
don post-office for
general post de-
livery was 126. In
1884 the number of
men required to
discharge the duty
of letter delivery
was no less than
4,030. The officers
at present employed
in the metropolitan
district exceed 10,
000, i.e., exclusive
of the postmen
above referred to.
In 1708 the staff of
the Edinburgh post-
office was composed
of no more than
seven persons. In
1884 the total num-
ber employed was
339. In 1792 the
staff of the Glasgow
post-office was composed of only eight
persons. At present the staff of the
Glasgow post-office numbers 1,267.

One novel department of the postal
system in operation on most great post
routes is the Travelling Post-Office. It
consists of two or three, sometimes more,
railway carriages connected by a hooded
gangway or passage. (See cut 1.) One
side of the carriage is occupied by a
series of pigeon-holes divided into
groups for convenience of sorting letters.

The mail bags are delivered by an ap-
paratus consisting of an arm or arms
of stout iron attached to the carriage,
which can be extended outward from the
side, and to the end of which the mail
bag is suspended, and a receiving net,
also attached to the side of the carriage,
which can likewise be extended outward
to catch the mails to be taken up—this
portion acting the part of an aerial trawl
net, to capture the bags suspended from
brackets on the
roadside.

In 1883 the letters,
post-cards, books,
circulars, and news-
papers transmitted
through the British
post office during
that year numbered
1,853,541,400. That
total weight, ex-
clusive of the mail
bags, would exceed
42,000 tons, which
would be sufficient
to provide full
freight for a fleet
of twenty-one ships
carrying 2,000 tons
of cargo each. What
a burden of sorrows,
joys, scandals, mid-
night studies, pa-
tient labours, busi-
ness energy, and
everything good or
bad proceeding from
the human heart and brain does not this
represent. In view of the great quan-
tity of correspondence conveyed by the
post, as well as the hurry and bustle in
which letters are often written, it is not
astonishing that writers should occa-
sionally make mistakes in addressing their
letters; but it will perhaps create
surprise that one year's letters which
could neither be delivered as addressed,
nor returned to the senders through the
Dead Letter Office, were over half a mil-
lion in number! Letters posted in
envelopes altogether without address num-
ber 28,000 in the year, while loose stamps
found in post-offices reach the annual
total of 68,000. For the United King-
dom, one year's issue of postage stamps
amounts in weight to no less than 114
tons.

In the Christmas week of 1882 the extra
correspondence which passed through the
London post-office was estimated at four-
teen millions, including registered let-
ters (presumably containing presents of
value), of which there was no less than
three tons.

The post-office is not only called upon
to perform the duty of expeditiously con-
veying the correspondence entrusted to
it, but is made the vehicle for the car-
riage of an almost endless variety
of small articles.

Among these are
the following—many
of them having been
alive when posted—
viz., beetles, bees,
gold-finches, cater-
pillars, crabs, frogs,
leeches, moles, owls,
rabbits, rats, squir-
rels, snails, snakes,
worms, toads, etc.;
also artificial teeth,
cream, eggs, mince
pies, musical instru-
ments, ointments,
pork pies, revolvers,
sausages, tobacco,
cigars, etc. Occa-
sionally the send-
ing of live reptiles
through the post-
office gives rise to
a lively scene when the snake's hiss has
escaped from the packages in which he
had been enclosed.

FRANKING LETTERS.

The unbusiness way in which the
British post-office in its earlier days was
called upon not only to convey franked
letters, but, under forged franks, articles
of a totally different class, will be per-
ceived from the following cases:

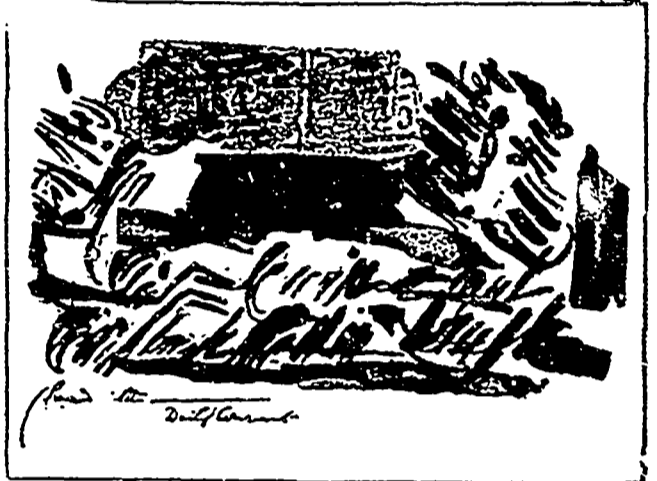
"Dr. Creighton, carrying with him a
cow and divers other necessaries."

"Fifteen couples of hounds going to
the King of the Romans with a free
pass."

"Two servant maids going as laund-
resses to my Lord Ambassador Methuen."

"Three suits of cloaths for some noble-
man's lady at the Court of Portugal."

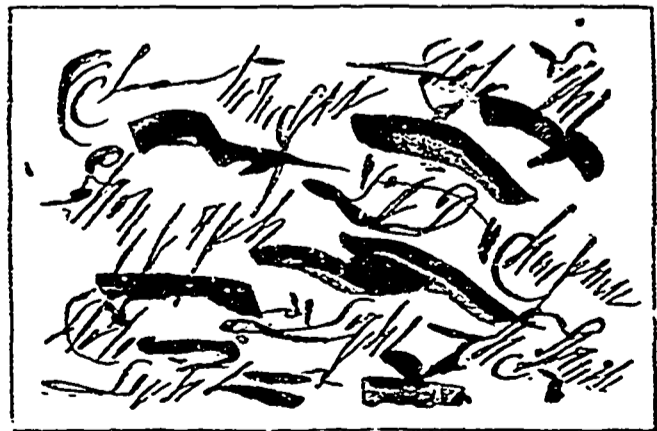
It is not to be understood that the
things consigned actually passed through
the post-office, but they were admitted
for transport on board the special packet



DAILY COURIER.

ships of Government, sailing for pur-
poses of the post-office. Petty frauds
are committed on the post-office to a
large extent at the present day by the
senders of newspapers who infringe the
rules by enclosing all sorts of things be-
tween the leaves, such as cigars, to-
bacco, collars, gloves, music, sermons,
etc. People in the United States and
Canada are much given to these prac-
tices, as is shown by the fact that in one
half of the year 1874 more than 14,000
newspapers were detected with such ar-
ticles secreted in them. The Cape Dia-
mond robbery of 1880 may be referred
to as an example of the great robberies
which have been perpetrated on the
post-office. The value of the diamonds
stolen at that time was £60,000.

The addresses of letters passing
through the post have often very curious
features arising from various causes.
Sometimes the whole writing is so bad
as to be all but illegible; sometimes the
orthography is extremely at fault; oc-
casionally the writer, having forgotten
the precise address, makes use of a
paraphrase; sometimes the addresses are
insufficient, and sometimes they are con-
fined with sketches on the envelopes
showing artistic taste and comic spirit.
(See cut 3).



QUEER ADDRESSES.

The following addresses are made use
of apparently owing to the correct ad-
dresses being lost, but the directions
given serve their purpose and the letters
were duly delivered.

"This is for old Mr. Milly, what prints
the paper in Lancaster where the gaul is.
Just read him as soon as it comes to the
post-office."

"Mr. ——— Travelling Band, one of
four playing in the street.

Persha (Perashore)
Worcestershire.

Please to find him if possible."

"This is for her that makes dresses for ladies that lives at other side of the road to James Brockillp.
Edenover, Chesterfield."

"This is for the young girl that wears spectacles, who minds two babies.
30 Sheriff Street
Of Prince Edwin Street Liverpool."

"To my sister Jean
Up the Canongate
Down a Close
Edinburgh.
She has a wooden leg."

"My dear Aunt Sue as lives in the Cottage by the wood near the New Forest."

It occasionally happens that when the eye is unable to make out an address the ear comes to the rescue. In London a letter came directed to

"Mr. Owl O'Neil
General Post Office."

But no one was known there of that name. A clerk looking at the letter commenced to repeat aloud, "Mr. Owl O'Neil, Mr. Owl O'Neil," when another clerk, hearing him, exclaimed, "Why! that must be intended for Mr. Rowland Hill," which indeed proved to be the case. A similar circumstance happened in Edinburgh with a letter from Australia addressed to

"Mr. _____
John 7 Scotland."

It proved to be intended for Johnshaven, a village in the north of Scotland. In another instance the address—"23 Adne Edle Street, London"—proved to be intended for 2 Threadneedle Street, London. Again—"No. 52 Oldham and Bury, London"—was written for No. 52, Aldermanbury, London.

The letter of which cut 2 represents the address was posted at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and delivered to the editor of *The Courant in Edinburgh*. It represents, it will be observed, a deer "courant." A fac-simile of a portion of the communication enclosed is presented in cut 4, which will give an idea of the interest attaching to editorial work, and afford valuable information to the reader.

In the London post-office indistinctly addressed letters are at once set aside, so as not to delay the work of sorting, and are carried forthwith to a set of special officers who have an aptitude for deciphering indistinct writing. These officers, by a strange contradiction in the sense of things, are called the "blind officers," and here the letters are rapidly disposed of. The "blind officers" are furnished with gazetteers, and other works containing the names of gentlemen's estates, farms, etc.

ODD REQUESTS.

Among other letters are some requesting information concerning property:

"United States.
"Will you do me the kind favour as you are the post master and able to know as I judge of. It is this, give me the full name and address of any 'Mac' that you know of in England, or in Scotland, or Ireland, or Wales, or in India, or at or in any other country that you know of, with their full names and correct address, so that I can write to them myself. If you have any pamphlet with the names of parties who have died and left money send as I want such information."

A farmer in the country wants a postmaster as go-between in a little business matter and pens him a few lines to the following effect:

"John _____ acting as a Farmer here would be very much obliged to the Postmaster if he would be so good as to name a suitable party at _____ to whom he might sell a 30 stone pig of good quality well—for he understands it is the best place to sell. The pig is now quite ready for killing."

The Dead Letter Office must occasionally be supposed to be a repository for the human dead, as inquiries for deceased persons are sometimes addressed to the "Dead Office." Thus:

"We have heard in the paper about 12 or 14 months back, Mary Ann—the servant girl at London was dead. Please send it to Printer's office by return of post whether there was a small fortune left for _____."

"I write a line two see if you had enything of my husband—that was left at _____ ill. Please will you rite back by return of post as we are in great trouble."

In a suburban district of London, where there were two terraces bearing exactly the same designation, there were residing at the same number in each two per-

sons having not only the same surname but the same Christian name. The following case of almost identical addresses was also brought to light:

"Mr. Andrew Thom
Bootmaker
8 Southbridge Street
Aldrie," and
"Mr. Andrew Thom
Boot-Top Manufacturer
86 Southbridge Street
Edinburgh."

For many years past it has been incumbent upon all candidates seeking employment in the post-office, as in other public departments, to undergo medical examination with the view of securing healthy persons for the service; and in the course of such examinations it is necessary for the medical officer to inquire into the health of the parents, brothers, and sisters of the candidate, etc. The following are examples of answers received:

"Father had sunstroke and I caught it of him."

"My little brother died of some funny name."

"A great white cat drawed my sister's breath and she died of it." A parent died of "upper plexity," another died of "Parasles." One "caught Tiber rever in the Hackney Road," another had "goarnders," a third, "burrailer in the head." Some of the other complaints were described as "rummitanic pains," "carratic fever," "indigestion of the lungs," "toncertina in the throat," "pistoles on the back." One candidate stated that his "sister consupted, now she's quite well again," while the sister of another was stated to have "died of compulsion."

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The best, the cheapest, the most entertaining, the most popular.

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Onward, 3 pp., 4to., weekly, under 5 copies.....	0 50
5 copies and over.....	0 20
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Less than 20 copies.....	0 25
Over 20 copies.....	0 24
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per quarter.....	0 02
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WILLIAM BRIGGS,

Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto.
C. W. COATES, S. P. HURVIA,
2176 St. Catherine St., Wesleyan Book Room,
Montreal, Halifax, N.S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

REV. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 30, 1897.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

NOVEMBER 7, 1897.

David's psalm of faith and love.—
Psalm 27.

THE AUTHOR.

David may well be designated "the sweet singer of Israel." His compositions are full of sweetness. Readers are captivated. There is more of joyousness than lamentation. We should think that none can peruse the entire book without being benefited spiritually. A selection of the Psalms might be read daily with profit.

THE TITLE OF THE PSALM.

"Jehovah is my delight and my salvation." Precious words! Light, salvation, strength. Light is beautiful. What a contrast from darkness. Salvation, deliverance from danger. Strength, ability to perform the duties of life. God is light, salvation and strength to all who trust in him. One writer says that the three words are "a triple shield against sundry terrors, as sufficient to ward them off."

RHEMES.

Verse 2. Compared to ferocious beasts, whose object was to devour and destroy. These could not harm the good man, not even should their number be a host

too vast to compute. David feels such confidence that he was able to bid defiance to all their attacks intended for his destruction.

NOBLE RESOLUTION.

Verse 4. He was decided in respect to his future course. He was a lover of God's house, and all other things were made subservient to it. He set great value upon the services of the sanctuary, because they enabled him to get into closer relationship with God. The remainder of the Psalm is expressive of the Psalmist's resolve to remain steadfast, as he felt certain that he would be safe and secure, and would become stronger and stronger to the end of life. Let every one act a similar part.

ACCURACY IN SMALL THINGS.

Careful attention to small things often constitutes the difference between thorough and superficial scholarship. The true man of science, the naturalist, the mathematician, the chemist, the electrician, gives attention to the most minute as well as to the greater things. They see what other men fail to discern, and this constitutes the basis of their larger knowledge. Here is a very simple illustration, one out of thousands:

"A young artist once called upon Audubon, the great student of birds, to show him drawings and paintings. Audubon, after examining his work, said: 'I like it very much, but it is deficient. You have painted the legs of this bird nicely, except in one respect. The scales are exact in shape and colour, but you have not arranged them correctly as to number.'

"'I never thought of that,' said the artist.

"'Quite nicely,' said Audubon. 'Now, upon this upper ridge of the partridge's leg there are just so many scales. You have too many. Examine the legs of a thousand partridges, and you will find the scales the same in number.'

"This lesson shows how Audubon became great—by patient study of small things."

JUST FOR FUN.

BY BEATRICE YORK.

School had just begun, and the buzz of study filled the air when Tommy Jones entered the room and crept to his seat. He was the worst boy in school, and always playing jokes on the other children. He pretended to study at first, but presently he nudged his desk mate and whispered: "I say, Johnny, let's have some fun with the boy that came in yesterday. He lives two miles from here, and he is not going home till nearly dark to-night, so we might dress up as ghosts and scare him."

Johnny readily assented, he being always ready to follow some bolder nature, though too timid to take the lead himself.

After school Tommy went home and took one of the sheets from his bed and got some matches and set out toward the spot where he and Johnny had agreed to meet, a lonely spot in the woods through which Virgil Hanley had to pass. Johnny soon came, similarly equipped. It was already dusk, and they had to hurry into their ghostly outfit lest Virgil should come. They wet the matches and made rings of the wet sulphur around their eyes and all over their faces, and wrapped the sheets about them. Johnny looked frightened when Tommy turned to him for approval, for the marks upon his face glowed like fire in the dusk.

Just then they heard a merry whistle, and Virgil came hurrying along. He was a sensitive-looking lad, just the subject for a practical joke. They hid till he had gone past and then stepped out and Tommy gave a shriek that echoed through the air. The sound startled Virgil, and he turned quickly, but was utterly unprepared for the sight that met his gaze. He stared at the two figures till they suddenly started toward him, and then he tried to run away, gave a gasp, and fell like a log.

The boys had not expected that their joke would go so far; they thought they would simply have a good laugh at his fright. They ran toward him and were horror-stricken at the look of terror on his face. They tried to revive him, but failed.

Finally Tommy told Johnny to run for help while he stayed with Virgil. The doctor came back with Johnny, but there was no help for Virgil. He died soon after from the effects of the fright. All the excuse the boys could give was that they had done it "just for fun."

It was a terrible lesson to them, and they never played another practical joke.—Sunday-school Visitor.

Duty.

Straight and firm mark out the furrow,
Drop therein the golden grain;
Do thy task, and rise to-morrow
Ready to begin again.
One day like another passing,
Acts and deeds of little show,
Garnered seeds may be amassing,
Whence the harvest fields shall grow.

Bravely, then, the ploughshare driving,
Faint not, nor withdraw thy hand;
Duties done by earnest striving
Leave thy traces o'er the land.
Hard the labour, few the pleasures,
Dull the task no others share;
But each step that duty measures
Leadeth up a golden stair.

Sing, then, in the early morning,
Going forth to work alone;
Sing at evening, home returning,
Counting up the day's work done.
Light the footsteps ever wending
Duty's worn and dusty ways;
Light the heart itself expending,
Dead to thought of human praise.

Dead to self, intensely loving,
In the noble throbs that move
Hearts which weary not in giving
Life for life, and love for love.
Love of souls and love of duty,
Fear of falsehood, hate of wrong—
These shall clothe thy life with beauty
Worthy of the poet's song.

"IT WON'T SINK."

BY REV. MARK GUY PEARSE.

Some years ago, when I was living on the east coast of England, I often used to go to sea for a night's trawling.

My companion on such occasions was a brave fisherman, himself at once the captain and crew of his craft. Though still a young man when he decided to be a soldier and servant of the Lord Jesus, yet his early life had been a somewhat wild one; and his career on board a ship that had regularly been engaged in smuggling, had given him many adventures of peril and daring. As for our craft she was not much to look at; used chiefly for dredging the stones from which the "Roman" cement is prepared, she carried the marks of her hard service; but she had one quality that covered many defects, she could stand any amount of sea, as my friend had often proved—and I, too, sometimes, in the fierce easterly gales that broke upon that coast. With a stove for cooking, and a snug cabin for sleeping in, the roughness of it all rather added to the enjoyment. But it was the company of my fisherman friend that was the special charm of these nights at sea. Simple and God-fearing, a quiet happiness seemed always singing in his soul, that often broke out in some glad song of praise together as we drifted in the still evening or flew before a stiff breeze. A man, too, who thought much, and had little opportunity for talking, so that I got from him many an opinion about things in general that it was good to hear.

It was as we sat together at daybreak, on a lovely morning in June, that he told me this story. We were drifting quietly along with the trawl overboard; not a sound was there to break the perfect stillness, except only the lapping of the water against the boat.

Presently my friend began—"Ah, sir, this is very different from what it used to be in the old times. We never used to think much about the beauty of the sea or the sky when the day broke—nor about God either. We would get out our telescopes, and sweep the sea all round to find if the government cutter was in sight, and only wished that the darkness had lasted an hour or two longer, that we might have got our cargo ashore."

"I can remember once"—and he laughed as he spoke—"though there—it was no laughing matter then, at any rate, for us. There was one morning when we caught sight of her—far off, almost, as you could see, but for all that we knew her rig in a minute, and terribly put about we were too—for we had a full cargo on board. At first we hoped that she wasn't after us—or tried to, anyhow. But very soon all hope was gone. She was bearing down upon us, sir, as straight as a line."

"Of course we knew we could never get away from her, do what we might. We looked at each other, for every man knew well enough that if we were caught it meant prison for us—and it meant the loss of the cargo and ship too—sawn in two, right across; that was her punishment, sir, in these times. We were still enough for a minute or so, all of us waiting for the captain to speak, and there all the time that speak of a sail coming straight for us. It was plain

enough that she was bound for, and gaining upon us, too.

"Presently he spoke out, 'Well, lads, there's no help for it that I can see, but this—let them come and find a clear hold and an empty ship. They may make of it what they can then. A man can't swing for that anyhow.'

"Well, sir, at it we went. We put a sail over the side of the ship for a blind, and then to work. It was tobacco done up in canvas bags, made handy for the sake of easy carrying. Half of us went down in the hold, and slung up the bags as fast as ever we could; and the rest were slipping them over the side of the ship, under the sail and into the sea. Eh, how we worked! 'Heave away, lads,' the captain kept saying; 'as well not do it at all as leave a bag behind—a single one will show them the game we've been up to.'

"Bit by bit we were stripped to the waist, and steaming with the heat of it from captain to cabin-boy. Pity enough it seemed, to be slinging the stuff over like that; but it was too late to think about that now. 'At it, my hearties,' says the captain. 'It will be something to laugh at to see the officer come aboard, and set his chaps to search the ship, and find an empty hold. Heave away, my lads.'

"We laughed at the captain's joke, and worked all the fiercer for his bit of fun. Of course the hold soon began to show the difference in the cargo, working as we were. But we were beginning to get a bit fagged and spent.

"'Fling away, lads,' the captain kept saying, himself doing the work of two men. 'They will spoil our laughing if they find anything left.'

"And then again it was still, except the splashing of the bags in the sea.

"We were beginning to think that we should do it.

"A quarter of an hour more, and 'tis clear,' cried the captain, joyfully; and every man felt that he could breathe again. We were going at it for our lives, and never an eye or an ear for anything else. Presently the captain sees that the boy was getting a bit done up, and he tells him to run out and look how the cutter was coming along. He was gone for a second, and then he came back, and you wouldn't have known him. We all stopped to look at him—we couldn't help it. His face was as white as death; and there he stood, with his eyes staring as if they would drop out of his head. His mouth was wide open, but he couldn't say a word, and his hands were stretched out before him. The captain began swearing at him, and asked him what he meant. But the lad he couldn't utter a sound. It was more like a boy out of his senses than anything else. Then the captain jumps up and grips his arms and shakes him. The poor little fellow managed to gasp out—'It won't sink!' And he fell down in a faint.

"It won't sink! We gressed in a moment what he meant. We hurried away to the stern of the ship, but nobody expected to see anything like the sight that was waiting for us there—a sight, sir, to fetch a man's heart out of him. It was a beautiful morning, like this. And there right away in the glistening track of the sun was the cargo. You could see the line of the canvas bags, rising with the bit of swell, and shining in the light, one after the other, reaching away to the cutter herself; there they were, every one of them proclaiming our guilt to all the heaven above us, and to every ship that was up and down the coast. Our hands just went down, sir, and there we sat, every one of us still as death, with his eyes set on that dreadful line of evidence against us, and every man with those words ringing in his soul—'It won't sink!'"

My friend was silent for a minute or two, and I thought the story was finished, at any rate so far as he cared to tell it. I had turned to enjoy the delicious stillness and the exquisite beauty of the scene, when he began again, but in another tone—

"Well, sir, it did not end there. I little thought at the time what would come out of that empty hold; and least of all that it could be any good. Of course I often used to think a bit seriously about things, and meant to mend; but somehow it never came to anything. Still my dear old mother kept praying on for me, and in spite of everything she would always hold to it that I should come right some day. 'Prayer is not much good if it isn't stronger than the devil and sin,' she would say, even when father and the rest of them had given me up. It was somewhere about two or three years after the adventure with the cutter, that one night—the last night in the year, it was—I had gone down the river in my boat, thinking I might get

some wild fowl, for there were a good many in the river. It was a dull misty night when I started. I got down some distance and then pushed away in under the bank, waiting for the moon to get up. It was all as still and quiet as could be, with never a sound but now and then the cry of a curlew, or the wings of the wild ducks overhead. The moon was getting up behind the hill, and the trees were standing all black against the light, and the silver shining between their trunks and branches. From ever so far off there came the sound of a peal of bells, ringing the old year out.

"The last night of the year,' I said to myself. Of course I couldn't help feeling a bit sad at the words, though I can hardly tell why. But as I sat there in the stillness, it began to come to my mind how I used to kneel down at my mother's side while she taught me to pray. I could hear her voice quite plain telling me of one good man and another, and of what they had done to make the world better. And I felt her hand laid upon my head again, and could see her sitting by the fire with her eyes closed and her lips moving, and I knew she was praying God to bless me.

"I sighed as I thought of it all, and said half aloud, 'If I died to-night, there isn't a soul in the world that would thank God that I ever lived.' I began to feel as if out of joint with everything. The more I thought of it the plainer I saw that my whole life was a failure. God had made me for himself, and here I am living as if there were no God, and no eternity. There would be a terrible account to settle some day. And here another year was almost gone.

"I did not think myself any very great

there in the mist and shadow of that side of the river, and there came a flock of ducks right down within easy shot. I was thinking about the pledge and never saw them till they were right on me. Then I put my gun to my shoulder, and in a minute more I should have a brace, but that very second it came into my mind that the public-house where I met my mates was called 'The Wild Drake.' 'You shall go,' I cried out, half laughing as I said it—'go for a token that by God's help I have done with 'The Wild Drake' for ever and ever.' Well, I knew I should make short work of the old company, and of the old ways, too, as soon as I had done with the drink. Then I thought of one thing and another. I would go with mother on Sundays, and a half a dozen things would come to my mind that I would have done with. My resolution seemed to grow with every new surrender, and all my heart was lighter and gladder for everything that I gave up. My whole life should be changed, and this new year should have a brighter tale to tell than any that I had ever lived before. Then I thought I would push off the boat and get away home, and tell the dear old mother what I meant to do.

"Ah, sir, I can never forget it. I had pushed off and turned round homeward, and just settled to the oars, feeling as if everything was right—wind and tide and all was fair. There right in front of me was the glistening water, stretching like a sheet of silver away towards the moon. In an instant it all flashed back upon me as plain as I ever saw anything in my life. I could see the cabin-boy with his pale face and his hands stretched out, and I seemed to hear him cry again—



"IT WON'T SINK."

sinner—not then—for I never got drunk, nor went into bad ways like other fellows did. As for smuggling, it never occurred to me that there was any harm in that, except for the company it brought me into. It was the emptiness and uselessness of my life that kept troubling me. The moon was rising higher, and the light fell on the flat stretch of shore opposite to me, gleaming in the pools here and there, and in the little curves and hollows that the tide had left. And somehow it came to be a picture of my life—it lay ugly and useless like the mud—no good. You couldn't grow anything in it, and couldn't even walk on it; or build on it, there was no foundation for anything. A life like that mud-bank, I said to myself with a shudder. My sad thoughts went slowly sinking down within me, until now the moon rode clear and full in the sky, lighting up all the woods opposite to me, and seeming to make it stiller than ever. Then out upon the silence came the pealing of the bells. Should the new year be no better than the rest?—only another stretch of mud, foul and ugly and useless?

"I bowed my head on the side of the boat, and prayed God to help me. By his grace, from that night I would be another man. I would just give up anything, everything I could think of that hindered my being a good man. Though I did not get drunk, I made up my mind to have done with the drink; never would I cross the threshold of the public-house again."

My friend laughed as he came to this part of the story. "I signed the pledge, sir, but it was in a new fashion, too—perhaps never a temperance pledge was signed that way before. I was sitting

'It won't sink!' I had been clearing the hold, pitching the cargo into the sea, but there it was; right away behind me, like as if it stretched up to the very throne of God, there was every word that I had ever spoken; everything that I had ever done, every wish that I had ever felt—there it lay, right out in the light of God. My soul sank down in helplessness and horror. 'It won't sink!' were the words that kept ringing over and over again in my ears.

"I just flung myself at the oars with a desperate fierceness. It was no good my trying—not a bit. It did not matter what I did; there seemed nothing else for it but to give right in to everything that was bad. Whatever I did, wherever I went, there was all the past stretching out before God—nothing forgotten; nothing buried! It was no use playing the fool like this any longer—clearing the hold when the cargo wouldn't sink. Tears filled my eyes, partly because all my hopes were gone, and partly because I was so helpless to make things any better. I just pulled away fierce and almost mad, wishing with every stroke of the oar that I could get down under the water and end it all.

"Everything seemed to mock me. So on in that stillness I went, feeling the wretchedest soul that ever lived, just as if I was dragging that dreadful past after me with every stroke of the oar. I couldn't undo a thing of it, couldn't unsay a word! It seemed a mockery to ring bells in a world like this.

"But as I pulled on the fierceness died out of me, until all that I felt was a great burden of helplessness. My hold of the oars grew slacker, until I stopped pulling altogether, and just drifted with the tide. Tears filled my eyes and rolled down my cheeks. I looked right

away up into the heavens—there was only a star or two shining, but somehow it made me feel that God was looking down upon me, and surely, I thought, he must pity me. Could I not kneel down and tell him all about it? And my mother's sayings came to my mind—that prayer is stronger than the devil and sin. I pulled ashore and knoed down and began to pray. I just pleaded guilty to it all. 'There it lies, Lord, floating out under thine eye, all the past,' I cried in my distress. I told him that I did want to start afresh, but that it was no use if I had always to go dragging the past after me like this. I did not like to ask the Lord to stick it all, but I did ask him what he could do with it. The more I prayed the more sure I felt that he would help me. I had forgotten all about the time, and just knoed on in prayer. How long I had been there I can't tell, perhaps for an hour or more. Then all in a moment, I don't know how, but I could sooner doubt my own life than doubt this, it was like a blaze of light on my mind—everything was as clear as day. The Lord Jesus Christ had come on purpose to deliver me from that past. It was gone—all gone. It was all cut off and sunk. I looked, and it was as if I could see across the shining water, and there was not a speck upon it, not one black sin left floating there. My sins were buried in the depths of the sea. I shouted for joy. No poor condemned sinner ever felt so glad at his escape as I did that night. The past was sunk—no eye could see it; none could ever find it again; it was gone, to be remembered against me no more for ever. Turn where I would it was sunshine and calm. There was no condemnation. Once again I looked up with my eyes filled with tears, but they were tears of joy this time.

"So that is what came out of that summer morning's adventure. And that is how I began the New Year, thank God, and how I began a new life, too. I have very often thought of it since, and said to myself—'It's no good clearing the hold if the cargo won't sink.'"

KEEP WAX AWAY FROM THE SUN.

"I lost my temper again to-day," said Madge, dolefully.

"How did it come about?" asked her mother. "Every time that happens it is easier again."

"Oh, I just went home with Sara and Belle, and they teased me, as they always do. They mimicked my voice and made fun of the way I held my hands in giving my recitation. They know I can't bear to be mimicked. I get furious in a minute."

"It seems to me," said Aunt Rebecca, looking up from her work, "that the safest thing for you would be to keep away from those girls. They always stir you up, and you know it. There is an old saying that 'he that hath a head of wax may not walk in the sun.'"

Madge laughed at the quaint words, but her mother said, seriously: "Daughter, your temper grows hot at a teasing word as quickly as wax melts in the sun; and since you know your weakness, one way to help it is to keep away from temptation. 'Tis the only safe and sensible way, and you will do well to follow it."—Sunday Evangelist.

When I Have Time.

When I have time, so many things I'll do
To make life happier and more fair,
For those whose lives are crowded now
With care.

I'll help to lift them from their low despair—

When I have time!

When I have time, the friend I love so well
Shall know no more these weary, tolling days.

I'll lead her feet in pleasant paths always,
And cheer her heart with words of sweetest praise—

When I have time!

When you have time, the friend you hold so dear
May be beyond the reach of all your sweet intent,
May never know that you so kindly meant

To fill her life with sweet content—
When you had time!

Now is the time! Ah! friend, no longer wait
To scatter loving smiles and words of cheer

To those around, whose lives are now so drear.
They may not need you in the coming year—

Now is the time!

The Builders.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of time,
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show,
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled.
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;
Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the seen and the unseen;
Make the house where God may dwell,
Beautiful, entire and clean.

SHIPS AT SEA.

It would be difficult to make any near guess at the number of vessels of all sorts and sizes that, at this very moment, are scudding along before wind and storm over the great expanse of ocean. On the Atlantic's broad bosom the "greyhounds" of the ocean pass and repass every day on their rapid journeys from port to port. Here it is chiefly the monsters of the ship-building art that are to be seen—the giants that fly along regardless of all winds, whether for or against them; but nearer the coasts of America and Great Britain thousands of lovely white sails may be seen gracefully skimming over the green waters in all directions and on every variety of purpose. On the banks of Newfoundland, where the bottom of the sea rises up in a great flat plateau and makes the water comparatively shallow, numbers of fishing boats are engaged every year catching fish for consumption all the world over. Thick fogs of the worst description almost invariably hang over this region, and the poor men are often in great danger of their lives. The larger vessels engaged in this work are packed with numbers of small boats called "dingies," and when a good spot has been reached the men turn out in these smaller boats, and often the fog comes on so thickly that they are unable again to find the mother-craft and are lost—engulfed by the first big wave that comes along with the freshening breeze.

GOOD FOR EVIL.

When Madame Sontag first began her musical career in Vienna, she was hissed at the stage by her rival, Amelia Steininger. Years went by, and one day, in her glory, Madame Sontag was riding through the streets of Berlin, when she noticed a little girl leading a blind woman along the walk, and she called to her and said, "Who is that you are leading?"

"Why," said the little girl, "don't you know? That is my mother, Amelia Steininger. She used to be the great singer once, but she lost her voice; and then she cried so much about it that her eyes went blind."

"Give her my love," said Madame Sontag, "and tell her that in a few days an old acquaintance will call upon her."

The next week, in the city of Berlin, a vast multitude gathered at a benefit for the poor blind woman, and it is said that Madame Sontag sang that night as she never sang before; and to the day of her death she took care of Amelia Steininger, and then she took care of her child after her.

THE MOST NORTHERLY SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

The most northerly Sunday-school in the world, it is thought, is that connected with a Methodist Episcopal church at Hammerfest, in Norway, in seventy degrees north latitude. Rev. Ole C. Olson, the pastor of the church, in a letter written some time ago to the Methodist Sunday-school Board, at New York, says: "At certain times of the year, the school is kept by lamplight, but in the summer time they can, if they like, keep it at midnight by the light of the sun." Hammerfest, being located nearer than 23 1-2 degrees to the north pole by 5 1-2 degrees, enjoys for a little

while the interesting experience of a sun that is above the horizon during the entire twenty-four hours, just as in mid-winter for some time the sun is not seen at all. But how beautiful the thought that in those inhospitable climes the sun of God's Word shines with the same brightness and beauty as with us. And in their school the same lesson is studied each Sunday upon which we are engaged in our schools.

A LAND WITHOUT TAME ANIMALS.

Japan is a land without domestic animals. There are no cows—the Japanese neither drink milk nor eat meat. There are but few horses, and these are imported mainly for the use of foreigners. The freight carts in the streets are pulled and pushed by coolies, and the pleasure carriages are drawn by men. There are but few dogs, and these are neither used as watchdogs, beasts of burden, nor in hunting, except by foreigners. There are no sheep in Japan, and wool is not



SHIPS AT SEA.

used in clothing, silk and cotton being the staples. There are no pigs—pork is an unknown article of diet, and lard is not used in cooking. There are no goats or mules or donkeys. Wild animals there are, however, and in particular bears of enormous size.—London Tid-Bits.

OUR SINS HELPED.

A little girl in a mission school sat upon the front seat, and when the superintendent was telling about how they nailed Jesus on the cross the tears came into her eyes and she had to get up and go out. In the afternoon she came back smiling. The superintendent asked her: "Mary, where did you go this morning?" She replied: "Oh, teacher, I couldn't stand it when you spoke to us about Jesus being nailed on the cross, for I felt just as if I had helped to pound the nails in, and I went off a little piece from the school and got down on my knees and told Jesus that my sins had helped to nail him on the cross, and I asked him please to forgive me, for I was very sorry; and now I feel happy, for I am sure that he has forgiven me." The Holy Spirit had changed the child's heart, so that she saw how sinful she was and what a loving Saviour Jesus is.

"What time is it, my lad?" asked an American traveller of a small Irish boy, who was driving a couple of cows home from the fields. "About twelve o'clock, sir," replied the boy. "I thought it was more." "It's never any more here," returned the lad, in surprise. "It just begins at one again."

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

LESSON VI.—NOVEMBER 7.

PAUL IN MELITA AND ROME.

Acts 28. 1-16. Memory verses, 3-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.—Rom. 8. 28.

OUTLINE.

1. Saved, v. 1-6.
2. Honoured, v. 7-10.
3. Welcomed, v. 11-16.

Time and Place.—Close to those of the last lesson.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Paul in Melita and Rome.—Acts 28. 1-6.

Willing Servants.

BY LIZZIE DE ARMOND.

Twenty-six servants here are we,
Just as willing as we can be;
Some of us swift, and others slow;
It makes no difference, off we go.

Hither and thither, at beck and call,
Speeding away to cot and hall;
Speaking only as we are told,
Many a message we unfold.

Nations totter, and kingdoms lie
Shorn of their ancient majesty;
War ridos rampant over the land,
Famine and Death walk hand in hand.

Then in a twinkling tumults cease,
Quelled by the loving words of peace
You, our masters, have bid us say,
Gladly your summons we obey.

Twenty-six letters, small and spry,
Over the land and sea we fly,
Bearing news at a lightning pace;
Nothing to us are time and space.

Willing servants, O bid us do
Only things that are good and true!
Stars in your crown then may we be,
Bright jewels for eternity.

JESUS A FRIEND.

"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child that had a mother of one that had none.

"Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus. He was mother's friend, and he's mine."

"Jesus Christ is in the sky. He is away off, and he has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely that he can stop to mind you."

"I do not know anything about that," said the orphan. "All I know is that he says he will, and that's enough for me."

"Klondike and the Yukon Country." A Description of our Alaskan Land of Gold, from the Latest Official and Scientific Sources and Personal Observation." By L. A. Coolidge. With a chapter by John F. Pratt, chief of the Alaskan boundary expedition of 1894. Now maps and photographic illustrations. Philadelphia: Henry Altemus. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, 50 cents.

Many things have conspired to advertise Canada throughout the world as she was never advertised before. One of the most striking of these is the discovery of gold in vast quantities in the Klondike river. Many of the newspaper reports of these rich finds are exaggerated or inaccurate. It is, therefore, of much importance to find a well digested book giving trustworthy information with maps and photographic illustrations. Both the author and publisher of this well-printed pamphlet have supplied a keenly felt want by this seasonable issue.

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Tu. Paul in Melita and Rome.—Acts 28. 7-16.

W. Desire to visit Rome.—Rom. 1. 7-16.

Th. Power over serpents.—Luke 10. 17-22.

F. The Lord a deliverer.—Psalm 34. 15-22.

S. Trust in the Lord.—Psalm 37. 5-18.

Su. Miraculous deliverance.—Psalm 124.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Saved, v. 1-6.

How were the shipwrecked crew and passengers received by the people?

What happened to Paul?

How did the sight affect the people?

What did Paul do?

What then did they think of Paul?

What is our Golden Text?

2. Honoured, v. 7-10.

How did Publius treat Paul?

What did Paul do for Publius' father?

How were Paul and his company treated?

3. Welcomed, v. 11-16.

How long did they remain in Malta?

In what city did they tarry three days?

Where did they disembark?

Whom did they find in Puteoli?

Where did other brethren meet them?

How did their kindness affect Paul?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where does this lesson teach—

1. God's care of faithful servants?

2. The fickleness of public opinion?

3. The helpfulness of Christian communion?

When you decide to go the right way in everything, don't depend upon the people to follow you unanimously in anything.