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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XIX.]

TORONTO, MARCH 4, 1899.

[No. 9,

Two-cent Postage.

BY E. S. ORR.

To smoky London's millions,
Auld Reekie, or Belfast,
Where women ride on pillions,
And jaunting cars go past;
To Welshmen's rocky quarry,
To every Highland glen,
A two-cent stamp will carry
The product of your pen.

By India's ancient river,
And Afric's burning sand,
The postman will deliver
The message from your hand.
Two cents on any letter,
Half-ounce—you understand—
You could not wish for better
Than Mulock now has planned.

To every fishing station
On bleak Newfoundland's coast,
A kindly salutation
For two cents goes by post.
Orange or cane plantation,
On rich Jamaica's plains,
By this new proclamation
The same great boon obtains.

Oh! would that wheresoever
Great Britain's flag's unfurled,
The same rate might deliver,
Our letters through the world.
May Canada's young nation,
Favoured by heaven's Lord,
Send men of every station
The pen—but not the sword.

WHATEVER YOU UNDERTAKE, ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.

"When I was quite a lad," said a wealthy and distinguished merchant, to one asking the secret of his success in life, "I went to pay a visit to my grandfather, a venerable man, whose velvet cap, blue coat, and huge silver knee-buckles filled me with awe.

"On my bidding him good-bye, he drew me gently to him, and, placing his hand on my head, said: 'My little grandson, I have one thing to say to you; will you try to remember it?' I looked into his face and nodded; for I was afraid to promise aloud. 'I want to give you a piece of advice,' he continued, 'which, if you follow it, will prove a sure passport to success. It is this: In whatever you undertake, always do your best.'

"This was my grandfather's only legacy to me, but it has proved far better than silver and gold. I have never forgotten those words, and I believe I have tried to act upon them. After reaching home, my uncle gave my cousin, Marcus, and myself some weeding to do in the garden. It was in the afternoon, and we had laid our plans for something else. Of course we were disappointed.

"Marcus was so ill-humoured that he performed his part of the work very carelessly, and I began mine in the same manner. Suddenly, however, the advice of my grandfather was recalled to my mind, and I resolved to follow it. Indeed, I 'did my best.'

"When my uncle came out to oversee our work, I noticed his look of approbation as his eye glanced over the flower-beds I had weeded; and I shall never forget his kind and encouraging smile, as he remarked that my work was well done. Oh! I was a glad and thankful boy; while poor Marcus was left to drudge alone over his beds all the afternoon. How much easier he would have found it to do his work well at first!

"At fifteen, I was sent to the academy, where I had partly to support myself through the term. The lessons were hard at first, for I was not fond of study; but my grandfather's advice was my constant motto, and I tried to do my best. As a consequence of this, I soon succeeded in obtaining the good opinion of my teachers, and was looked upon as a faithful, painstaking student.

"My character, too, became known beyond the academy; and, though I was but a small boy for my age, and not very strong, my mother had three or four places offered for me before the year was

out,—one from the best merchant in the village, in whose store a situation as clerk was considered very desirable. The latter offer was a great surprise to me, but it was a result of the reputation I had won.

"The habit I had formed of faithfully doing my best, in whatever I had to do, proved very valuable; and, although I did not possess unusual talents, I found difficulties vanish before me. I gained the confidence of those with whom I had dealings; and, in short, prosperity has, with the blessing of God, crowned my efforts. My only secret of success has been my grandfather's legacy—Always do your best."

Speaking of blocks of ice, Harper's Round Table tells how the Russian boy makes a good sled from it:

"He saws out a block that is longer than it is thick, and about high enough for a comfortable seat. Then he scoops out a hollow like a saddle a little back of the middle of the upper surface and upholsters it with straw or rags. It is then ready for its first trip down hill, and if the rider is skilful he will make very good time on it.

"But carrying it back to the top of the incline would be too hard work for even a Russian boy, and pushing it up hill would be about as bad. A clever lad once thought of a better way, and all

is necessary to make one—it will last all winter. Imagine him freezing a new set of runners on when the old ones have worn out!"

HISTORY FROM A TREE.

In an English museum there is a section of polished Douglas pine large enough, say, to make a round table to seat a dozen persons. Instead of making it an object-lesson in botany, the museum authorities have ingeniously chosen it as a medium for the teaching of history. The tree was cut down in 1885, and as the age of a tree can be inferred from the number of rings which its cross-section discloses this one must have been five hundred and thirty-three years old. In other words, it was born in 1352, and it lived through the most interesting part of English history—from Edward the Third to Victoria.

It is therefore a simple matter to mark different rings with their dates and the names of the events that were happening while they were being born. This is what has been done—from the centre of the tree in two directions, right away to the bark. The markings, which are neatly executed in white paint, reveal some interesting facts. Thus, when the pine was four years old, the battle of Poitiers was fought, in 1356; when it was twenty-five Edward the Third died. It was one hundred and nineteen when Caxton introduced printing, and when Columbus discovered America it was one hundred and forty. When Shakespeare was born two hundred and twelve rings had already made their appearance; when Raleigh settled Virginia, two hundred and forty. Fifty years later Sir Isaac Newton was born. When the great fire of London was raging this venerable specimen could boast three hundred and fourteen rings, and eighty more when the battle of Culloden was fought.

It had reached the remarkable age of four hundred and twenty-four when American independence was declared, and the yet more remarkable age of four hundred and eighty-five when Queen Victoria ascended the throne. And even then it had a long time yet to live, when the axe of the woodman cut short its days.

HER WISE IDEA.

One of Boston's bright school-teachers had a boy come into her class from the next lower grade who had the worst reputation of any boy in school. His behaviour, says the Boston Herald, was so tricky and disobedient that he had always been put into a seat directly in front of the teacher's desk, where he could conveniently be watched. His reputation had preceded him, but the new teacher had her own ideas as to how recalcitrant boys should be treated. On the very first day she said: "Now, Thomas, they tell me you are a bad boy, and need to be watched. I don't believe it. I like your looks, and I am going to trust you. Your seat will be at the back of the room, end seat, the fourth row from the wall."

That was all she said. Thomas went to his seat dumbfounded. He had never in his life been put upon his honour before, and the new experience overcame him. From the very first he proved one of the best and most industrious pupils in the school; and not long ago his teacher gave him a good-conduct prize of a jack-knife.

One day she was going down one of the streets not far from the school, when suddenly she noticed Thomas among a small crowd of street gamins. He saw her, too, and immediately took off his hat, and called out, his face beaming with a glad grin. "Hello, Miss E— Nice day."

The other boys laughed at him, but he silenced them by saying:

"Well, she's the best friend I ever had, and I'm going to take my hat off every time I see her."

The man who can say "yes" and "no" at the right time has the greatest command of language.



WINTER IN RUSSIA.

RUSSIAN WINTER.

The great country of Russia has many varieties of climate, it extends over so many degrees of latitude, but our first thought when its name is mentioned is of long and extreme cold. The people have to live and to dress as the long severe winters force them to, and in their journeys, made mostly by sleds and sledges, they must suffer greatly. Some one has described a gentleman's home in Siberia as a little house thatched with deerskin. In winter, in such a dwelling, blocks of ice are substituted for windows, and there is never warm enough weather all winter to melt them.

other boys have copied him ever since. He found a good rye straw and began blowing through it at the front of the block with the end of the straw close to the ice. Soon he had a little hole in the block, as neatly drilled as a steel tool could have done it. In the course of an hour and a half he had driven a hole slantwise through the ice, coming out at the top just in front of the saddle. A stout string passed through the hole and knotted completed his sled, which could then be drawn up hill almost as easily as the best coaster that ever was made. If a boy is careful of his ice sled—and he is apt to be careful, for considerable work

An Eastern Parable.

BY MRS. SIOURNEY.

Once in a shop a workman wrought
With languid hand and listless thought,
When, through the open window space,
Behold, a camel thrust his face!
"My nose is cold," he meekly cried,
"Oh, let me warm it by thy side!"

Since no denial word was said,
In came the nose, in came the head,
As sure as sermon follows text
The long and shaggy neck came next.
And then, as falls the threatening storm,
In leaped the whole ungainly form.

Aghast, the owner gazed around,
And on the rude invader frowned,
Convinced, as closer still he pressed,
There was no room for such a guest;
Yet, more astonished, heard him say,
"If thou art troubled, go thy way,
For in this place I choose to stay."

Oh, youthful hearts, to gladness born,
Treat not this Arab lore with scorn!
To evil habit's earliest wile
Lend neither ear nor glance nor smile!
Choke the dark fountain ere it flows,
Nor e'en admit the camel's nose.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 4, 1899.

"HE SAVED OUR LIVES."

One of the terrible trials of India is famine. The principal food of the natives is rice, and if that crop fails they starve unless relieved from outside sources. They themselves live from hand to mouth, and never think of laying up a supply of food against the day of famine. Some years ago this terrible trial came upon the Karens of Burmah. The war between England and their Burmese masters had just ended. Their stores of rice had been burned or stolen, their cattle driven off, thus leaving them without seed to sow or buffaloes to till the ground. The scarcity of food brought shipments of rice from Calcutta to Rangoon. But its price rose 700 per cent. above that usually asked, and thousands of the Karens had not a rupee.

The Karen missionary, the Rev. J. H. Vinton, lived at Rangoon. He began giving out the little store of rice which he had laid in for the mission-school. The news spread—"There is rice at Teacher Vinton's."

The Karens flocked to his house. Stalwart men came hundreds of miles, carrying a basket or bag, hoping to receive rice for their families. Some fell fainting at the missionary's door, others died in the streets, exhausted by their long journey, during which roots and herbs were their only food. When Mr. Vinton had given out his last bushel of rice, there were thousands of starving Karens who looked to him for their next meal.

Going to the rice merchants, he said, "Will you trust me for a ship-load of rice? I cannot pay you now, and I do not know when I can pay you. But I will pay you as soon as I am able." Their answer showed that these native merchants, shrewd, calculating heathen, who could see their countrymen die and yet raise the price of rice day by day, considered the missionary's word the best sort of security.

"Mr. Vinton," they said, "take all the rice you want. Your word is all the security we want. You can have a dozen cargoes if you wish."

The missionary filled his granaries and out-buildings with rice. He fed native Christians and heathen. He tried to keep an account with each applicant. But they came by thousands, and the account book was thrown aside.

"You are ruining yourself," remonstrated his friends. "You don't know the names of half the people to whom you are giving this rice. How do you expect to get your pay?"

"God will see to that," replied the man who had learned to do his duty and trust God.

"Every cent of the money expended was refunded," writes his daughter, Mrs. Luther.

After the famine was over Mr. Vinton went out among the Karens in their jungles. Even the heathen gathered round him, bringing their wives and children to see the man who had saved them from starving.

"This is the man who saved our lives!" cried crowds of heathen Karens. "We want his religion," and down on their knees they dropped and would have worshipped him, had he not sternly restrained them.

To-day, though he has been dead more than twenty years, "the name of Justus Hatch Vinton is a talisman through the jungles in all that country. The Karens speak it with moistened eyes and bated breath. They still say in hushed tones, 'He saved our lives.'"

WHAT ONE BOY DID.

BY ANNE GUILBERT MAHON.

They were just sitting down to the table, twelve boys, their faces bright, their eyes sparkling with the anticipation of the dinner that was before them. It was Clifford Ray's birthday, and his mother had said he might invite eleven of his friends to a dinner party.

Clifford was an only child and an only grandchild, and, strange as it may seem, he was blessed with three grandmothers. The way he came to have more than his share of grandmothers was that his mother had married again, so there was her mother, his father's mother, and his step-father's mother; stranger yet, they lived together, to all appearances in peace and concord, and vied with each other in petting and spoiling Master Clifford.

The boys lost no time in starting on the good things, and they ate as only healthy, growing boys can eat. They did not talk much at first, they were too busy for that; but they enjoyed themselves thoroughly, which made Mrs. Ray and the three kind old grandmothers who waited on them beam with pleasure.

After they had got fairly started, Mrs. Ray unlocked the door of a little cupboard, built in the wall, and said smilingly, "Now boys! I'm going to give you your choice of some very fine wine. I have all kinds here, and you can take your choice, in honour of Clifford's birthday."

"Oh, that's fine, mother!" exclaimed Clifford. "Come, boys, what kind will you have?"

No one answered, so Mrs. Ray turned to the boy at the head of the table, George Warner, the biggest of the twelve, and the most popular; George usually took the lead in everything.

As Mrs. Ray turned to him, he answered politely, but without the slightest hesitation, "I won't take any, thank you, Mrs. Ray."

The boys looked at him in surprise, and Clifford's mother said, "What! Not any wine? Oh, you are not so particular! Of course it wouldn't do for boys to make a practice of drinking it; but this is something extra, and a glass won't hurt you; it will make a man of you."

George was tempted to reply that he knew just what kind of a man it would make of him, he had seen men like that; but he did not like to say anything rude to Mrs. Ray, so he answered politely but as firmly as before, "No, thank you. I really can't take it. Please don't urge me!"

"Come, now! You won't refuse a lady, I'm sure!"

All eyes were turned on George. He coloured slightly as Mrs. Ray poured out a glass of the sparkling beverage and set it before him, but his resolve was not shaken, and he repeated, "I'm sorry to have to refuse you anything, but, indeed, I can't take it."

Mrs. Ray was evidently annoyed. "Well, I won't press you, if it's against your principles to drink it," she said, and turned to the next boy with, "Well, you'll take it, Harry Clark?"

George's refusal had given Harry cour-

age to act. He knew his mother would not want him to take the wine, but he would not have been strong enough to refuse if it had not been for his friend's example, so he said, "I don't believe I'll take any, either, Mrs. Ray."

Frank Miller, who sat next to Harry, said the same, and so it went all around the table until it came to Clifford.

"You'd better shut up the cupboard, mother, I don't believe any of the fellows want it."

Then they went on eating their dinner, and were soon as merry as if the interruption had not occurred. The incident was seemingly forgotten.

But there was one who did not forget it. In the next room there was a listener of whom none of the boys were aware. Mrs. Ray's brother had long been a source of trouble to his family. It was the old story of bad company and then all sorts of dissipation. He had tried one business after another, to make a failure of all. At last he had gone away, and his family hoped that the separation from his old companions might reform him; but he came back an utter wreck and failure.

Howard Morse had come in while the boys were at dinner. He was sober then; but he intended going out later in the evening with a number of boon companions, and "making a night of it" as usual. The door between the dining-room and the library, where he had thrown himself down on the divan, was open, and he heard his sister's offer of the wine and George's refusal.

It reminded him of the time when he took his first glass of wine, and then he thought of the events which followed. Like all drunkards, at times he would have given anything he possessed to break the awful bondage, and he now wished heartily that when he had been offered his first glass he had, like George, had the courage to refuse. Then the thought came to him, "Am I going to be outdone by a boy twelve years old? What he can do, I can; it isn't too late yet. If God will only forgive me and help me, I'll never touch another drop."

A few minutes later the boys and Mrs. Ray and the three grandmothers were greatly surprised to see Howard Morse walk into the dining-room and greet them cordially. Since he had started on the downward path he had kept taciturnly to himself when he was at home, and avoided meeting any of the people who visited there. This was a new Howard, surely!

After dinner, instead of hurrying out of the house, he joined the boys in the library. He was so entertaining, instituting new games, and telling thrilling stories, that no one could believe the clock right when its hands pointed to the hour for leaving.

Reluctantly the boys went home, after bidding "Uncle Howard" a hearty good-night.

As George was going Howard caught his arm and drew him aside.

"I want to tell you, George, that you have saved me to-night."

George's eyes opened wide in astonishment. "Saved you? I?"

"Yes; it was your example in refusing the wine that set me to thinking, and I resolved never to touch another drop of liquor or have it in the house. I would like to join your temperance society. I want to help save others who have been as low as I was."

George was very happy that night, and when he prayed to his heavenly Father he did not forget to thank him for the privilege which had been given to him, to save a soul by his example.

Howard Morse kept his word. He not only joined the temperance society, but later on the church, and was well known throughout the community as an earnest worker.

Some years afterward he started out as a temperance lecturer and was the means of leading many from the "broad way that leadeth to destruction." And in all his lectures he never failed to give credit to the boy who had stood firm for his principles, and by his example, pointed him to the way in which he was now walking.—Union Signal.

ALWAYS PRAISING.

A man was converted, writes Mr. Moody, and he was just full of praise. He was living in the light all the time. He used to preface everything he said in the meeting with "Praise God."

One night he came to the meeting with his finger all bound up. He had cut it, and cut it pretty bad, too. Well, I wondered how he would praise God for this; but he got up and said:

"I have cut my finger, but, praise God, I didn't cut it off!"

If things go against you, just remember that they might be a good deal worse.

A Methodist Soldier

BY

ALLAN-A-DALE.

CHAPTER X.

A BLOODLESS VICTORY.

Out of that turmoil we came victorious, Mr. Ullathorne, despite his ducking in the river, seemed to have the strength of six men. Laying a grip of iron on the collar of the man who fought with my father, he brought him over on his back with such a tremendous jerk that I thought he must have well-nigh broken the villain's neck.

There was a quick movement in the hedge above as Mr. Ullathorne performed his doughty deed, and the same voice which had encouraged the assault called again: "Run, Bill! run. You can't beat the parson."

The man addressed as Bill scrambled to his feet, and was about to start down the path when, my blood being now fairly boiling, I rushed for him. But the big fellow knew more about the business than I, and with a ready, back-handed blow, which nearly toppled me into the river, he dodged and then plunged onwards, barely missing in his haste the still prostrate form of the man who had first fallen.

Well content was I to see the villain run, knowing by the movement in the hedge that our unseen antagonist had gone also. There now remained only the man of whom I had disposed so luckily. Turning to see what damage had been done to him, I found that he also had risen to his feet and was going off limping and swearing in the darkness.

But Mr. Ullathorne, still bending over my father, and I were now more concerned to know what injury had befallen him than to attempt any pursuit of our assailants.

"Is he hurt?" I said, more than anxiously.

"Nay, lad, I think not," said Mr. Ullathorne.

As he spoke my father raised himself on his elbow, gasping a little as though the breath had been knocked out of him.

"It's—all—right, isn't it, Jim?" were the first words he said. Though they came slowly I thought the words were the most welcome I had ever heard.

"Aye," said I gleefully, "we've beaten 'em."

He put his hand to the place where he had fastened his wallet, within his leather belt. He was now sitting up and panting a little, but in the pale starlight I could see a smile on his face as he felt and found it there.

"They didn't get it, after all, did they?"

"Get it?" I said, a sudden light dawning. "They were after the money, were they?"

"What else, Jim? D'ye think they throw me in the river for fun?" Mr. Ullathorne answered my question, laughing in spite of the situation. "But help me get your father to his feet. He may be hurt more than he thinks."

Needing scarcely any assistance, my father straightened himself, and in a moment or two declared himself all right and able to go on. "We must get to the city as quickly as we can, Mr. Ullathorne, and find you a dryer suit of clothes," he said. "But how did you and Jim manage to rid us of them? After I saw the first send you into the river I suppose I got a crack over the head from behind. At any rate, I remember no more."

As we walked slowly and cautiously along we put our several stories together and came to an understanding of the manner in which the attack was made. Then for some minutes we were in momentary expectation of another attack, not thinking they would be so easily baulked. But happily we were not further molested. We soon reached the outskirts of the city and then the streets, which, dimly lighted with lamps though they were, enabled us to breathe more freely.

And so to our lodgings, where, when we came to examine ourselves, we found we had all met with some damage, though none of it serious. Mr. Ullathorne was wet; my father had the side of his head bruised, and I had a lump on the back of mine which made my first soldier-cap a queer fit for a few days. Altogether, we were glad to have got out of the scuffle so lightly. My father, thinking not of the coin but of the purpose to which it was to be put and the price he had paid for it, was especially thankful to find that the bounty money was safe.

The question remained, who were our assailants? On account of the darkness we could not say, with any certainty,

how they were dressed; but as I lay awake that night, the bruise on my head making it difficult to sleep, I felt more and more convinced the man who stood behind the hedge and directed the attack was none other than my old enemy, Joe Harter. True, I had not seen him since we had left the village, unless it were indeed he who attempted to interrupt Mr. Ullathorne at the preaching. But that voice from the hedge had a strangely familiar ring. Next morning at breakfast I mentioned it.

"What a fanciful lad you are, Jim," said my father. "D'ye think that one-legged rascal is in every bit of villainy? When he has been abroad a bit he will find that there are others as bad as Joe, will he not, Mr. Ullathorne?"

But I would not let my idea go so easily. "Consider," I said, "if it was he at the fair, why, seeing us, should he not get a couple of his old acquaintances and try for the money he knew you had with you?"

"Thou'rt a regular lawyer, Jim," said Mr. Ullathorne, amused at my earnestness. "We shall have to buy thy discharge and send thee to London. But, seriously, friend Barber, you might make inquiry when you get home and find out whether this man Harter has been away during the past two days. If it was Harter, as Jim seems to believe so thoroughly, he may do you some hurt yet."

"Never fear," said my father, "when I am at home again the money goes to the Squire, and then friend Joe will take no more interest in me."

So for a time the matter was dropped. We went up to the barracks early that day, and, presenting myself to the recruiting officer again, I was put in charge of a sergeant, together with a number of other recruits, and, at the expense of a few pounds, I was soon provided with a full uniform and all the belongings of a soldier.

Then my father, who had been offered a seat in another returning farm-wagon, bade me farewell. He was a man of few words, and rarely expressed the deep emotions he must often have felt.

His simple "Good-bye, Jim; always remember that there is One above to whom your mother and I will look and pray for your safe-keeping," were the last words I was to hear from him for many a year. I can see, even now, the great tear which rolled unheeded down his stern, rugged cheek, as he gripped my hand. If there were tears in my eyes also, as I said "Good-bye," they were of a kind no man need be ashamed to confess.

But a hundred things I would have said remained unspoken. A harsh voice calling upon me to "Hurry up, and fall in there!" reminded me that I was now one of his Majesty's hired men.

Before my father started home again he had the sorry satisfaction of seeing his son in a badly-fitting green jacket taking his first lessons in soldiering with a score of raw recruits.

CHAPTER XI.

FIRST MARCHING ORDERS.

You may wonder how I enjoyed my early days in the army. Truth to say they were unpleasant. The constant drilling was terribly wearisome as soon as the first novelty had worn off, but, thanks to my willingness to learn, and a certain natural habit of obedience, added to a stout body, which soon set off my uniform, I was not long in acquiring a regular soldier's appearance.

I found in the men in the company to which I belonged a rare rough lot of English, Irish, and Scotch, recruited at all times and places. There were veterans who had smelt powder on the Continent, tanned and yellow men who had been drafted home from West Indian regiments, turbulent Irishmen recruited from the bogs, and ever ready with a shillelagh to pick a quarrel, or a whiskey bottle to make a friend, and there were a fair number of south-country lads like myself from the plough or the chalk downs. The officers who had the task of licking us into shape were for the most part gentlemen, with here and there a man who had risen from the ranks.

When fortune came my way later, I took care to remember how it seemed that the former were kinder to the men than the latter, and better liked for it. Those were flogging days in the army, days when an officer could use his cane, or the flat of his sword, among his men on the slightest pretext, and a rough-and-ready court-martial could award a man even a thousand lashes with the cat-o-nine-tails for drunkenness or a breach of military rules.

Hard indeed it was for the young soldier to escape punishment, some of the officers, with a mistaken notion of discipline, believing that it was a good

thing to give a man "a taste of the cat" for a slight offence. Many a well-meaning lad, who was trying to do his duty by his regiment and his king, was in this way made reckless, indifferent to punishment, and brutalized beyond belief. "The worse men they are the better soldiers they make," was a saying that was current among some of the officers of that day.

It was two weeks or more before I had any word from home. Then, to my great delight, I was told by one of my comrades that a "parson" was asking for me. At once I knew it could be no other than Mr. Ullathorne, and going down to the gate found him with a smile on his face and a hand ready to grasp mine.

"Well, lad," he said, "I saw thy folks two days ago, and promised to bring you word as soon as I was able that they were well. I have lots of messages for you, and every one wants to know how you are faring. You're looking first-rate, Jim; soldiering seems to agree with you."

I told him that I was well and not discontented with my lot. Then he gave me all the kind messages he was bearing from my home and friends.

"And I have a great piece of news for you," he continued. "What say you if I tell you that Harter has not been seen in the village since the day we left? D'ye think that connects with our adventure after the fair? No one knows

told your father you will fight on the right side. This time, at all events, I shall have a good story to tell the folks at home, and I hope I shall find you here when I come again to Winchester."

But the good man's hope was not fulfilled, for the next day we received our marching orders, and before the end of the week were under canvas at Ashford. Rumour had for once spoken truly, and when, two weeks later, we heard that we were to take part in military operations on the Continent, the wildest expectations and surmises of barrack-room gossip were verified to the astonishment even of the men who had ventured them.

(To be continued.)

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL BY JOHN.

LESSON XI.—MARCH 12.

CHRIST HEALING THE BLIND MAN.

John 9. 1-11. Memory verses, 5-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.—John 9. 25.

OUTLINE.

1. The Blind Man, v. 1-3.
2. The Working Lord, v. 4-7.



"GOOD-BYE, JIM!"

where he has gone, though some say to Portsmouth and others to London."

"It may be so, Mr. Ullathorne," I replied, "though I have lately seen so many of his kind, both in these barracks and out, that I am now well inclined to believe that the men who attacked us might have had no previous knowledge of us. There have been many complaints in and about the city lately of highway robbery. Some have asserted that soldiers have been engaged in them, and twice we have been paraded by companies for people who have been robbed to try and identify the men. But it has led to nothing so far, and is not likely to, seeing there are nearly three thousand men now in the barracks."

"And what is this I hear in the town about moving the troops? I hope we are not going to lose you, Jim."

"We know nothing for certain," I said, "but there is a rumour in the barracks to-day that several of the battalions go to the big depot at Ashford in Kent; for what purpose no one can say. We are being marched and drilled as if 'Boney' were to land to-morrow. I could almost wish he would. With so much war-talk in the air the men are getting restless, and they say there never was so much difficulty in keeping order in the barracks. Because they can't fight the French they must needs fall to fighting among themselves. There are heads broken every night among the Irishmen in the Rifles."

"Well, lad, God forbid there should be any need to send your regiment into the field, but if you go I know you will render a good account of yourself, and as I

3. The Wondering Neighbours, v. 8-11. Time.—On a Sabbath day in the early winter of A.D. 23.

Place.—Pool of Siloam, Jerusalem. Rulers.—Herod in Galilee; Pilate in Jerusalem.

LESSON HELPS.

1. "He saw"—He earnestly gazed, until his disciples noticed his interest in the blind man. "From his birth"—He probably repeated this sad fact over and over in a monotonous whine. Blind beggars in our own great cities nearly always, by painted sign or by their own words, tell passers-by how they came to be blind.

2. "Who did sin"—The Jews generally believed that all special afflictions were divine punishments for special sins. Modern people often make the same assumption. "This man, or his parents"—As if they had said, "What is the explanation—the man's own sin? That cannot be, for he was born blind. Is he then punished for his parents' sin?"

3. "Neither hath this man sinned"—That is, not sinned in any peculiar way calling for the punishment of blindness; he was a sinner only as we all are. "But that"—In order that. "The works of God"—The miracles which Jesus was constantly doing, and one of which he proposed now to do. This poor blind man should become a voucher for the divinity of Jesus.

4. "I must work"—Better, "We must work;" the duty is as imperative on the disciples as on the Master. "Night cometh"—Jesus means, death is coming to all.

6. "Spat clay"—It was a current idea of the Jews that both saliva and clay had curative qualities. Jesus used them as means at hand.

7. "Wash in the pool"—Wash off the clay into the pool. "Which is by interpretation, Sent"—Or, sending; that is outlet of waters. "The pool by its very name was a symbol of him who was sent into the world to work the works of God and give light to the world by providing a fountain in which not only all uncleanness is washed away, but all ignorance and blindness of heart"—Abbott

8. "He that sat and begged"—He was well known in the streets.

"I am he"—There were many things about this poor man's healing which he did not understand, but he could say, "One thing I know. I was blind, now I see."

10. "How were thine eyes opened"—Personal experience always has an interest to men, whether it be in the physical or the spiritual life.

11. "He answered and said"—He told a straightforward, simple story, from which all cross-examination of the rulers could not make him swerve.

HOME READINGS.

M. Christ healing the blind man.—John 9. 1-12.

Tu. Questionings.—John 9. 13-23.

W. "Now I see"—John 9. 24-38.

Th. Bartimeus.—Mark 10. 46-52.

F. Spiritual blindness.—Matt 13. 10-17.

S. Prophecy of Christ.—Isa. 42. 1-7.

Su. Darkness and light.—2 Cor. 4. 1-7.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Blind Man, v. 1-3.

Whom did Jesus see by the wayside? What question did the disciples ask? What reply did Jesus make? What promise held out hope to the blind? Isa. 42. 6, 7.

2. The Working Lord, v. 4-7.

What did Jesus say about his own work? What did he do for the blind man? What did he tell the man to do? What was the result of the man's obedience? What proof that he was the Messiah did Jesus give to John? Matt. 11. 5.

3. The Wondering Neighbours, v. 8-11.

What question did the man's neighbours ask? What answers were given? What did the man himself say? What did the people then ask? What was the man's testimony? What testimony did he give later? Golden Text.

On what day was this cure performed? Verse 14.

What did the healed man think of Jesus? Verses 17, 25.

What did the Jews do to the man? Verse 34.

What noble confession did the man make? Verses 35-39.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. To do good as we have opportunity?
2. To obey every command of Jesus?
3. To be witnesses for Jesus?

BIRDS ON HER HAT.

That quick wit is not confined to cities was proved the other day by a young woman who was rambling along one of our roads.

She was dressed smartly, and when she met a small, bare-legged urchin carrying a bird's nest with eggs in it, she did not hesitate to stop him.

"You are a wicked boy," she said. "How could you rob that nest? No doubt the poor mother is now grieving for the loss of her eggs."

"Oh, she don't care," said the boy, edging away; "she's on your hat!"

THE CHRISTIAN COSMETIC.

A Hindu trader in Kherwara market once asked Pema, "What medicine do you put on your face to make it shine so?"

Pema answered, "I don't put anything on."

"No; but what do you put on?"

"Nothing. I don't put anything on."

"Yes, you do. All you Christians do. I have seen it in Agra, and I've seen it in Ahmedabad and Surat, and I've seen it in Bombay."

Pema laughed, and his happy face shone the more as he said, "Yes, I'll tell you the medicine. It is happiness of heart."

"What do they do when they install a minister?" asked a small boy of his father. "Do they put him in a stall and feed him?" "No," said his father, "they harness him to a church and expect him to draw it alone."

The Price of Success.

The price of success is daily toil,
And perseverance to the end—
'Twill never do for you to stand still,—
On sloth you never can depend!

The price of success is watchfulness,
And keeping your record high,—
The reward you will not fail to get,—
For 'twill surely come by-and-bye!

The price of success is going ahead,
With a very determined will,—
And that you may advance, you must
Keep grinding at the mill!

The price of success is fixing your eye
On results gained every day;—
Knowing your motto must always be,—
Keep ever pegging away!

The price of success, remember,
Is honest, faithful work,—
Resolving that you will never
Your daily duty shirk!

THE BLIND BEGGAR.

It was the afternoon of a lovely Sabbath day, and sitting just outside the temple was a blind beggar. It was the custom of those days to lead the blind, lame, or sick to some public place where they might receive alms from the passers-by, and this spot was known as "the blind man's seat," for he had sat there for years. When he was a child his mother would leave him there, while she went up into the temple to sell doves. There was no need to shield his eyes from the dust of the street, the glare of the bright sun, for he had come into the world rosy and sweet like other babies, but he could not see—he was a blind boy.

Now and then the white and gray doves would fly so close to him he heard the flutter of their wings; and at times, when the air was full of sunlight, and he heard the bees buzzing and whispering their secrets way down in the hearts of the flowers, or from the distant hills the shepherd's pipe or the ringing of the mule bells, he would wonder how it would seem if he could really see it all.

Passers-by would notice the quiet, sightless little boy, sometimes stopping a moment to speak to him, sometimes dropping in his hand a coin, some sweetmeat, fruit, or a fragrant flower, and little children would stop their play and stand looking at him curiously, whispering softly, "He cannot see, he is blind!"

So his childhood passed, and, now a man, he was still sitting there. He alone was helpless, and though he had grown to be a man, the old couple always thought and spoke of him as a boy. "We are getting old," they would say, "and will soon be gone, and then who will care for our boy and lead him to his seat by the temple?"

This Sabbath afternoon he was listening to the passers-by, and he heard them speak of a great physician, a wonderful healer, who made the blind see, the lame walk, who had done all manner of wonderful things in the cities near by, and was now coming to Jerusalem. It troubled the blind beggar to hear them say such things. He had no faith in their talk. How could the blind be made to see?

Just then there was an unusual stir, and a cry of,

"HE IS HERE!" "HE HAS COME!"

"Let us see what he can do!" There was a sound of many feet, a crowd eager and wondering pushed along, men and women following with haste, children calling to one another, "Come and see!" A multitude of old and young, some believing, some ridiculing, all curious, all following a little group who, out of compassion, stopped where the poor blind beggar sat. One among them stepped forward, laid his hand on him, and looked into his upturned face, with the sightless eyes moving restlessly round and round, never seeing, and appealing more than any words could have done. Always moving, never still, so that you wondered if even in sleep the lids shut out that ceaseless roar! The idlers sauntering along waited to see what was going on.

A boy who had elbowed his way through the crowd to the beggar's side, had, as he stood there, idly scraped up with the toe of his foot a little pile of fine white clay; and the Great Healer, who liked to show the doubting, unbelieving ones how the simplest things in nature were his work, and could be made to minister to man's necessities, stooped down, and, taking up a little of it, moistened it with his mouth into a smooth paste, and tenderly supporting the blind man's head, he carefully spread it over his eyes, then told him to go outside the city walls to the beautiful pool of Siloam and bathe them.

THE CROWD LAUGHED AND SNERRED, they did not believe he could be cured, and they ridiculed the idea of his going outside the city walls with the clay over his eyes; so they scattered on their various ways with jeers and shouts, and only the parents, one or two of their friends, and the little children (with their unflagging interest in anything unusual) followed the believers who led the blind man beyond the city walls, the groves of olives, and gardens of figs, to the clear pool of Siloam, whose waters to this day are said to be eye-healing. The pool was like a great stone basin, with a flight of steps leading down to it.

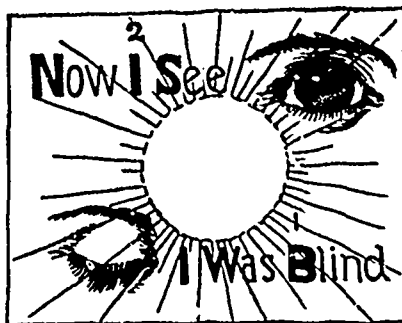
The blind man went slowly down the steps, and with a trembling hand bathed his eyes again and again in the grateful, cool water. He longed to see; had wondered as he walked along if it could be possible! From the moment he had felt the gentle touch on his eyes and had heard that voice, tender and trust-commanding, he had half believed; as he walked down the steps of the pool he had prayed inwardly that his dearest wish might be granted, if only for a moment, and the restful water on his eyes completed his faith; he believed that he would!

Raising his face, he was bewildered for an instant, and then, full of delight,

HE KNEW THAT HE COULD SEE!

An old man, with outstretched hands, said in a trembling voice, "My boy!" and he saw his father! His mother's wrinkled face bent over him, half smiles, half tears, and for the first time his eyes responded to her look of love.

The fishermen mending their nets wondered at the joyous cry of thanks-



THE BLIND MAN.

Have you ever seen a blind person? Can you think how it must feel to be blind? Shut your eyes a moment, and try to think. But you can't, really, for you know that you can open your eyes again. Can a blind man work, just as others do? Can he help himself? How sad it is! How long had this man been blind? Oh, to think that he had never seen the sun and sky, the flowers and stars, his mother's face, or anything about him. Could he make himself well? Could any doctor heal him? Had he anything to do then? Yes. "Go, wash," Jesus said. He could obey. He did. Then when the Pharisees quarrelled about its being done on the Sabbath, and asked the man and his parents again about the deed, and tried to make the man tell more than he knew, he said he only knew one thing—he was blind, but now he saw. It must have been a good man who did such a good deed. Then the Pharisees would not let the man belong to the synagogue any more, so they put him out, but, oh,



(See Lessons in this Number.)

giving they heard, and leaving their work went down and looked at him. They could not, at first, believe that this was really he who was born blind, but as they spoke he called them by name, for he had known them by their voices for years. They shook his hands, they questioned him, and followed him to the city.

The country was all aglow, the sky blazing with the golden atmosphere of an oriental sunset, the mountains piled up like great temples in the clouds, the domes and towers of the city lighted up with a splendour that recalled the "New Jerusalem!"

"Its streets are paved with gold, its walls are made of precious stones, its gates are pearl!" What a sight for eyes that never before had seen! They entered the city walls, and as they met neighbours and old friends, the question was asked, again and again: "Is this the blind beggar?" Soon they met

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

who asked the man he had healed, "Do you believe on the Son of God?" He answered, "Who is he? Let me see him that I may believe;" and as he said this he raised his head, and his newly found eyes saw a face not like any other—a divine face, with a glory and sweetness that drew him to it with great power, and the voice that said, "I am he," was as gentle as music, as tender as a caress! The beggar, his countenance lighted up with happiness, cried, not afraid nor trembling, but joyful and exultant, "Lord, it is thou; I believe!" And from that time he and his parents, who were filled with gratitude, joined the little band of believers, and went about praising God and trying to teach others to love him.

Jesus met him. He must have gone to find him this time. He told the man who he was, and the man said, "I believe."

Do you see this open eye? It is a seeing eye, not a blind one. What did the man say was the one thing he knew? "I was blind, now I see." Was that enough to make the man glad? Was that enough to prove that Jesus was good and powerful? If Jesus could open blind eyes, could he not do anything? Did the man have to understand all about the great Son of God, all about what Moses wrote of the coming Messiah, or Anointed One, all about the way the Lord did miracles, in order to see, or to believe in Jesus? Oh, no. Do we have to understand everything in the Bible and all Jesus does, before we can belong to him? No. We can be his if we know as much as the blind man did. We will put "I see" in our lesson chain. That is what we want most. Sin keeps us from seeing Jesus as our Saviour. He can make us see him, in our hearts.

English friendliness toward the United States has been shown strikingly of late, not only in the speeches of English statesmen and the comments of the press, but in popular demonstrations. At the recent celebration of Lord Mayor's Day in London, one feature of the procession was a car containing figures representing Britannia and Columbia. A week later, at Portsmouth, when the ram battleship Formidable, which is said to be the largest warship in the world, was launched, the British and American flags were entwined on the official stand.

BITS OF FUN.

Never look a gift automobile in the motor.

A specialist in diseases of the throat is credited with saying, "The best chest-protector is worn on the sole of the foot."

"Were you a bull or a bear?" asked an acquaintance of a speculator. "Neither," he replied; "I was a donkey."

First Statesman—"I see that you were interviewed at length yesterday."

Second Statesman (surprised)—"Is that so? But, now I think of it, I did find a reporter's card when I got home."

A young Englishman, being asked at dinner whether he would have some bird's-nest pudding, said, turning to the hostess:

"Ah! yes, bird's-nest pudding, and what kind of bird may have made it?" "Oh, it was the cook coo made it," was her prompt reply.

A beggar stopped a lady on the steps of a church. "Kind lady, have you not a pair of old shoes to give me?"

"No, I have not; besides, those you are now wearing seem to be brand new." "That's just it, ma'am—they spoil my business."

"Wise men hesitate; only fools are certain," he observed, in the course of a conversation with his tender spouse.

"I don't know about that," she said, testily.

"Well, I am certain," he exclaimed. And for a long time he was puzzled why she burst out laughing at him.

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