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# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XIV.]

TORONTO, JANUARY 27, 1894

[No. 4

## UNCLE TALKS.

### WONDERFUL TREE OF MADAGASCAR.

WINTER'S snows have already begun to cover the earth with fleecy robes. In the garden, all except the hardiest plants are either covered up or removed indoors to be saved from frost; and the vines are protected with straw and earth up to the trellis-work. The trees alone, standing bare and leafless, must face the storm and stress of winter unsheltered.

There are trees on three side of the homestead—a row of cherry trees in the wide lane, some noble, towering maples in the rear, with a half-dozen fruit trees, and right before the door, and half-way between it and the gate, a grand old apple-tree, whose wide-spreading limbs make a favourite seat for the boys in summer, and whose sea of blossoms in spring is a marvel of beauty to all who live in the neighbourhood. It apples are the biggest, reddest and sweetest on any tree for miles around. But some of its limbs are showing signs of decay and ere many more summers elapse, the old tree must be brought under the axe.

"Dear old tree!" said the boys, when Uncle John, after inspecting it, the other day, told them of this decision. "It seems like a friend to us," added Tom.

"The young folks will miss it very much," said mamma sadly.

"Yes," said Uncle John. "There is no plant in the whole world so deserving of man's affection as a tree; yet there is none that exacts less care and trouble at his hands. In our climate we think less of trees than people do in some other parts of the world."

"Oh, yes," said Ellie, "I remember reading the Bible, a little while ago, in Deuteronomy xxii. 19, where it says 'the tree of the field is man's life,' but I never could make out just what it meant."

"It means," replied uncle, "that the trees are necessary to his comfort and, in some parts of our earth, to his very existence. There are trees in some countries that seem to supply almost every thing that man needs for his subsistence."

"Tell us of them, uncle, please," cried Ted, who had been an eager listener. "Are they big apple-trees like ours?"

"No, my boy; they bear something that may not be quite so toothsome, but it is much more precious than a sweet apple. Humbolt," continued Uncle John, "mentions a tree he saw in South America, and which he calls the cow-tree. It is a tree so called because it takes the place of a cow in supplying the people with milk."

"How funny to think of wooden cows that give real good, sweet milk!" cried Ellie.

"Yes," continued the traveller, "these trees grow out of the rocks. They have large, woody roots, and the leaves are dry and leathery. For several months of the year no rain falls to moisten the leaves and the branches look dry and dead; but when the trunk is pierced, a sweet and nourishing milk oozes out. The best time for milking, the natives say, is at sunrise, and at that hour they go out with bowls and calabashes, to pierce the wooden cows. They make incisions in the branches, and soon have the bowls overflowing with nice, fresh milk, which some drink on the spot, while others take it home to the little ones."

"But does it taste like real milk, uncle?" asked Tom, incredulously.

"So I gather from what travellers say. The smell is pleasant and the taste agreeable."

"There is surely no other plant like it in the world," said Ted, in wondering tones.

"Wrong, my boy. There are others, but they don't give milk. There's a remarkable tree in the island of Madagascar, called the 'Traveller's Tree.' The branches don't grow out of the trunk, but spring out in a line, like the spokes of a wheel. Each branch grows at the end a big broad leaf which spreads out like a fan. Under the branches, a dew collects in the evening, in a myriad of drops that form little streams which run down the lower side of

from its rind or shell are made spoons, cups, bowls, and even tables. The bark of the tree is made into twine, cloth, and mats; the tender young buds are eaten, and the sap makes capital sugar. The tough, leathery leaves are used for sails for boats, for sacks, for baskets, and thatch for cottages."

"Well!" exclaimed the deeply interested group, "surely no other tree can be so useful."

ings are used for stuffing pillows. Its leaves make a capital cloak for wet days, and the chopsticks, which you have seen Chinamen use instead of knife and fork, are also made out of its stems. But that isn't the whole; its tender shoots are boiled and eaten and the pulp is transformed into paper, and the pith into pickles and sweetmeats. Boats, floats, sails, cable, rigging, fishing-rods and fishing-baskets, are all made from the same tree. Chinese farmers have it in the form of carts, wheelbarrows, ploughs, wheels and fences. In fact, I might go on for an hour telling you about this remarkable tree which is everywhere used by the Celestials. If there is a more useful plant on the globe, I have never heard of it."

## ABOUT YOUR BOYS.

TREAT your boys as though they were of some importance, if you would have them manly and self-reliant.

Be careful of the little courtesies. You cannot expect your boy to be respectful, thoughtful and kind unless you first set him the example.

If you would have your boy make you his confidant, take an active interest in all he does; don't be too critical, and ask for his views and opinions at all times.

Don't keep your boys in ignorance of things they should know. It is not the wholesome truth, but the unwholesome way in which it is acquired, that ruins many a young man.

Don't act as if you thought your boy amounted to nothing, nor be continually making comparison between him and some neighbour's son to his disadvantage; nothing will dishearten him quicker.

Don't think that everything is good enough for the boys, and that they don't care for nice things; have their room fixed up as nicely as possible; let them understand it is to be kept in order, and the result will justify your pains.

Furnish your boy with good, wholesome reading matter. Have him read to you and with you. Discuss with him what you read, and draw out his opinions and thoughts upon the subjects. Help him to think early for himself.

Make home a pleasant place; see to it that the boys don't have to go somewhere else to secure proper freedom and congenial companionship. Take time and pains to make them feel comfortable and contented, and they will not want to spend their evenings away from home.

Pick your son's associates. See to it that he has no friends you know not about. Take an interest in all his troubles and pleasures, and have him feel perfectly free to invite his friends to the house. Take a little pains to make him and his friends comfortable and happy. He will not be slow to appreciate it.

## A CURE FROM SMOKING.

"Don't you know it's very wrong to smoke, my boy?" said an elderly-looking lady in a railway waiting-room to Young America, who persisted in smoking a cigarette, much to the old lady's discomfort.

"Oh, I smoke for my health," answered the boy, emitting a volume of smoke from his mouth which almost strangled the old lady.

"But you never heard of a cure from smoking," continued the old lady, when she had regained consciousness.

"Oh, yes I did," replied the boy, as he formed his mouth into a young Vesuvius, working on full time, "that's the way they cure pigs."

"Smoke on, then," quickly replied the old lady, "there's some hope for you yet."



"THE TRAVELLER'S TREE" OF MADAGASCAR.

the branches. At the base of the branch is a cuplike hollow, where the dew gathers, and thirsty travellers have just to poke something between the branches and hold a cup or jar under, and it is speedily filled with sweet, refreshing water."

"Another illustration of how our Heavenly Father provides for His creatures in all places," remarked mamma from the sofa.

"Yes; all trees are useful in some way or other," responded uncle, "but there are some whose every leaf, branch and fibre are valuable in various ways. The cocoanut is one of these; its fruit yields oil, a sugary milk and solid food, while

"Ah, but the bamboo in China is even more so," was the smiling reply. "It grows about eighty feet in height, and has neither blossom nor fruit. Its leaves are short and slender, but many of its canes are thicker than your papa's arm. The biggest stems are used for pillars of buildings and for rafters and planks, and its leaves are woven as thatching for the roof. The fibre makes mats for the floor. In many Chinese houses the bamboo is made into bedsteads, tables and chairs, and workmen also turn it into umbrellas, hats, baskets, cups, brooms, shoe-soles, pipes, bows-and-arrows and sedan-chairs. The finer fibre is spun into twine, and the shav-

Watch, Mother, Watch.

Mother, watch the little feet,  
Climbing o'er the garden wall,  
Bounding through the busy street,  
Ringing collar, shed and hall.  
Never count the moments lost,  
Never mind the time it cost;  
Little feet will go astray;  
Guide them, mother, while you may.

Mother, watch the little hand,  
Picking berries by the way,  
Making houses in the sand,  
Tossing up the fragrant bay.  
Never dare the question ask,  
"Why to me this weary task?"  
These same little hands may prove  
Messengers of light and love.

Mother, watch the little tongue,  
Prattling eloquent and wild,  
What is said and what is sung  
By the happy, joyous child.  
Catch the word while yet unspoken,  
Stop the vow before 'tis broken;  
This same tongue may yet proclaim  
Blessings on the Saviour's name.

Mother, watch the little heart,  
Beating soft and warm for you;  
Wholesome lessons now impart,  
Keep, O keep that young heart true;  
Extricating every weed,  
Sowing good and precious seed  
Harvest rich you then may see  
Ripening for eternity.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, JANUARY 27, 1894.

JOHN 3. 16.

A STORY OF THIS TEXT.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

One cold, wintry night a poor Irish boy stood in the streets of Dublin—a little city arid, homeless, houseless, friendless.

He had taken to bad courses, and become an associate of thieves, who were leading him on the broad road to destruction. That very night they had planned to commit a burglary, and appointed him to meet them in a certain street at a certain hour.

As he stood there, waiting, shivering, and cold, a hand was suddenly laid on his shoulder. It was very dark, he could only see a tall form standing by him, and he trembled with fear; but a kindly voice said, "Boy, what are you doing here at this time of night? Such as you have no business in the streets at so late an hour. Go home—go to bed."

"I have no home, and no bed to go to. That's very sad, poor fellow! Would you go to a home and to a bed if I provided you?"

"That would I sharp!" replied the boy. "Well, in such a street and at such a number (indicating the place) you will find a bed." Before he could add more, the lad

started off. "Stop!" said the voice; "how are you going to get in? You need a pass: no one can go in there without a pass. Here is one for you—can you read it?"

"No, sir."  
"Well, remember that the pass is 'John 3. 16,' don't forget, or they won't let you in. 'John 3. 16.' There, that's something that will do you good."

Joyfully the lad rushed off, repeating his lesson, and soon found himself in the street and at the number indicated, before a pair of large iron gates. Then his heart failed him, they looked so grand. He could not get in there! Timidly he rang the bell. The night porter opened, and in a gruff voice asked, "Who's there?" "Mo, sir. Please, sir, I'm John Three Sixteen," in very trembling tones. "All right; in with you, that's the pass," and in the boy went.

He was soon in a nice, warm bed, and between sheets such as he had never seen before. As he curled himself up to go to sleep, he thought, "This is a lucky name, I'll stick to it!" The next morning he was given a bowl of hot bread and milk, before being sent out into the street (for this home was only for a night). He wandered on and on, fearful of meeting his old companions, thinking over his new name; when, heedlessly crossing a crowded thoroughfare, he was run over.

A crowd collected, the unconscious form was placed on a shutter, and carried to the nearest hospital. He revived as they entered.

It is usual in the Dublin hospitals to put down the religion, as well as the name and address, of those admitted. They asked him whether he was Catholic or Protestant. Sure, he didn't quite know. Yesterday he was a Catholic, but now he was John Three Sixteen. This reply elicited a laugh.

After his injuries had been attended to, he was carried up into the accident ward. In a short time his sufferings brought on fever and delirium. Then was heard in ringing tones, and oft repeated, "John iii. 16! It was to do me good, and so it has!"

These persistent cries aroused the other patients. Testaments were pulled out to see to what he pointed. What could he mean? and here one and there another read the precious words, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ("It was to do me good, and so it has!" the sufferer cried.) Luther called this verse "The Miniature Bible." When those poor sick folk read the tender words, and heard the unconscious comment—"It was to do me good, and so it has!"—the Spirit stirred within them, and God the Holy Ghost used that text then and there to the conversion of souls. There was "joy in the presence of the angels of God" over sinners that repented. The sovereign power of God the Holy Spirit used this one text from the lips of a poor, ignorant boy in that hospital ward, and souls were saved.

Consciousness returned, and the poor little fellow gazed around him: how vast it looked! and how quiet it was! Where was he? Presently a voice from the next bed said—"John Three Sixteen, and how are you to-day?" "Why, how do you know my new name?" "Know it! You've never ceased with your John Three Sixteen, and I for one say, blessed John Three Sixteen!" This sounded strange to the little lad's ears. To be called "blessed"—he for whom no one cared. "And don't you know where it comes from? It's from the Bible."

"The Bible! what's that?" The poor little waif had never heard of the Bible—that blessed book, God's word to man. "Read it to me," he said; and as the words fell on his ear, he muttered, "That's beautiful! it's all about love, and not a home for a night, but a home for always!" He soon learnt the text, saying, "I've not only got a new name, but something to it!"

Days passed on, and there were changes in the ward, but our little friend never felt lonely; he fed on his text and its precious words.

Another soul in that ward was to be won to Christ by his means, and now in simple conscious faith he was to be the agent of blessing.

On a cot near him lay an old man who was very ill. Early one morning a nun came to his bedside, and said, "Patrick, how is it with you to-day?" "Badly, badly!" groaned the old man. "Has the

priest been to see you?" asked the nun. "Oh, yes; but that makes it worse, for he has anointed me with the holy oil, and I am marked for death. I'm no fit to die—oh, what shall I do?" "Patrick, it's very sad to see you so," she gently answered; "look! here are these beads, they have been blessed by his holiness the Pope, and they will help you to die happy." She placed them around the man's neck, and then, wishing him good-bye, went out. But how could a string of beads ease a dying man facing eternity, with his sins unforgiven? Poor Patrick groaned aloud. "God, ha' mercy!" he cried; "I'm such a sinner, I'm no fit to die. What shall I do? Oh, what will become o' me?"

Our little fellow heard his miserable words. "Poor old man," thinks he; "he wants a pass." "Patrick," he called, "I know something that will do you good—quite sure—it has done me." "Tell me, tell me quickly," cried Patrick. "If only I could find something to do me good!" "Here it is! Now listen, John 3. 16. Are you listening?" "Yes, yes; go on." "John 3. 16—'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'" Through these words Patrick found peace in his dying hour, and entered into everlasting life—another soul brought to Christ in that hospital ward by means of a single text blessed by the Holy Spirit.

Our little friend recovered. For long, John Three Sixteen was his one text. God-blessed his simple faith; friends placed him at school, and now he is an earnest, hearty worker for the Master. "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." (Luke 11. 28.)

WAYS OF MAKING A LIVING.

Times have changed. There are now a dozen ways of making a living where twenty years ago even the demand did not exist. Type-writing, for instance, was unknown a few years ago, and now there are thousands who support themselves by it. It has supplied a new and wide field for the employment of women, and has come into almost universal use for legal documents. The invention of the telephone has given employment to thousands in the construction of the apparatus and the attendance at telephone offices, and the number thus employed already rivals the number engaged in telegraphing. Fortunately, a large portion of these are females. It is only a few years since the invention of the district messenger service and the employment of street bootblacks gave employment to an army of boys.

There is a strong tendency toward the practice of specialities; that is, persons are desired to know one thing, and to know of that all there is. In every profession there are men who get a reputation for some particular branch. Thus there are acknowledged specialists in law, who have almost a monopoly of a certain class of cases. Some lawyers know all about patents, and others all about admiralty; others, all about landlords and tenants; others, all about criminal law; and so on.

Boys will do well to remember that they must each one absolutely master something or other. It will not do to be generally "smart." The time has passed when one is at all expected to be able to "do anything." Some of these things are very small. For instance, there is the occupation of a "tea taster," who sits all day by a table and tastes tea on a salary. No one distinctly has an ambition to be that, yet, as an illustration, it shows the tendency of the times toward special branches of an extensive business.

ONLY HIS MOTHER.

BY PANSY.

"CHARLES HOLLAND, at your service?" A well-dressed, well-mannered, pleasant-faced boy. You feel sure you will like him. Everybody who sees him feels just so.

"His mother must be proud of him," is a sentence often on people's lips. Look at him now, as he lifts his hat politely in answer to a call from an open window.

"Charlie," says the voice, "I wonder if I could get you to mail this letter for me? Are you going near the post-office?" "Near enough to be able to serve you,

Mrs. Hampstead," said the polite voice. "I will do it with pleasure."

"I shall be very much obliged, Charlie. But I wouldn't want to make you late at school on that account."

"Oh, no danger at all, Mrs. Hampstead. It will not take two minutes to dash around the corner to the office."

And as he received the letter his hat again lifted politely.

"What a perfect little gentleman Charles Holland is," says Mrs. Hampstead to her sister as the window closes. "Always so obliging; he acts as though it were a pleasure to him to do a kindness."

Bend lower, and let me whisper a secret into your ear. It is not five minutes since that boy's mother said to him:

"Charlie, can't you run up stairs and get that letter on my bureau, and mail it for me? And Charlie, with three wrinkles on his forehead and a pucker on each side of his mouth, said:

"O mamma! I don't go, how I can't. I'm late now; and the office is half a block out of my way."

And the mother said, well then, he need not mind, for she did not want him to be late at school. So he didn't mind but let the letter on the bureau, and went briskly on his way until stopped by Mrs. Hampstead.

What was the matter with Charlie Holland? Was he an untruthful boy? He did not mean to be. He claimed himself to be strictly honest.

It was growing late, and he felt in a hurry, and he hated to go up-stairs. Of course it would not do to refuse Mrs. Hampstead, and by making an excuse he could get to school in time; but the other lady was only his mother. He letter could wait.

"Only his mother!" Didn't Charles Holland love his mother, then?

You ask him, with a hint of doubt about it in your voice, and see how his eyes will flash, and how he will toss back his head some head, and say:

"I guess I do love my mother. She's the grandest mother a boy ever had."

Oh, I didn't promise to explain Charles' conduct to you; I am only introducing him. You are to study for yourselves. Do you know any boy like him?

MARCHING ORDERS.

It is related that a young English clergyman once accosted the Duke of Wellington with the question whether it were not really useless and extravagant to send missionaries to India to preach the Gospel, in view of the ignorance and obstinacy of the Hindus. The Duke had lived in India, and knew well all the difficulties of the conditions; but he promptly replied:

"Look, sir, to your marching orders. Preach the Gospel to every creature."

With a man of true military instinct, and training a clear "order" settles every question. There is nothing to do but to obey. So it should be with the orders of the great Captain of our salvation. No one has a right for a moment to raise a question as to the wisdom of properly carrying the Gospel to the remotest regions of the earth, or to the most ignorant and depraved among mankind.

GIVE ME YOUR BOY.

The saloon must have boys, or it must shut up shop. Can't you furnish it one? It is a great factory, and unless it can get 2,000,000 boys from each generation of raw material, some of these factories must close out, and their operatives must be thrown on the cold world, and the public revenue will dwindle. "Wanted—2,000,000 boys!" is the notice. One family of every five must contribute a boy to keep up the supply. Will you help? Which of you boys will it be? The manufacturer of Crete had to have a tramping full of his maidens each year; but the manufacturer of America demands a city full of boys each year. Are you a father? Have you given your share to keep up the supply, for the great public institution which is helping to pay your taxes and kindly electing public officials for you? Have you contributed a boy? If not, some other family has to give more than its share. Are you selfishly voting to keep the saloon open, grind up the boys, and then doing nothing to keep up the supply?



Not Fit to be Kissed!

"WHAT ails papa, mother?" said a sweet little girl.  
 Her bright laugh revealing her teeth white as pearl;  
 I love him, and kiss him, and sit on his knee,  
 But the kisses don't smell good when he kisses me.

"But, mamma,"—her eyes opened wide as she spoke—  
 "Do you like those kisses of 'bacco and smoke?  
 They might do for boys, but for ladies and girls!  
 I don't think them nice," as she tossed her bright curls.

"Don't nobody's papa have moufs nice and clean?  
 With kisses like yours, mamma—that's what I mean;  
 I want to kiss papa, I love him so well,  
 But kisses don't taste good that have such a smell.

"It's nasty to smoke, and eat 'bacco and spit;  
 And the kisses ain't good, and ain't sweet, not a bit;  
 And her blossom-like face wore a look of disgust,  
 As she gave out her verdict, so earnest and just.

Yes, yes, little darling! your wisdom has seen  
 That kisses for daughters and wives should be clean;  
 For kisses lose something of nectar and bliss,  
 From mouths that are stained and unfit for a kiss.

In Prison and Out.

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER IV.—OLD EUCLID'S BOARD.

AS Mrs. Fell, leaning heavily on the arm of Bess, crept homeward, after her sorrowful visit to the pawnbroker, they saw an old man, one of their neighbours, making his way, with a shambling and limping tread, along the uneven pavement before them. The lamps were lit down the narrow and dirty street, and the light fell on the dingy figure of the old man as he passed under them with his stooping shoulders and his long, ragged locks of gray hair falling below his battered and broken hat, round which still clung a little band of black material that had not become quite brown with rain and sunshine. He was a small man, and seemed to have withered and shrunk into a more meagre thinness than when his clothes had been bought, now many years ago. The face under the battered hat was of a yellow brownness, and much wrinkled, with shaggy eyebrows hanging over his eyes. There was a gleam in these dim and sunken eyes, as if it were possible for him to smile; but the possibility seldom became a fact. He looked half asleep as he shuffled along; and in a low, husky voice he was dreamily crying "Creases," but not at all as though he expected any one of his neighbours to spend a penny on his perishable stock.

"There's poor old Euclid!" said Mrs. Fell in a tone of pity, as if she were looking at one whose circumstances were as bad, if not worse, than her own.

The old man's baptismal name was Euclid, his surname Jones; but in the multitude of Joneses his surname had long been lost, and was almost forgotten. He was the son of a village schoolmaster in some quiet spot in Wales, who had called his only child Euclid, with a vague and distant hope of seeing him some day a distinguished mathematical scholar. But the schoolmaster and his wife had both died before little Euclid had fairly mastered the alphabet, and from that time he had lived among the neighbours, now with one and now with another, passing from cottage to cottage, until he was old enough to scare crows and tend pigs. Little learning did Euclid get at these early employments. In course of time he drifted up to London, where he worked on the roads till he was disabled by an accident. He had married a wife, who bore him eight children, born and bred under every chance against health and life, and dying, all but one, just as they grew old enough to do something for themselves, after they had tested their father's love and endurance to the utmost. His wife was dead also. He had buried them all in their own coffins, unassisted by the parish, a remembrance which stirred up his downcast heart with a feeling honest pride whenever it crossed his brain. Life had brought to Euclid an enigma to

solve, stiffer and more intricate than the most abstruse mathematical problem, how to keep himself and his off the parish during life and how to get buried, when all was over, without the same dreaded and degrading aid. The problem was but partially solved yet; there still remained his youngest child and himself to die and be buried.

Euclid turned in at the same door as that to which Mrs. Fell was painfully creeping. He lived in the one attic of the house, having the advantage over Mrs. Fell in more light and fresher air, and in the quietness of a story to himself; but he possessed few other advantages. His household goods were as poor as hers had been before all that was worth pawning had gone to the pawn-shop. There was a bed on the floor close by the handful of fire, and Euclid's first glance fell upon it; but it was empty, for a sickly-looking girl of eighteen was sitting on a broken chair before the fire, cowering over it with outstretched hands. She had wrapped herself in an old shawl, and was holding it tightly about her, as though she felt the chill of the November evening; but she smiled brightly when the old man's wrinkled face and dim eyes met her gaze, as he stood in the doorway an instant, looking anxiously and sadly at her.

"Come in, daddy, and shut the door," she said cheerfully. "I'm not bad to-day; but you're late,—later than ever. It's gone six, and I thought you would never, never come."

"Folks did not care to buy creases this cold day," he answered, his husky voice striving to soften itself into tenderness; "but, Victoria, my dear, you've not waited tea for me?"

"I should think I have," she said, rising from the only chair, and compelling him with all her little strength to sit down on it, while she took an old box for her seat. "I couldn't relish the best o' tea alone at this time o' night, and you in the streets, daddy. So we'll have it at once; for it's been made, oh! hours ago,—at least, it's near an hour by the clock. That clock's real company to me, father," she added, looking proudly at a little loud-ticking clock against the wall, which seemed the best and busiest thing in the bare room.

"I ain't got no 'erring for you, Victoria," he said regretfully, "nor nothing else for a relish, nothing save a few creases, and they'd be too cold for your stomach, my dear. If you feel set on anything, I'll take a penny or two from our little store, you know. It's all quite safe; isn't it, my dear?"

"Yes, yes," she answered, a shadow flitting across her face for a moment; "you needn't never be afeard of that not being safe. I'm not set on anything, daddy."

"How much is it now, Victoria?" he inquired, his eyes glistening a little as he listened eagerly to her reply.

"It's two pound, sixteen shilling and ninepence three farthings," she answered without hesitation. "I take good care of it."

"I think we shall do it, Victoria," he said, with an air of satisfaction; "and after that, my dear, there will be nobody but me; and I'm not afeard but I'll save enough for that. No, no; I shouldn't like any on us to die like a scamp upon the parish, and be buried in a parish coffin."

Victoria had been reaching down the two cracked cups and the loaf of bread from a corner cupboard; and now she stood for a moment looking wistfully into the fire, her pale, thin face flushed a little into almost delicate beauty. Under the pillow on which she rested her head every night, and on which it lay many a long hour of the wearyful day, there was always hidden a precious little store of money, slowly accumulating by a few pence at a time,—the fund that was to pay for her own coffin, and the other costs of her own poor funeral. She had made a shroud of coarse calico for herself, and kept it carefully ready against the time it would be needed.

There was no question in her mind, or her father's, that this fund would be needed probably before the next summer came. Her doctor, who was a druggist living in the next street, assured her that good living and better clothing and warmer lodging were all she needed; but he might as well have ordered her to the south of France for the winter. It was Euclid's chief anxiety now that the sum should grow as fast as possible, lest an unusually severe winter might hasten on the necessity for it. And to Victoria it was a matter of as much interest and care as to him, so often did she reckon up the cost of a coffin and a grave, and count over the money provided to procure them for her. She thought of it again as she stood looking into the fire, and saw as vividly and fleetly as a flash of lightning her own funeral passing down the narrow, common staircase, the children trooping after it, but only her old and weeping father following as mourner. She stooped down, and kissed him, as if to comfort him beforehand for the grief that was to come.

"Is anythink ailm' you, Victoria?" he inquired in as gentle a tone as he could lower his voice to.

"Nothin' fresh, daddy," she answered; "only you'll be lonesome when I'm gone."

"Ay, ay," said Euclid. "It'll be a dark shop without you, my dear."

He said no more, but sat slowly rubbing his legs up and down before the fire, while his memory travelled back over the twenty-five years that had passed since he was a strong man, able and willing to work hard and to live hard for the sake of his wife and children. Victoria saw him counting his children on his fingers, as he huskily muttered their names. He seemed to see them all, his boys and girls, who were gone out of this troublesome world down into the dark secret of the grave; they were all living in his memory, and his wife, too, who had trodden the same strange yet familiar road eighteen years ago. He had buried them all, and had never once taken a penny from the parish. His withered face lit up as the thought crossed his mind.

"Victoria," he said, as if this recollection had reminded him of Mrs. Fell, "there's a mort o' trouble downstairs in the ground-floor back. There's Mrs. Fell as bad off or worse than us, though she do take parish pay. There's no luck in parish money, I know; but she's dead beat, I s'pose. I saw her comin' back from the pawn-shop, and she looked like death. There's her boy David away, and nobody knows where he's gone to, and she's almost heart-broke. I took the liberty o' noticin', and there's not a scrap o' fire in their room. So, Victoria, my dear, if you didn't mind it, we might ask her up here a bit when we've done our tea. There's not enough for all, or we'd ask her to come up for her tea. But she's got no fire, and we have; and four of us will be warmer than two, if you didn't mind it."

"Mind it, daddy?" repeated Victoria. "I'd be right glad if she'll come."

Many a time had Victoria glanced longingly into Mrs. Fell's room as she passed the door, and wished she would call out, and invite her in. But Mrs. Fell had felt herself in a superior position to Euclid,—a laundress being surely of a higher social standing than a watercress-seller, to say nothing of living on the ground-floor instead of the attic,—and she had taken but little notice of Euclid's girl amid the constantly changing members who inhabited the house. Bess was better known to Victoria; and David had many a time shown himself friendly, and run errands for her when she was too poorly to go out herself. To-night she could not swallow a morsel after her father's suggestion. As soon as tea was over, and the cups and teapot put away, and every token of their poor meal, Euclid went downstairs to carry his invitation in person, whilst Victoria arranged an empty box or two to serve as seats about the fire, upon which she put another tiny shovel of coals. Her colour came and went fitfully as she heard Mrs. Fell's slow footstep mounting the steps leading to their attic, followed by her father and Bess; and she received them shyly, but gladly, at the door.

"It's very kind on you and Euclid, I'm sure," panted Mrs. Fell, with the ghost of a smile on her face, "and I take it neighbourly; and if there's any thing as me and Bess can do—"

"Please come and sit down in the chair," said Victoria, interrupting her easily; for she was still struggling for breath. She was soon seated in the chair, which was placed in front of the fire; whilst Euclid sat on one side on an old box, with Bess and Victoria opposite on another. The flickering flame of the small fire shone upon their faces, and was the only light by which they saw each other. But in a few minutes they almost like old friends.

"She's the last I've got," said old Euclid to Mrs. Fell, nodding at Victoria, who was talking to Bess. "Her mother died when she were born eighteen years ago. She were too weak to get the better on it, and she had to go. I'd five little children when she died. Victoria's got her complaint," he went on in a lower tone, "and she's the last out o' eight on them. Boys and gals, they're all gone afore me."

"It's His will as knows best, Mr. Euclid," said Mrs. Fell, with a heavy sigh.

"I s'pose it is," replied Euclid. "I hope he knows; for I'm sure I don't. I've had no time for thinkin' of nothink but how to keep off the parish. Not as I'd say a word agen a woman takin' parish pay, a poor weakly woman like you. But it 'ud be a sore disgrace for a man to come on the parish even for his buryin'."

Mrs. Fell sighed again, and sat looking into the red embers of the fire sadly, as if she was seeing again the bright days of her married life.

"I never lost nobody, save my poor David,—my husband, I mean," she said; "and by good luck he were in a buryin' club, and they gave him a very good funeral,—a hearse, and a mournin'-coach for me and the two children, and plumes! But there'll be nobody save the parish to bury me; for Bess is only a child and David's gone."

"Where's he gone to?" asked Victoria.

"He went out upon a little journey nigh upon a month ago," she answered; "and we've never

heard a word of him since he said 'Good-bye; mother.' He's never come back again. Some think's happened to him. I know; for he's always that good to me and Bess, you couldn't think! I'm frettin' after him all the while more than I can tell: it's wastin' me away. But it's God's will, as good folks say; and there's none on us as can fight agen him."

"And Bess says you've been forced to part wi' your weddin' ring," Victoria replied, with a shy look of sympathy.

The tears welled up into Mrs. Fell's eyes, and Bess bowed her head in shame. For the first evening in her life, when she had no work to do, the poor woman felt that her finger had lost its precious sign of her married life. She might almost as well have been an unmarried woman,—one of those wretched creatures on whom she had almost looked down with honest pride and a little hardness. She laid her right hand over her undecorated finger, and looked back into Victoria's sympathizing face with an expression of bitter grief.

"I'll work till I drop to get it back," cried Bess, with energy.

"I wish my-anissis were alive now," said Euclid. "I'm always a-wishin' it; but she were a good woman, and she knew summat more about God than most folks, and about Him who died for us. I never was a scholar; but she could read, ay, splendid! and she knew a mort o' things. She taught me a lot, and I remembered them long enough to teach Victoria some of 'em. Victoria, my dear, there's them verses as was your mother's favourites,—them as I taught you when you was little. I've forgot 'em myself, Mrs. Fell; but she's got them all right and straight in her head, and she says them back to me now my memory's gone. Sometimes I think it's her mother a sayin' of 'em. 'The Lord,' you know, my dear."

Victoria's face flushed again, and her voice trembled a little as she began to speak, whilst Bess fastened her dark eyes eagerly upon her; and Euclid and Mrs. Fell, with their careworn and withered faces turned straight to the fire, nodded their heads at the close of each verse, as if uttering a silent "Amen."

"The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.  
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.  
 He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over.  
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

(To be continued.)

THE LAST READING.

In one of the coal mines in England a youth about fifteen years of age was working by the side of his father, who was a pious man and governed and educated his family according to the word of God.

Father and son worked together in a newly-opened section of the mine. One day the father had just stepped aside to procure a tool, when the arch above suddenly fell between them, so that the father supposed his son to be crushed. He ran toward the place and called to his son:

"My son, are you living?"

"Yes, father, but my legs are under a rock."

"Where is your lamp, my son?"

"It is still burning, father."

"What are you doing, my dear son?"

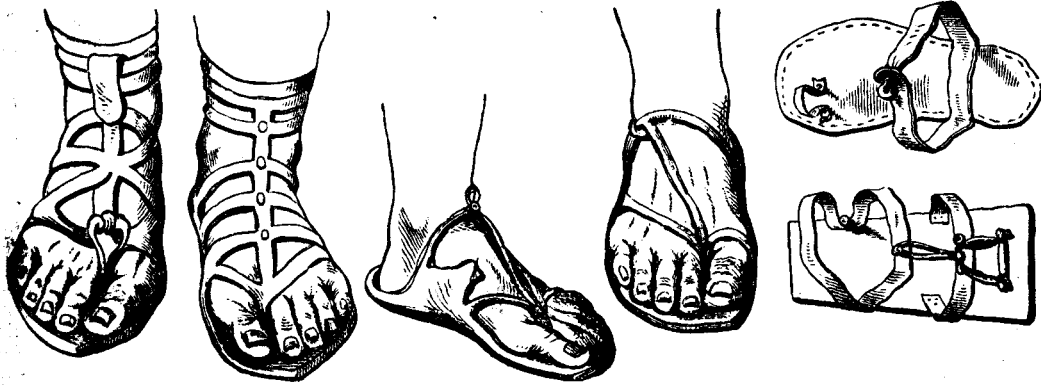
"I am reading my Bible, father, and the Lord strengthens me."

These were the last words of that Sabbath-school scholar before he was suffocated.

A GERMAN TRICK.

GERMAN children are said to be more "slow" than those of other civilized nations, but they frequently reach the mark as soon as their more rapid brothers. The following is a German idea. Try it.

Cut a strip of paper two by fifteen inches. Draw a line on both sides along the exact middle. In order to distinguish between the two sides, indicate one line by dots, the other by dashes. Paste the ends of the paper together so that the centre line will be continuous, but join the dotted line to the line of the dashes. This will give a twist to the ring. With a pair of scissors carefully cut through the middle line all the way round the ring. How many rings there will then be you will see for yourself.



SANDALS. THE SHOES WORN IN BIBLE LANDS.

## SANDALS.

A SANDAL was the article ordinarily used by the Hebrews for protecting the feet. It consisted simply of a sole attached to the foot by thongs. We have express notice of the thong (Authorized Version, "Shoe-latchet" in several passages, notably Gen. 14. 23; Isa. 5. 27; Mark 1. 7. Sandals were worn by all classes of society in Palestine—even by the very poor; and both the sandal and the thong, or shoe-latchet, were so cheap and common that they passed into a proverb for the most insignificant thing (Gen. 14. 23; Eccles. 46. 19). They were dispensed with in-doors, and were only put on by persons about to undertake some business away from their homes. During meal times the feet were uncovered (Luke 7. 38; Exod. 3. 5; Josh. 5. 30). It was also an indication of violent emotion, or of mourning, if a person appeared barefoot in public (2 Sam. 15. 30). To carry or to remove a person's sandal was a menial office, betokening great inferiority on the part of the person performing it (Matt. 3. 11).

## LESSON NOTES.

## FIRST QUARTER.

B.C. 1921.] LESSON V. [Feb. 4.  
BEGINNING OF THE HEBREW NATION.  
Gen. 12. 1-9. Memory verses, 1-3.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.—Gen. 12. 2.

## OUTLINE.

1. God's Call, v. 1-3.
2. Abraham's Faith, v. 4-9.

TIME.—B. C. 1921. Population widely spread.

PLACES.—Haran, Land of Canaan, Sichem, Plain (or Oak) of Moreh, Beth-el, Hai.

## CONNECTING LINKS.

1. The descendants of Noah (Gen. 9. 18-10. 32.)
2. The building of the tower of Babel at Babylon (Gen. 11. 1-9).
3. The dispersion (Gen. 10. 1-32).
4. The ancestry and birth of Abram (Gen. 11. 10-32).

## EXPLANATIONS.

"The Lord had said"—The method of giving revelation in these early times we cannot tell. "Thou shalt be a blessing"—A cause of blessing to others besides himself. "All families of the earth"—We know, what Abram could not, that these promises referred to Jesus, the world's greatest blessing. "Departed out of Haran"—They probably had passed there on account of Terah's age and infirmity. "Their substance"—Their property in flocks of sheep and goats, camels, and herds of cattle. "The souls they had gotten"—Their children and servants. "The Lord appeared"—This is the first recorded distinct appearance of God to man. "Canaan"—Southwest of Haran. "Moreh"—Properly, the oak of Moreh. "Canaanite"—Already this land was "possessed." "He removed"—Literally, he pulled up his tent pins. This shows the kind of life they were leading.

## PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. Learn from this lesson that it is better to follow God's call than to dwell in the midst of plenty and power.
2. That it is better to go not knowing where God leads than to walk the surest path human knowledge marks out.
3. That God's promise is better than the world's best performance.

## THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. For what purpose was Abram called? "To serve God in a strange land."
2. What

was God's promise to Abram in the Golden Text? "I will," etc. 3. To what place did Abram and his family first journey at God's call? "To Haran in Mesopotamia." 4. To what place did he go after his father died? "To the land of Canaan." 5. In what should we try to be like Abram? "In trusting God's care."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The foreknowledge of God.

## CATECHISM QUESTION.

How do you describe that exaltation?

It was his victory over death; his rising again on the third day; his ascending into heaven and receiving power to send down the gift of the Holy Spirit; his sitting at the right hand of God the Father; and his appointment to judge the world at the last day.

## JUNIOR LEAGUE.

## DEPARTMENT OF SPIRITUAL WORK—HEART.

Under this department should be held a Junior Epworth League prayer-meeting, in which the members should take some part beside singing. Prayer and personal testimony are to be encouraged. Responsive reading from the Bible, the recital of the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed can be used in introductory and closing exercises. In some churches it has been found advisable to hold separate meetings for boys, and one for girls, with different leaders, at the same or different hours. In nearly every case, however, it will be found best for boys and girls to meet together.

The Sabbath day is the most fitting time to hold this service. In churches where Sunday-school is held in the morning before public service the devotional meeting can be held in the afternoon, or vice versa.

Many churches hold this meeting in the evening, just before the Epworth League prayer-meeting. We have seen forty-five boys and girls march out of their own meeting into the opening exercises of the Epworth League, take part in the singing and Scripture reading, giving to the meeting a new interest. Some do not encourage the Juniors to stay to the Senior meeting; of course it will not be unduly urged, nor yet restrained. In another church the devotional meeting is held on Wednesday night, an hour before the regular church prayer-meeting.

"The boys and girls for Jesus," should be the watchword of this department. Our little brothers and sisters have a Christian experience; their little trials and temptations are just as real to them and as serious in their effect upon character as our greater cares.

The same evangelistic methods may be used among children as among adults. The raising of the hand for prayer, standing up for Jesus, asking for prayers, signing covenant cards, and other exercises designed to commit them to the Lord and his work may reasonably be used.

Encourage the children to witness for the Lord.

"Though you cannot speak like angels,  
Though you cannot preach like Paul,  
You can tell the love of Jesus,  
You can say, 'He died for all.'"

"Though you cannot rouse the sinner  
With the judgment's dread alarms,  
You can lead the little children  
Safe to Jesus' loving arms."

In a certain devotional meeting we know of, the leader, with profit and delight, uses lessons from Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Another uses the book, "Talks to Boys and Girls About Jesus." Subjects can be announced in advance, as in the Epworth League, such as, "The Mother of Jesus," "The Birth of Jesus," "Boyhood of Jesus," "Jesus Bringing Dead Children to Life," "The Child in the Midst," "The Children's Church," etc. The work of this department is of the first

importance. If only one department can be worked let it be this one. Use the very best talent in the church for edifying and instructing the children. The spiritual is the basis for all successful work in the church. A pure and worthy character is the objective point of Junior League work, and must never be lost sight of.

As many other departments of work as may be taken up must be made to contribute to the success of this work. Knowledge, sociability, sympathy, and enthusiasm gained in other departments will all add to the interest and success of the prayer-meeting hour.

How it makes the heart glad with anticipation to think of the day drawing nigh when every vein of our church work will throb with life and energy through the fulfilment of the promise "to you and to your children forever!"

The Epworth League movement has its eye open on the near future. Bishop Vincent has eloquently brought out this word-picture. Look at it:

"The Church of to-morrow is here. It is singing at our doors; it is climbing upon the high chairs in our houses; its voice is heard throughout our land. The streets of the city are full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Look at these representatives of the Church of the twentieth century! There are the bishops and elders of twenty years hence; there are the deacons and the stewards, the trustees and the teachers; and there are the rank and file!"

It will add greatly to the interest of the League to publish a Topic Card, giving the name of the League, name of the church, motto, object, officers, departments of work, and prayer-meeting topics for at least six months in advance. The boys and girls will prize these cards highly; they will advertise the League and assist the superintendent of the League in preparing for the meetings.

## FROM FATHER TO SON.

A FEW months ago I was present in Dr. Garnier's consulting room, says a writer in the *London Fortnightly Review*, watching the prisoners from the depot filing past. We were informed that a child had been brought by its parents to be examined. These people were shown in; they belonged to the respectable working class, and were quiet and well-mannered. The man was the driver of a dray belonging to one of the railway stations, and had all the appearance of a stalwart working man. The boy was only six years old; he had an intelligent, rather pretty face, and was neatly dressed.

"See here, Monsieur le Docteur," said the father, "we have brought you our boy; he alarms us. He is no fool; he begins to read; they are satisfied with him at his school, but we cannot help thinking he must be insane, for he wants to murder his little brother, a child two years old. The other day he nearly succeeded in doing so. I arrived just in time to snatch my razor from his hands."

The boy stood listening with indifference and without hanging his head. The doctor drew the child kindly towards him and inquired:

"Is it true that you want to hurt your little brother?"

With perfect composure the little boy replied:

"I will kill him—yes, yes, I will kill him?"

The doctor glanced at the father, and asked in a low voice:

"Do you drink?"

His wife exclaimed indignantly:

"He, sir! Why, he never enters a public house, and has never come home drunk."

They were quite sincere. Nevertheless the doctor said:

"Stretch out your arm."

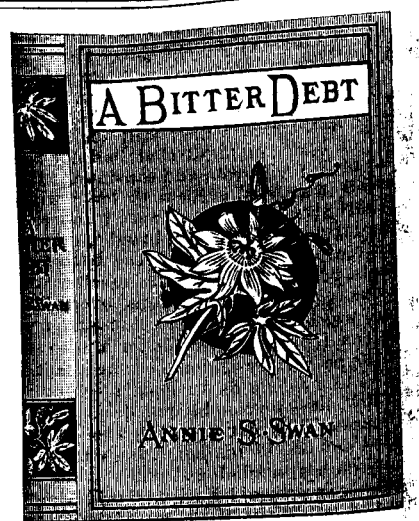
The man obeyed; his hand trembled. Had these people told lies, then, in stating that the man had never come home the worse for drink? No; but all through the day, wherever he had called to leave a package, the people had given him something to drink for his trouble. He had become a drunkard without knowing it; and the poison that had entered his blood was at that moment filling the head of that little child with the dreams of an assassin.

## A SURE WINNER.

THERE is such a difference in boys, and men, too, for that matter. We know a boy who seems to consider it a grievous calamity that he has to work. He takes no special interest in his employer's business. He grumbles when it is time to begin work in the morning, can hardly keep his eye off the clock during the day, and hails six o'clock with joy, as it were the hour of deliverance from some awful imprisonment. A writer in the *Christian Union* tells of a boy of another sort:

"As I write a coal-cart has driven up to the house opposite in charge of a boy perhaps seventeen years old. On the sidewalk a man with gray hair was leaning on his shovel, waiting for the coal to be dumped. The boy backed his cart, went in to have the ticket of delivery signed, hurried out, and drew the pins from the back-board of the cart. He tugged and pulled to dump the cart, at last being assisted by the older man, who did not exert any degree of strength in his effort. At last the cart was dumped, and the man began to shovel the coal. While waiting for the man to get the coal out of the way so that the balance of the coal would run out on the sidewalk, the boy drew from the pocket of his coat a woollen cloth and began to polish and rub the heavy harness on the horse. On the blinders were some ornaments of brass, and for this he used polish that he evidently kept for the purpose. He braided the horse's mane, after combing it with his fingers, and straightened and arranged the harness with evident pride and enjoyment. As I watched I thought, 'I do not believe that boy will shovel coal when his head is gray. He uses his time to the advantage of his employer and the improvement of his employer's property. Somebody who needs service that demands devotion and industry will find this boy out and give him employment that his character fits him for.'"

When the horse was driven away he held his head up and stepped off as if he knew his personal appearance had been greatly improved. The young driver looked at him critically, as if his standard had not been reached.



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