

Poetry.

THE "PEARL OF GREAT PRICE."

BY KATE E. HAYES.

There is a precious jewel,
As costly as life's rare,
Which every child may covet,
And every child may wear.

'Tis not the flashing diamond
That sparkles like a star;
Nor emerald, nor ruby,
Oft brought from mines afar.

'Tis coarser far than any
Precious stone that gold can buy;
For it cost the blood of Jesus,
Who left his home on high.

Yes, left his home in Heaven,
Far, far beyond the skies,
And came to earth to give us
This pearl of greatest price.

Then, children, pray the Saviour
To give this pearl to you;
Be not afraid to ask Him,
For He has bid you to.

And, when God's angel calls you
To tread on Death's dark shore,
No wave shall dim its lustre—
'Twill shine for evermore!

—Exchange.

Miscellaneous.

STORY OF THE WORLD.

BY OLIVE THORNE.

"I've been to the museum!" shouted Frank Drury, the minute he got into the house.

"Why didn't you bring some home to me, Frankie?" asked baby Nell, from the floor where she sat dressing her doll.

"A pretty thing I'd have, goosey, bringing it home to you. Why, there were animals there, or bones of animals, bigger'n this room!"

"Why, Frankie?" said Nell.

"Father," said Frank, turning to Mr. Drury, who had just come in, "do you believe those big skeletons were really live animals on the earth?"

"What else can I believe?" asked Mr. Drury, smiling, "when the bones are all there, and they are bones, and not the work of man?"

"I don't know," said Frank; "but they are such horrid creatures, and so big. I can hardly believe they were really alive. I'm glad I didn't live in the days when they flourished."

"No man lived in those days my son."

"Why? Father? how do you know?"

"Because no bones of human beings are found. This world has had a strange and wonderful history, and men are just learning to read it as it is written in rocks and mountains."

"I don't see how histories can be written in rocks," said Frank with a puzzled look.

"That's because you are not a geologist," answered Mr. Drury.

"What is a geologist, father?"

"It is a man who makes it his business to examine and study rocks and mountains, and try to learn how and when the earth was made."

"Oh, father, can they find out how the earth was made?" asked Frank eagerly.

"There are many suggestions and suppositions on the subject; or, to speak more correctly, there have been many theories about it, but I believe they are pretty well agreed now on the main points."

"What are they agreed on, father?"

"The first point on which most of them agree is, that the centre of the earth is a mass of liquid fire."

"I don't believe it," said Frank, stoutly.

"Why don't you believe it, my son?" asked Mr. Drury. "Because you have reason to know, or merely because you don't like the idea?"

Frank blushed. "I suppose it's because I don't like the idea."

"Well, men who have studied it all their lives do believe it. I will tell you some of their reasons, if you would like to hear."

"I would—very much."

"One reason is, that the deeper you get into the ground the warmer it is."

"Why? Is it?"

"Yes. If you'd ever been down a deep mine you would know. Another is, that Artesian wells—do you know what they are?"

"Oh, yes! there's one in the Park. I saw them bore it, and it's ever so many hundred feet deep. It spouts up the water all the time."

"Well, deeper Artesian wells always throw up warm water—the deeper the well, the warmer the water. Another reason is, the hot springs in the world, such as the Geysers in Iceland."

"Oh, yes! I've read about them in my geography."

"But the best and strongest proof is the existence of volcanoes which throw up liquid lava, fire, and heated gases."

"Don't you think there's any danger of its burning the world up?" asked Frank a little anxiously, for this was a new and very uncomfortable idea to him.

"Oh, no! it is supposed to be constantly cooling and getting solid."

"How far down is it to the fire?" asked Frank.

"It is supposed to be thirty miles—a mere crust."

"That's a pretty good crust, I should think," said Frank, laughing.

"In proportion to the thickness or diameter of the earth, this crust is as thick as the skin of an apple, compared to the size of the apple."

Frank grew sober again, and Mr. Drury went on: "It is supposed, by those who know the most about it, that this earth was once a huge burning body. All the rocks and everything were melted up together in one fiery mass. But it was all the time flying through space at a fearful rate, and, of course it naturally got cooler as time went on. From being a vast body of vapor, it first became a liquid, hot and boiling; then, as it still whirled through the cold space, it became thicker and more pasty; and finally it began to crust over."

Frank drew a long breath, as though he was glad to get to land again.

"This crust, though solid, could not, of course, resist the boiling and heaving of the red-hot mass within it. And it must have been something too awful to imagine, the pitching and tossing of the solid crust, the dreadful crackings and burnings, when it was forced to give way, and the red-hot matter rushing out and cooling on the surface. That would have a hell, you see."

"And mountains, too, father?"

"They were formed thus: as the earth cooled, it grew smaller."

"Why, father?"

"Because nearly all substances do so. Of course then, as the part under the crust cooled more, the crust would be too big for it; that would cause the crust to crack and break, forming chains of mountains and ravines. In some places the burning mass would burst a hole through the crust and pour out a quantity of the fluid, that would get cool and thus form a single mountain. In some mountains they can trace three such eruptions."

"What happened next?" asked Frank, breathlessly.

"All this time the earth was supposed to be surrounded by a mass of vapor, but as the crust became cooler the vapor began to turn into water, and of course it fell on the earth in rain."

"That would cool it more, wouldn't it?"

"It would after a while, but at first the rain itself was hot, with terrific thunder and lightning. So much rain fell that at last it filled up the hollows in the crust, and finally it covered the whole earth, a hot, muddy sea."

"It must have been a nice place to live," said Frank.

"Nothing could live for an instant on such a globe," said Mr. Drury. "But it was getting cooler, and the constant rains were purifying the air all the time. Finally, after ages of such coolness—as soon, in fact, as the world was cool enough—plants and animals began to appear."

"How do you know that, father?"

"They find remains of them in the rocks. The animals were the lowest order of sea animals, and the plants had neither leaves nor flowers at first. But they soon grew to immense forests, in the warm, damp soil, and those plants are the source of our coal. Coal is formed by the partial decay of plants."

"Why? Is it, father?"

"Yes, and it has been made in our day as an experiment, by a Frenchman, to prove how it was made."

"Did he make real coal, father?"

"He made something enough like it to prove his point. He had an apparatus where he could place wood and plants so as to keep them very hot, and under strong pressure, and that was all."

"It is funny to think we are burning up forests which grew before men were made," said Frank.

"Yes, we are both warmed and lighted—when we use gas—by the vegetation of the most remote ages of the world. And another singular thing is, that this wonderful store of coal is found all over the world—in the cold as well as the warm climates—proving that in those days it was as warm up at the north pole as it is now at the equator, for it was only in a warm, moist climate, that such vegetation would grow. Ferns—such as we see a few to-day or two—grew to enormous trees. Another class of plants, which we call mosses, grew at that time to trees ninety feet high."

"Were there no animals, father?"

"Animals now began to appear, and such frightful-looking animals! One is almost afraid of their skeletons. Think of a lizard thirty feet long, with a head like a snake. Or a sort of whale, with a neck like a long snake. Or, worse still, a flying monster, which you might call a dragon—for you never could pronounce his scientific name—more than twice as large as the largest birds now known."

"I'm glad I didn't live in those days."

"There wouldn't be much pleasure in living in the neighborhood of such animals, I think, nor with the pretty creature called the *labyrinthodon*."

"Nice name, anyhow."

"It is as graceful as he was. He was about nine feet long, and over three feet high, a fearful creature. One of the most horrible was discovered by a little girl in England, about sixty years ago."

"Tell me about it, please."

"She got her living by breaking up pieces of rocks to find fossils of small animals. One day, when she was hunting about as usual, she saw some bones sticking out. She soon saw it was part of a large animal, and she tried to dig it out. It was thirty feet long, with eyes larger than a man's head and a delightful little mouth containing one hundred and sixty teeth. This beauty now reposes in the British Museum, where I saw him—her bones."

"Ugh! I don't want to see him," said Frank.

"After these creatures disappeared things began to look as we know them. Birds came, and with them flowers. Animals, such as we know, began to flourish. And at last, when all was ready, came man."

"But, father, the Bible says the world was made in six days."

"I know it does in the translation. It means six periods; but instead of six days, each one consisted of ages. When geologists first began to talk about the earth being so old, some people were terribly alarmed lest the Bible record should be proved untrue. They seemed to fear that the Creator had written a different history in the rocks from that in His inspired Word. But the more that Word and the rocks are studied, the better they agree and explain each other."

"Geology must be an interesting study, father."

"It is very interesting. Not only to know the history of the earth, before men lived on it, but to trace out the history of men, from their savage and half-wild state, to civilization—to see how little by little they progressed in knowledge and the arts—how they made use of copper, and wood, and at last iron—how they lived in caves, then huts, and finally houses with all modern improvements—how, from living on wild fruits and raw flesh, they came to scour earth, air, and sea to supply their tables, and from wearing skins to cover them down to the products of the tailor's skill."

"Some people wear skins and live in huts now, don't they, father?"

"Yes; I don't know but races could be found in the world exhibiting every state of progress, from savage to most enlightened."

"There are plenty of savages, anyway," said Frank.

"When men first began to find the bones of these enormous animals I have been telling you about, they thought some of them were human bones, and that's where the stories of giants originated. Bones that ignorant people called human turned out to belong to animals."

"Then there never were any giants, father?"

"Never, so far as we know."

"Nor fairies—of course."

"Nor fairies, as you say."

"Then," said Frank with a half serious face, "I shall never enjoy the old story books again."

"You're old enough to enjoy other things," said Mr. Drury, just as the tea bell rang.—The Interior.

USEFUL ADVICE TO BOYS.

To throw stones. Fold each one carefully in a feather bed, and give good notice to all in the neighborhood when you are going to pitch.

To carry gunpowder in the pocket. Soak it well in cold water, then wrap it up in a cover of oiled silk.

To slide down the banisters. Let a surgeon sit upon the lowest stair. Also carry a painful poultice in each of your hands, as you may need it.

To get rid of studying your lessons. Eat a hot mince pie every night for one week, before going to bed.

To cure creaky boots. Wear them always in going to the cake pantry.

To be polite to sisters. Get their big brother to introduce you to them.—*Heath and Home.*

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