

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

TORONTO, MAY 2, 1896.

[No. 18.]

Vol. XVI.]

HOW THE BOYS CAUGHT THE DEACON, AND HOW THE DEACON CAUGHT THE BOYS.

Joe and Pete were two boys who lived in the village, and we are sorry to say, did not have a very good example set before them at home. Their fathers made it their business, as they called it, to show up the inconsistencies of professing Christians, and of course the boys grew up very much like their fathers.

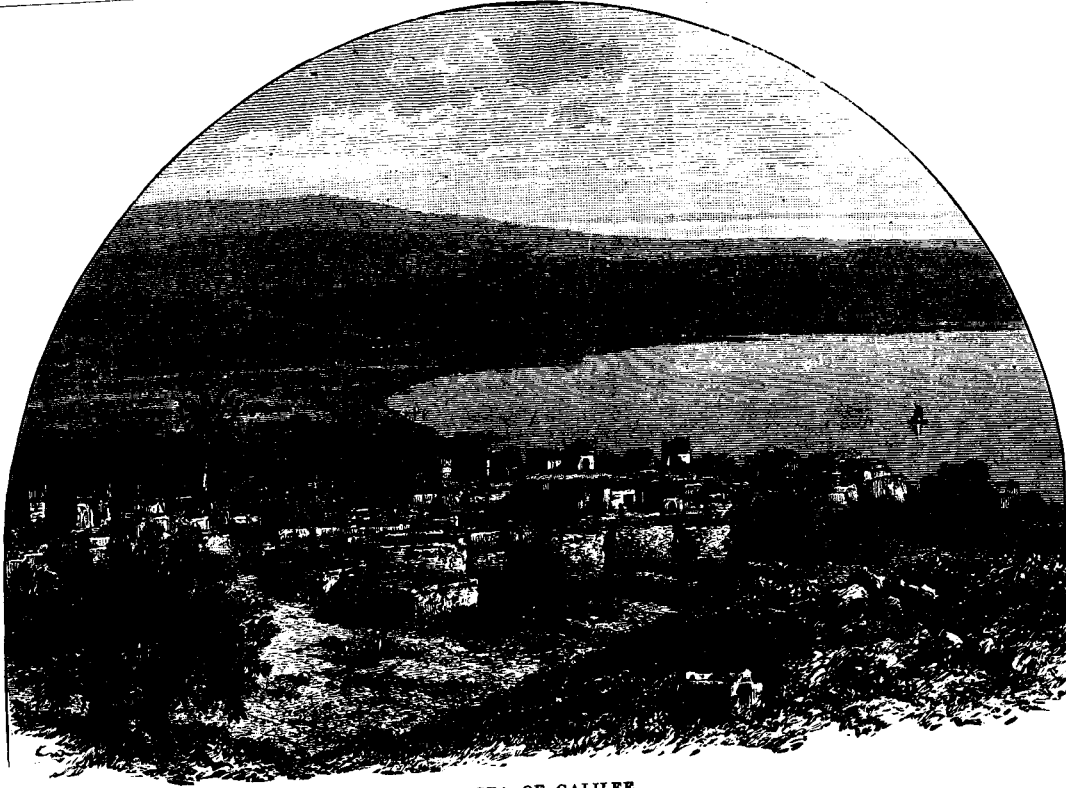
One spring day Joe and Pete met in the village store, and Joe seemed quite elated as he began to tell his companion how he had found out how inconsistent Deacon Lawson was, after all his lecturing and speaking to the boys about the evils of tobacco, whiskey and beer.

"Pete," began Joe, "do you know I was in here the other day when the deacon's little girl came in and bought 25 cents' worth of chewing tobacco, of the strongest kind."

"Yes," answered Pete, "and I was in the deacon's room yesterday, and I saw a plug of tobacco lying on his desk with a piece cut out of it, just as if the deacon had been having a chew. Isn't it terrible that a man will say so much against folks using tobacco, and then go and use it himself on the sly?"

All unknown to the boys the deacon had come into the store, and had heard the boys speak. He rose up and confronted the boys with a pleasant smile on his face, as he sat down beside them and answered, "Yes, it is quite true that I sent for 25 cents' worth of chewing tobacco, and it is quite true that Pete saw a part of a plug on my desk in my house. Boys, don't you know that I am a firm believer in the Bible, and that I try to follow its teachings as closely as I can, and it is plainly written in God's Word that, 'every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.'" (And there was a suspicion of a merry twinkle in the deacon's eye as he went on). "And is not tobacco a creature, or a creation of God, does he not send the rain and the sunshine to make the tobacco plant grow and mature, and every creature of God is good—for something. For let me tell you, boys, the great allwise Creator never made anything in vain. Everything is and was made by God for a purpose."

"Do you know, boys, that when my cattle are tied up in the stables all winter



THE SEA OF GALILEE.

and kept warm and comfortable, as I like to see my animals kept, that towards spring I generally see some of them begin to rub and scratch themselves unmercifully, and by this I am made aware of the presence of small insects on their skin. As I know that tobacco is a poison, and is 'good' to kill vermin, I send to the store and buy 25 cents' worth of it, and cut it up fine and make a decoction of it, which I use on the cows' and calves' backs, and they lie and chew their cud in peace. By this I prove that tobacco is a strong poison, and that it is 'good' for that purpose.

"But, boys, God never made the tobacco plant to grow in order that you might chew it and smoke it, and defile and destroy your manhood with the poisonous stuff. The use of tobacco, either by chewing or smoking, is a very dirty, demoralizing habit, and it very often creates an unnatural thirst that leads to drinking beer or whiskey. Some may ask you, Oh, what harm is there in having a smoke or a chew of tobacco, or in taking a glass of ale?"

"Boys, do you know that when my Master was asked silly questions, he often replied by asking his questioner another question, and I have found it a very safe rule to follow my blessed Master's example, and when people ask me this question: What harm is there in tobacco or liquor? I ask, What good is there? Tell me that first. All that you can say is, that they are good as poisons. Well, then, keep them for the purpose that they were made for."

"Of course you know, boys, that I grow barley, but I don't sell it to the brewer or distiller to manufacture poison to destroy men's bodies and souls with. No, I grind it up and feed it to my pigs, and it is 'good' for that purpose. Where do you find better or fatter pigs than those in my pen?"

"Then look at the money that is thrown away and wasted in tobacco and beer. If you save five cents a day, and deposit it every month in a savings bank, at the end of eight years you will receive

the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars. Quite a nice start in life, is it not? But if you spend the five cents a day on a cigar or on a glass of beer, what will you have to show for it at the end of eight years?"

"Listen, boys," (and by this time the deacon was on his feet standing before the boys with tears of love in his eyes), "you will have a weakened constitution and a depraved appetite, which nothing but the power of God can help you to overcome. Boys, Jesus Christ died to save you from the power of sin and its consequences, just as much as he died for me, and he loves you just as much as he loves me. Boys, it is much more pleasant to serve the Lord than to serve the devil. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. Sing with me,

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoners free,
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for me."
Ebenezer Villa.

EARTHWORMS.

The common earthworm, despised by man and heedlessly trodden under foot, fulfils a part in nature that would seem incredible but for the facts revealed by the patient and long-continued researches of Darwin. "Worms," says Darwin,

"have played a more important part in the history of the world than most persons would at first suppose." Let us follow Darwin, and see how this apparently insignificant creature has changed the face of nature. We will first consider the habits and mode of life of the earthworm. As every one knows, the worms live in burrows in the superficial layer of the ground. They can live anywhere in a layer of earth, provided it re-

tains moisture, dry air being fatal to them. They can, on the other hand, exist submerged in water for several months. They live chiefly in the superficial mould less than a foot below the surface, but in long-continued dry weather and in very cold seasons they may burrow to a depth of eight feet. The burrows are lined by a thin layer of earth, voided by the worms, and end in small chambers in which they can turn round.

The burrows are formed partly by pushing away the earth, but chiefly by the earth being swallowed. Large quantities of earth are swallowed by the worms for the sake of the decomposing vegetable matter contained in it, on which they feed. The earth thus swallowed is voided in spiral heaps, forming the worm castings. In this case the worm obtains food and at the same time excavates its burrows.

When it is stated that the number of worms in an acre of ordinary land suitable for them to live in is fifty-three thousand, we can imagine the great effect which they must have on the soil. They are, in fact, continually ploughing the land. At one part of the alimentary canal of the worm is a gizzard, or hard muscular organ, capable of grinding

food into fine particles; it is this gizzard which is the main factor in triturating the soil, and it is aided by small stones swallowed with the earth, which act as millstones.

The earth is thus continually passing through the mill formed by the gizzards of worms, and is reduced to fine mould. Thus all the mould covering a field passes every few years through the bodies of worms, and the same fragments are probably swallowed and brought to the surface many times over in the course of centuries. A layer of earth one-fifth of an inch thick, or ten tons by weight, has been calculated in many places to be brought annually to the surface per acre.

It is not difficult to understand how objects, such as stones, rocks, etc., lying on the surface, will in course of time become gradually buried in the ground. The worms, undermining the stones, bring up the earth to the surface, and so raise the ground round the edge of the stone, till the latter sinks and is eventually buried in the soil, provided the soil is suitable for worms to live in.

The sinking of the foundations of many old buildings is due to the action of worms, and no building is safe from this unless the foundations are laid lower than the level at which the worms can work, viz., about eight feet below the surface.

The earthworm is thus seen to be one



TOWN AND LAKE OF TIBERIAS.



RUINS OF THE WHITE SYNAGOGUE AT TELL HUM, CAPERNAUM.