

An Evening Prayer.

[This little poem was sent us by Mr. Cheesman, the President of the Endeavour Union, of Cleveland. The poem was written by a thirteen-year-old Junior, of the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, of Cleveland, and certainly that Junior will grow up to be a poet.—Ed.]

DEAR GOD, on bended knee
I send this prayer,
Through the night watch over me,
With all a Father's care.

On the morrow bless us all
With strength and "daily bread;"
Accept our work, however small,
Through Christ, as thou hast said.

I thank thee thou hast fed
And clothed us every one;
Through green pastures hast thou led,
And where still waters run.

Forgive each wicked deed
Or act I may have done;
Teach me to live, I plead,
Like Jesus Christ, thy Son.

Be with me in my sleep,
And from the time I wake
Temptations from me keep;
I ask for Jesus' sake.

—Golden Rule.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, APRIL 21, 1894.

CHAT WITH THE CHILDREN.

BY MATTIE H. HOWARD.

I WONDER how many of our little readers have seen a deer. It is a pretty animal, with its graceful form and branching antlers. When this country was new and the Indians lived here, there were many deer, but now they are almost extinct. In some countries, where it is cold, men enjoy going out hunting, and sometimes after hunting all day, bring in the deer on sleds over the snow. As they pass through the grand old forests the moon gives her pale light, and a pleasing picture might be made for you little boys who have never seen anything of the kind. No doubt these hunters will have a grand feast, for venison—the flesh of the deer—is considered a delicate meat, and much prized by those who are so fortunate as to obtain it.

King "Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and three score measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl." His dominion was great. He was the wisest and richest man, and entertained his subjects and guests highly. The deer, you see, was eaten at his table.

In the Book of Deuteronomy we find what the people of the Lord were allowed to eat. These are the beasts to be eaten: "The ox, the sheep, and the goat. The hart and the roebuck, and the fallow deer,

and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois. And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat." Among these animals we find several kinds of deer. The hart, the roebuck, the fallow deer, and the chamois, are all species of deer. The chamois is between a deer and a goat. It is taller than a common goat and swifter, but it is like a goat by living among the rocks and being able to climb steep, rocky places.

The deer becomes very tired and thirsty from running, hence David in one of the Psalms made a suitable simile: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks so panteth my soul after thee, O God." David had many trials and, no doubt, was often weary and thirsty for a refreshing of God's grace, like the tired hart pursued by its enemies, was thirsty for water.

There is a fable about a beautiful stag that, while drinking at a clear brook, saw its image reflected in the water. It admired its branching horns very much, but was not pleased with its slender legs. Very soon the dogs of the hunters were heard pursuing it. It would have escaped from the dogs, because its swift running could have saved it, but its beautiful antlers were caught in a thicket of low boughs, and the poor creature was held fast; so the dogs came upon it and killed it. Now, children, all fables have morals. I will not point out the moral to this, but will leave it to you thoughtful ones to think for yourselves; and I will digress from my subject, the deer, and tell you a story of a dear little ugly boy.

Once upon a time there was a man and a woman who had two sons, Philander and Reuben. Everybody called Phil such a pretty boy, but nobody ever spoke of Reuben's personal charms. At first this grieved little Reuben, but his parents, to console him, told him that "pretty is that pretty does," and that by being good and smart people would overlook his lack of personal beauty and esteem him at his true worth. This encouraged Reuben, so he forgot his ugly face and applied himself to learning useful lessons. On the other hand, Philander, being satisfied with himself, having received so much adulation, made no effort to improve. In the course of time Reuben became an intelligent and a useful man, and as his mind developed his countenance softened and he became better looking the older he grew; whereas his brother, having no intellectual gifts and losing with time his youth, became a very ugly old man. Now is this anything like the fable?

BOYS, DON'T SMOKE.

How often noble, manly boys form some habit that tends to weaken or even destroy a most praiseworthy character!

If you want your body healthy and vigorous, and your soul vigorous, don't be smokers, boys! No smoker can be a well man! You never saw one.

And as for boys just entering their teens and over, scientific investigation shows that "emasculatation" is often the terrible result, and there are many other ways in which the use of tobacco is shown in the systems of young persons. You say you try it just for fun; but let me tell you the cigarette habit is dwarfing the energies of thousands of young men all over the land, as well as boys. It will be no fun in the end.

You have a body and soul, and they are given to improve or ruin. You can put them under training that will make them stronger, better, happier, or you can suffer them to be made weak and miserable. Which is the best course?

You say to me: "Oh, you would cut off a fellow's fun!" Not a bit of it. I would have you able to enjoy every rational amusement in your life all the better.

One weakness of boys, strong in many other respects, is in choosing foolish companions, and then listening to their entreaties. Do you think that you can go out at night, come in when you please, have a "jolly spree," as you call it, and be none the worse for it? Never! That isn't manliness. Boys may aspire to be men without being manly, and they may be manly without being men.

I heard a boy, not long ago, say: "Father doesn't allow me to say, 'I

can't' in speaking of conquering bad habits." This is the true way men are made. Overcome temptation. Always say, "I can't" to a wrong influence. It is a glorious thing to do it, boys!

Don't think, as so many boys do, because your father smokes you must; that it is an evidence of manhood!

If you had seen, as I did, in one of our hospitals some months ago, a noble lad of seventeen years, the only son of his parents, with everything to make life desirable to live, dying a wretched death from smoking cigarettes, his pale, sad face,—for his blood had all turned to water—so suffering, as he said, "Oh, tell the boys, whenever you see them smoking, to let cigarettes alone. If I had done so, I should be well and happy to-day!" The doctor in attendance told me he had tried in vain to save the young life. "What a warning!" he said.

And this is not a solitary case. General Grant, whom you all know of, died of cancer, from the use of tobacco; Colfax from heart disease; while physicians say more than half the deaths by heart disease are from the same cause—tobacco smoking!

Do you know how many young men are set aside every year, by insurance companies, from tobacco heart-disease.

Did you ever see a man who wanted his boy to smoke, no matter how inveterate a smoker he was himself? On the other hand ask a boy whose father does not smoke, what he will do when he grows to be a man, he will quickly tell you, "His father didn't, and he won't!"

Why, do you know, boys, that the record of a court shows that out of 700 male convicts in a prison, 600 were there for crimes committed under the influence of liquor, and 500 of that 600 testified that the use of tobacco brought them to drink.

As we have said, few fathers among those who smoke would be willing to have their boys smoke. Yet who can expect a boy not to smoke if his father sets the example? Fathers would often themselves drop it if they had the moral courage. But they get so wedded to the vile stuff, that its infatuation holds them prisoners, in spite of dyspepsia, neuralgia, and all the troubles which it always brings.

With God alone is the power to withstand the temptation, boys.—*Lutheran Observer.*

In Prison and Out.

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER XVI.—TWICE IN JAIL.

FOR the second time—or, as the prison report registered it, for the third time—David Fell had been committed to jail for three months. David knew the prison report was wrong. More than this, he did not feel that his first offence had deserved so severe a penalty. Now, when he had been defending his mother's good name, and seeking the restoration of her property, his whole boyish nature rose rebelliously under a sense of cruel injustice.

He would do it again, he cried within himself; yes, if all the magistrates and policemen in the whole world were looking on. Why should his mother be cheated out of the only treasure she possessed? and how could he stand by, and hear her called what Mr. Quirk had called her? His mother was as good as any woman in London, and he was ready to fight anybody who gave her an ill name.

He was but a boy still. In many homes he would have been reckoned among the children, and his faults of temper would have been passed over, or leniently dealt with. He was in jail for a brave, rash action, which most men would have applauded in their own sons. Each time the trial that committed him to an imprisonment of three months had not occupied more than five minutes. Police-courts are busy places, with a constant pressure of affairs to be despatched; and a police-magistrate has not time to investigate the statements of boys who, nine times out of ten, are telling a lie in order to escape punishment. David had been caught red-handed in his transgression of the law; and the law, framed as it had been against wrong-doers, swept him, in its resistless current, into jail.

The prison was not the one from which he had just been released; but there was a mournful sameness to it. He did not feel like a stranger there. He had had one night free,—a night and a day with his dying mother; and now three more months stretched

before him. But this time he was sullen and moody, brooding over his injuries. There was no longer the hope to sustain him of learning a trade, by which he could maintain his mother and Bess. He felt sure his mother would be dead before this second term was over, and it would be best for little Bess to have nothing to do with a brother who had been twice in jail.

David became insolent and refractory. What did it matter if they put him into the black hole, where no single ray of light could enter? The darkness could not affright him; or, if it did, he would harden himself against it, as he hardened himself against every punishment or expostulation. He was honest and truthful; yet he was branded a thief and a liar. He was intensely ignorant; yet he was punished for actions which would have been applauded in a gentleman's son. He could not put his wretchedness into words; you might as well ask of him to paint on canvas a picture of his prison-cell. His tongue was dumb; but his memory and the passion of his heart were never silent. They were forever muttering to him in undertones of revenge and hatred and defiance.

David completed his fourteenth year in jail. The heavy-browed, sullen-faced boy, who was discharged from his second imprisonment in April, could hardly have been recognized as the lad who had gone out, ashamed though resolute, to beg for help the preceding October. He slouched along the sunny streets, under the blue sky, bright with glistening spring clouds; but he paid no heed to sunshine or cloud. In old times there had been the changes of the seasons even for him and little Bess in their squalid street; but they had no more power over his sullen mood. He sauntered on, not homewards (he knew too well there could be no home for him), but towards the old familiar place,—the only spot he knew well on earth, where, at least, he would find faces not altogether strange to him, if they were not the faces of friends, and where alone he could learn any tidings of Bess. But he did not hurry; there was no mother now to be hungry for a sight of him.

Still, when he reached the house, he went straight to the old door, and knocked. A stranger opened it, and looked suspiciously at him. There was no Mrs. Fell there. She had never heard of such a person. She had only come into the house three weeks ago, and she was too busy getting her own living to go gossiping among the neighbours. She slammed the door to in his face, and he heard her draw the bolt on the inside. He had not caught even a glimpse of the poor, dark room, which had once been his home.

"I'll go upstairs, and ask Victoria," said David to himself.

He mounted the stairs slowly and quietly, not with the buoyant step of an active and restless lad, but with the hesitating, listless tread of a culprit. He was ashamed of facing either Euclid or Victoria, and he was almost afraid that their door would be shut in his face. But when he reached the foot of the last staircase, leading only to their garret, he saw the door open, and he mounted more quickly.

Yes, the door was open,—propped open with a brick, to prevent it from banging to and fro on its hinges; but the garret was quite empty. There was no trace left of the former tenants, except the pictures which Victoria had pasted over the fireplace. All was gone,—the broken chair, the corner cupboard, the poor flock-bed from the floor, the black kettle, and little brown teapot; there was nothing left. David sat down in the corner where Victoria's bed had been, and his face in his hands. If there had been a faint hope left in his heart of finding friends and a refuge here, the glimmer of it died away into utter darkness. He was absolutely alone in the world which had been so cruel to him.

It is possible that he fell asleep for very sorrow; but after a long while, as the dusk of evening was creeping on, he roused himself, and slowly descended the stairs. On the second floor he tapped with a trembling hand on a closed door, and quietly lifted the latch. He knew the workman who lived there with his wife and children. They were sitting at supper; and the man, calling out, "What's there?" looked up, as David put his pale face round the door.

"I'm looking for my mother!" he said, in a faltering voice.

"Your mother!" repeated the man, rising angrily. "I know what you want, you little bird! Get out o' this at once, you skulking thief!"

But David did not wait for him to reach the door. He closed it hastily, and ran down stairs to escape if he was pursued. As he was passing into the street, he heard his name called through Blackett's open door. He stopped instantaneously, catching at a straw of hope. Perhaps Roger could tell him what had become of Bess.

"Come in, David Fell," called the voice of