

The Gate at the Head of the Stair.  
Some things in our house have lost their use—

We meet them everywhere—  
And one of the saddest and sweetest to me  
Is the gate at the head of the stair.

So often I ran to close the gate,  
That my baby might not fall,  
As toddling along on uncertain feet  
He followed me through the hall.

And often when returning home  
I forgot my trouble and care,  
When I heard his laugh and saw his face  
By the gate at the head of the stair.

And now, with weary, longing heart  
I climb the tedious stair  
The gate is open—I look in vain,  
My baby is not there.

But I love to think when life's journey ends  
In that heavenly dwelling place,  
I shall find to welcome me at the gate  
My baby's radiant face.

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, MARCH 10, 1900

### WHAT ENGLAND ASKS OF THE BOERS.

When England annexed the Transvaal, in 1877, it was to save it from utter collapse brought about by corrupt administration and the inability of the Government to defend itself against its native enemies. English vigour and English money reconstructed the republic and put it on its feet again, drove back its enemies, and opened up the country. In return for this the burghers turned on England at Majuba Hill. Then, for the sake of peace and as an act of magnanimity, and not because of compulsion, England gave the Transvaal internal autonomy under an imperial suzerainty that would guard against encroachment upon neighbouring boundaries. All that the British have sought or desired in their dealings with the Transvaal from the beginning until now, it is declared, has been to secure that tranquillity, that safety for life and property, that equality before the law, which they have maintained where they have had undisputed sway, which are essential everywhere in South Africa for its progress and development, and which their extensive possessions in the country, their paramount authority, and their general interests as a world-wide power justify them in demanding.

As for the more recent difficulties in the Transvaal since the gold-mines were opened in 1886, and the great rush of English settlers began, it is contended that President Kruger and his associates have been chiefly, if not wholly, at fault. Their policy toward the Uitlanders has been harsh, exacting, unjust, and oppressive to the last degree. While these Uitlanders, made up largely of English mine-owners, operators, and business men, have composed more than one-half of the population for some years, and have paid nearly nine-tenths of the taxation, they have been denied a share in the Government. Freedom of the press has not been permitted. Religious equality has been forbidden. A trial by

a jury of his peers is denied to all but Boer citizens. Although the English language is generally used in conversation and business, it is forbidden in public documents and proceedings, and in the public schools. The judges of all the courts are made subservient to the President, and can be dismissed by him at pleasure.

It is also charged that the Boer officials have administered the finances of the country for their personal enrichment, and at the expense largely of foreigners; that they have controlled various monopolies, such as dynamite, spirits, wool, paper, and oils, for the same purpose; that they have enacted complicated and oppressive registration and residence laws, under which it would take fourteen years to obtain the franchise, during twelve of which the candidate would be neither a British nor a Boer subject.

In justification of their course in South Africa, the British contend that from the beginning they have acted clearly within their rights as a sovereign and ruling power, in territory which is theirs by virtue of conquest and possession. Their government in South Africa has been characterized, it is said, by justice, clemency, and fair treatment for all. Under their rule in Cape Colony and Natal, the Boers have enjoyed the same rights as the British settlers, with the same representation in the local legislatures. British capital and British enterprise have been freely employed in developing the entire region, in building its railroads, operating its mines, and promoting the general welfare of the people. Wherever the British have been supreme, law and order have prevailed, the natives have been restrained and controlled, and all the interests of civilization generally have been advanced.

This has not been the case where the Boers have had the ascendancy in government. Their rule has been weak, tyrannical and inefficient. They have been constantly embroiled with the Kaffirs; they have enslaved the Basutos, and won for themselves the undying hatred of all the native tribes with whom they have come in contact.—Leslie's Weekly.

### SHOOTING THE SHARK.

While a great ship-of-war lay at easy anchor in the beautiful bay, and the waters slept around her, smooth as a mill-pond, and silvery as glass, the sailors were idly moving here and there on the ship's deck, for there was nothing to be done. The old boatswain, a favourite with all, was among them, telling his long stories, or, as they called it, "spinning his long yarns." Among this crew was a bright little boy, a son of the old boatswain, the idol of his father and the pet of all the sailors. He was so cheerful and bright and good-natured, that there was nothing which they would not do for "little Jem." The morning was warm, and the water just the right temperature for bathing. A group of the sailors leaned over the side of the ship, and seemed greatly delighted with something they saw. It was "little Jem," their pet, far out from the ship, swimming alone. He could whirl over, dive, float, or shoot forward like a duck.

"Boatswain," cried one, "what a swimmer little Jem is."

"Aye," says the father, "he seems to take to the water kind o' natural. I never had to teach him."

"Boatswain, boatswain, a shark! a shark!" Oh, he will get Jem in one minute more!

The old man leaped up, and a single glance took it all in. There was his son playing in the water, lying on his back, unconscious of any danger, and a huge shark making straight towards him, and it was plain that in a moment more he would be crushing the limbs of the boy. The old man remembered that one of the cannon was shotted. Quick as a flash, and with almost superhuman strength, he wrenched the gun in place, depressed the muzzle, aimed a few feet between the child and the shark just where the fish would be in a single instant. The match was applied, the gun roared and recoiled. The poor father sank down beside the gun, too faint to look. The smoke of the gun cleared away, and up rose a shout from the sailors, almost as loud as the roar of the gun.

"What is it?" calls the father.

"Oh, Jem is safe. There lies the shark, dead and torn in pieces. How could you move the gun, and sight her, and get her off so quickly and so accurately?"

"I don't know. God helped me. Won't some of you bring Jem to me?"

The next moment a boat was lowered, and the oars were bending as she cut her way to the boy. He had just begun to understand the thing, and was paralyzed with terror. Gently they lifted him into

the boat, and in a few minutes placed him in the arms of his weeping father. The old man seemed to receive him as from the dead, and could only rock him in his arms and cry like a babe.

How wonderful that Providence had stepped in, and from a source so unsuspected, sent salvation to the life of that child. The only man who could have managed the gun so quickly and accurately, the only man who thought of the thing, was the father. And when death hung on an instant of time, and on the accuracy of his eye, and the steadiness of his hand, how he had them all in full use as long as needed!

Young reader, there are sharks after you, with wide jaws and sharp teeth—coming towards you. Will any power come in between you and them and save you? Have you a Father watching over you who will see that you are safe?

There is one youth who has many sharks after him, in the shape of companions who are profane, unclean in conversation, who are trying to make him swear and drink and smoke. Will they succeed? Will his heavenly Father send in some power that will save him? Perhaps the prayers of his mother, or the gentle voice of his sister, or the loving heart of some good boy may be the instrument. Perhaps his devoted teacher will become that power. Perhaps the Holy Spirit alone will do it.

There is another who has a shark coming towards him in the temptation to forget the sixth commandment, or not to honour his father and his mother. The hour that he does this he puts himself out beyond the promise of life, and his end may be near.

Oh, pray that between every child and his great spiritual danger there may come that power louder than the cannon's roar, quicker than speed of ball, and surer, even, than the eye of a loving father!

### HE SAVED THE BABY.

An old resident of a Nova Scotia town is the proud owner of a Newfoundland dog for which he has been offered large sums. The dog's intelligence has always been rated high, but two years ago he added to his reputation by an act which seemed to indicate a power of rapid reasoning equal to that possessed by many human beings.

His master lives on the side of a hill, the street sloping rather abruptly down to the water's edge. One day a little girl, left in charge of her baby sister sleeping in its small carriage, turned away to talk with a schoolmate, and forgot the baby for a moment.

In that moment a sudden gust of wind took the little carriage, and bore it down the hill toward the water. The two children ran shrieking after it, but the wind was too fleet for them.

The big Newfoundland, lying at the foot of his master's walk, as usual, raised his head when he heard the cries, and saw the carriage skimming by him. Unlike the children, he made no attempt to overtake it by a direct chase, but dashing across three or four lawns, he came out at a curve of the road ahead of the little vehicle, and planting himself firmly in its track stopped it, and held it safely until some of the neighbours, who had been roused by the cries, hurried to the spot.

Then he walked up the hill again, apparently unmoved by the praise and petting which were surely his due, and resumed his nap with the air of a dog that had done his duty as best he knew how, and was content.

### "I CAN'T."

Yes, you can. Work your thoughts out, and each thought will become a new strength. Throw forward your purposes and fasten them on a thorough education, and think for it, work for it. Bear, suffer, and heroically contend for it, not as an end, but as a means for enlarging and beautifying your own life, and as a power to help others. Exercise the gift to bear and hold on. This will give you mental and moral nerve. Away with doubts and difficulties. Eat plain, healthy food, wear plain clothes, and save your money for necessities. Deny yourself of picnics and excursions, and while others are off on these, read the best of literature, make your own speech, and be ready to talk more intelligently than when the occasion comes. Hold on and work forward, young man. When you must stop for money or difficulties, hold the ground already gained, and make the next advance from the last step of the former march. God calls you forward: forward! to his work. His past work is done, he nor the world needs you in the past, but needs you for the now and the future. Stand for the best thought of your age, that which will carry the world

forward. It is all a whim about the good old times in our country's past. The present is better, but has the possibilities of a rapid self-destruction, and society needs every honest man to avert the dangers. Up, young men, and get wisdom, get understanding. Wisdom adds to you; it makes you greater. Money may increase your farm or your swine herd, but you are worth more than land or swine. Surrender to God's great thoughts, and they will enlarge you.—The Milligan Era.

### TRUE GENTLEMEN.

"I beg your pardon" and with a smile and a touch of his hat, Harry Edmond handed to an old man, against whom he had accidentally stumbled, the cane which he had knocked from his hand. "I hope I did not hurt you."

"Not a bit," said the old man. "Boys will be boys."

"I'm glad to hear it," and lifting his hat again, Harry turned to join his playmates.

"What do you raise your hat to that old fellow for?" asked Charlie Gray. "He is old Giles, the huckster."

"That makes no difference," said Harry. "The question is not whether he is a gentleman, but whether I am one; and no true gentleman will be less polite to a man because he wears a shabby coat or hawks vegetables through the streets."

### THE LOCUST ARMY.

I never witnessed such a sight as I saw to-day—the young locusts. It goes beyond description. They march in line, all headed one way. They wheel to the right and then to the left, in divisions; then there will be a rush in the midst of them like a charge, then they will gather in the centre till they are piled one upon another, a squirming, twisting mass. I was watching them when I heard a noise to my right, and I saw a multitude which no man could number come rushing down the bank and pass on. I got on one side and called the hens. They came and did not see the locusts till they were in the midst. They then squawked and flew away as though they were in fire. These young locusts are now about one inch long, with dark-brown head, black stripe the length of the back, chest and each side bright green, the body and legs green stripes. I was just called by Chico to come and see. Looking up the rocks, it looked like water pouring down as another division seemed to come from the top of the mountain. It would be impossible to withstand the onslaught of an army so well drilled and so numerous.—Sam Mead.

### FORGETTING.

"I am sorry to see that you and Hal are not as good friends as you used to be," said George Hartwell's father to the young lad one day. "Have you quarrelled?"

"Not exactly, but he treated me in a mean, shabby way awhile ago, and we've never been as good friends since."

"Wasn't he sorry afterward? Did he never ask pardon? I thought Hal was unusually ready to acknowledge himself in fault."

"Oh, he said he was sorry, and he did ask my pardon."

"You surely did not refuse it?"

"Of course not, father, but then I can't forget, you know."

"The same old story, my son," said the father, gravely. "What is pardon worth that still keeps the offence in angry remembrance?"

"Well," said George, excusingly, not answering the question, but making an objection, "it is very hard to forget."

"So it may be, but that is no reason for not doing it. Are you going to be so weak and self-indulgent always that you will not do a hard thing? For shame! 'It is the brave who first forget,' says some wise man, 'and noble foes that first unite.' Here is your chance to be both brave and noble, George. I shall be disappointed in you if you fail," and the father left his son with a new thought in his mind, which soon ripened into purpose of heart to "forgive and forget."

People talk of "making up one's mind," but, after all, the heart has to be made right before the good deed is done.—Exchange.

Cause for Murder.—Vicar (who has introduced "Gregorian" tones into his services)—"Well, Mr. Rogers, how do you like our music? Tradition says, you know, that those psalm tunes are the original ones composed by King David."

Flippant Parishioner—"Really? Then I no longer wonder why Saul threw his javelin at him."