

## A Gentleman.

MARGARET B. HANCOCK.

I knew him for a gentleman,  
By signs that never fail;  
His coat was rough and rather worn,  
His cheeks were thin and pale—  
A lad who had his way to make,  
With little time for play—  
I know him for a gentleman  
By certain signs to-day.

He met his mother on the street;  
Off came his little cap  
My door was shut; he waited there  
Until I heard his rap.  
He took the bundle from my hand,  
And when I dropped my pen,  
He sprang to pick it up for me,  
This gentleman of ten.

He does not push the crowd along,  
His voice is gently pitched,  
He does not fling his books about,  
As if he were bewitched.  
He stands aside to let you pass;  
He always shuts the door,  
He runs on errands willingly,  
To forge and mill and store.

He thinks of you before himself;  
He serves you if he can;  
For in whatever company  
The manners makes the man.  
At ten or forty 'tis the same,  
The manners tell the tale;  
And I discern the gentleman  
By signs that never fail.

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, MAY 15, 1897.

## JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

MAY 23, 1897.

Samuel to anoint David.—1 Samuel 16. 1-13.

THE OCCASION.

David was chosen by God to be the success of Saul, king of Israel. Saul was a valiant soldier, and for a time he was a faithful servant of God. When he became wicked and disobedient to the divine requirements, then God cast him off. Learn to obey God in all things. Saul became very wicked. When men enter upon a wicked course their ruin is sure.

SAMUEL KNEW OF SAUL'S DOWNFALL.

Samuel was a good man, a true prophet, whom God informed of his intentions. He faithfully reproved Saul for his disobedience, and did not keep him in the dark respecting the plans of Jehovah. "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel." Poor Saul was anxious to have Samuel pray for him. When bad men get into trouble, they often seek the aid of good people to pray for them. Samuel did all in his power for Saul, but it was useless.

WHY DAVID WAS SELECTED.

God sometimes chooses the weak things of this world to confound things that are mighty. He was the youngest son of his father, and had a most eventful career. It might justly be termed romantic. It is full of the most thrilling incidents, and cannot fail to inspire the greatest possible interest. The selection

of David as the successor of Saul was a surprise to Jesse, the father of David, hence, though he had several sons, he did not for one moment suppose that all the older ones would be rejected, and the youngest would be the choice. You see, man seeth not as God seeth, man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart and makes no mistakes.

A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY.

When they asked Samuel his business, he said, "I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord." Nothing should be done that we cannot ask God's blessing upon. One reason why men do not succeed better is they do not seek divine direction. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." Men should never enter into any business, or undertake any matter, no matter how trivial may be its importance, without being certain that they are acting as God would have them act.

DIFFICULTIES.

Though anointed king of Israel, David's path was crowded with trouble. It did not seem likely that he would ascend the throne. Saul hated him. He even had to flee for his life. God's purposes are not always speedily accomplished. But what he says will assuredly come to pass. Learn to trust God, no matter how dark and lowering the clouds may be.

## "GWINE BACK HOME."

As we waited in the L. & N. depot at Nashville for the train, someone began crying, and an excitement was raised among the passengers. A brief investigation proved that it was an old coloured man who was giving way to his grief. Three or four people remarked on the strangeness of it, but for a time no one said anything to him. Then a depot policeman came forward and took him by the arm, and shook him roughly, and said:

"See here, old man, you want to quit that! You are drunk, and if you make any more disturbance I'll lock you up!"  
"Deed, but I hain't drunk," replied the old man, as he removed his tear-stained handkerchief. "I'ze lost my ticket an' money, an' dat's what's de matter."

"Bosh! You never had any money to lose! You dry up or away you go!"  
"What's the matter y're?" queried a man, as he came forward.

The old man recognized the dialect of the Southerner in an instant, and repressing his emotions with a great effort he answered:

"Say, Mars Jack, I'ze bin robbed."  
"My name is White."  
"Well, then, Mars White, somebody has done robbed me of ticket an' money."  
"Where were you going?"  
"Gwine down into Kaintuck, where I was bo'n an' raised."

"Where's that?"  
"Nigh to Bowlin' Green, sah, an' when the wah dun sot me free I cum up this way. Hain't bin home sence, sah."

"And you had a ticket?"  
"Yes, sah, an' ober \$20 in cash. Bin savin' up fer ten y'ars, sah."

"What do you want to go back for?"  
"To see de hills an' de fields, de tobacco an' de co'n, Mars Preston, an' de good old missus. Why, Mars White, I'ze dun bin prayin' fur it fo' twenty y'ars. Sometime de longin' has cum till I couldn't hardly hold myself."

"It's too bad."  
"De ole woman is buried down dar, Mars White—de ole woman an' free chillen. I kin 'member de spot same as if I seed it yisterday. You go out half-way to de just tobaccker house, an' den you turn to de left an' go down to de branch whar de wimmen used to wash. Dar's fo' trees on de oder bank, an' right under 'em is whar dey is all buried. I kin see it! I kin lead you right to de spot."

"And what will you do when you get there?" asked the stranger.

"Go up to de big house an' ax Mars Preston to let me lib out all de rest of my days right dar. I'ze ole an' all alone, an' I want to be nigh my dead. Sorter company fur me when my heart aches."

"Where were you robbed?"  
"Out doahs, dar, I reckon, in de crowd. See? De pocket is all cut out. I'ze dreamed an' pondered—I'ze had dis journey in my mind fur years, an' now I'ze dun bin robbed an' can't go!"

He fell to crying, and the policeman came forward in an officious manner.

"Stand back, sir!" commanded the stranger. "Now, gentlemen, you have heard the story. I'm going to help the old man back to die on the old plantation and be buried alongside of his dead."

"So am I!" called twenty men in

chorus, and within five minutes we had raised enough to buy him a ticket and leave \$50 to spare. And when he realized his good luck the snow-haired black fell upon his knees in that crowd and prayed:

"Lord, I'ze been a believer in you all my days, an' now I dun ax you to watch ober dese yere white folks dat has believed in me an' helped me to go back to de ole home."

And I do believe that nine-tenths of that crowd had tears in their eyes as the gateman called out the train for Louisville.—Our Dumb Animals.

## ARE THE PLANETS INHABITED?

This is a question which is frequently asked and variously answered. It is at best a matter of pure speculation, and there is absolutely no proof on either side of the question. The most that can be done is to suggest certain possibilities. We know very little of the surface conditions of the planets, and therefore can arrive at very uncertain conclusions as to their habitableness. There are but two of them on which it would seem possible for life to exist. These are Venus and Mars. An atmosphere is an absolute necessity of life—at least such as we have on the earth. It serves two special purposes. In the first place, it supports life by furnishing gaseous food. In the second place, it moderates the heat of the sun, and tempers the cold on the side of the planet away from the sun. Without the atmosphere our earth would be uninhabitable. The days would be burning hot and the nights freezing cold, and animal life could not long endure such extremes.

Let us see how it is with the planets. Mercury is so near the sun that little is known of its surface conditions. We have no evidence that it has an atmosphere, and the extremes of heat and cold must be very great. Life on Mercury is therefore hardly possible. Venus resembles the earth in many respects. It has a solid surface, there is water on it, and it has an atmosphere containing water vapour. Being nearer the sun, its temperature is somewhat higher than that of the earth. With these conditions, there seems to be no reason why it may not support life. Mars is still more like the earth. Its surface shows indications of land and water, and the spectroscope shows that its atmosphere contains moisture. On its surface is a network of fine lines which have been supposed to be canals containing water, as they appear and disappear from time to time. There are bright spots at the poles which have been supposed to be caps of ice and snow. The day on Mars is about equal to our day, and the seasons recur in the same manner, though they are twice as long as ours. The year of Mars is nearly equal to two of our years. As in the case of Venus, life may exist here, but there is no proof of it. Jupiter and Saturn are masses of molten matter, surrounded by dense clouds of vapour, and with no solid crust. Life, as we understand it, is here impossible. Uranus and Neptune are still hotter, being yet in a semi-nebulous condition, and shining partly by their own light. Of course, life cannot exist on them. The moon is a cold body, without atmosphere, and turns on its axis only once a month. It is thus seen that the possibilities of planetary life are very limited, and speculation in regard to it is not very profitable.—Cumberland Presbyterian.

## WRITTEN.

"Don't write there," said a father to his son, who was writing with a diamond on his window.

"Why not?"

"Because you can't rub it out. And did it ever occur to you, my child, that you are daily writing that which you cannot rub out? You made a cruel speech to your mother the other day. It wrote itself on her loving heart, and gave her great pain. It is there now, and hurts her every time she thinks of it. You can't rub it out."

"One day you whispered a wicked thought in the ear of your playmate. It wrote itself on his mind, and led him to do a wicked act. It is there now; you can't rub it out."

"All your thoughts, all your words, all your acts, are written in the book of God, and you can't rub them out. What you write on the minds of others will stay there, but what is written in God's book may and can be blotted out. You can't rub it out, but the precious blood of Jesus can blot it out if you are sorry and ask him. Go then, my child, and ask Jesus to blot out the bad things you have written in the book of God."

## ONE BLACK DROP.

One black drop—only one—but what a tinge it has given that water! Spreading to every other drop in its neighbourhood, it has clouded the whole mass.

That is the way with a thought that is not pure. It affects the desires, and there follows the wish to do the impure thing. It reaches the will, and there follows the deed. Then, how the recollection of it clouds the hour when one prays; the hour when the Bible is read, and God's house is visited; the hour of solitary study, or of intercourse with friends!

Look out for this devil. How? A man says of the water obscured by the black drop, "I will expel this dusky cloud." Stop! Let him go farther back, and not admit that drop in the first place. That impure desire, don't gratify it; that impure book, put a hundred feet as quickly as possible between you and it. Who will promise in this one thing to look not, touch not? That promise will make a memory of sunshine for you which will last a lifetime.

## A VEGETABLE PISTOL.

But the most remarkable instance of this method of scattering the seeds (shooting them from the pod) is afforded by Hura crepitans, a handsome tree, a native of the forests of South America. The curious fruit of this tree is a somewhat flattened, deeply furrowed or fluted body, made up of a circle of many cells, each containing one seed. When the seeds are ripe, the cells open, and expel them with a loud report, like the crack of a pistol. Hence the fruit is sometimes called the "monkeys' dinner-bell."

Stories have been told of Hura fruits being placed in desks and subsequently opening and discharging their seeds with such violence as to break ink-wells, and even to crack the wood of the desk.—"How Plants Spread," by Thomas H. Kearney, Jr., in St. Nicholas.

## SOME FACTS ABOUT CANADA.

The Canadian rivers and lakes swarm with game fish. The timber lands are almost limitless. The undeveloped coal fields cover about 100,000 square miles. She has more iron than any other country in the world. There are vast quantities of gold and silver. Lead is found in nearly every province. There is also a vast supply of copper; the salt deposits are the largest in the world, while one place yields nickel in large quantities. While on the subject, it may be said that considerable error exists regarding Canada's climate. It is not very well known, for instance, that the mean temperature for Hudson Bay is three degrees warmer during the winter months than the mean temperature of Lake Superior. There was colder weather in the winter of 1888 in Iowa and Nebraska than in the Northwest Territories of Canada.

A mother was talking to her sick and dying child, trying to soothe the suffering one. First, she told the little one of the music in heaven that she would hear—of the harps and songs of joy. "But, mamma," spoke the feeble child, "I am so sick, it would give me pain to hear that music." The mother, grieved at the failure of her words to comfort her darling, next told her of the river of Life, gushing from the throne of God, and of the lovely scenes of the New Jerusalem. She talked at length, and finally paused. "Mamma, I am too sick," whispered the dying child, "too tired to like those pretty things." Deeply pained, the mother tenderly lifted her child and pressed it to her bosom, and the little one said: "Mamma, this is what I want—rest—and if Christ will take me to his breast and let me rest, then I would like to go to heaven now."

Of the great Powers across the sea, five—Russia, Germany, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary—have enormously increased their public debts during the past ten years; England, Spain, and Denmark have decreased theirs. France to-day is the most deeply involved, her indebtedness being at the rate of nearly \$140 to each inhabitant; moreover, she is retrograding financially instead of recuperating. England's proportion is about \$84 to each inhabitant, but she is yearly reducing her debt. Russia's obligations are enormous, but the proportion is small—only about \$30 to each inhabitant. Germany's is higher—nearly \$60; and Italy's is higher still—about \$83.—Zion's Herald.