

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE RICHEST MAN IN AMERICA.

Did you know that John Jacob Astor was born in Germany? Well, he was, and his father was one of the poorest men you could find in the poor little village of Waldorf. He was a butcher by trade, not rich enough to keep a shop, but when anybody had an animal to kill they got Jacob Astor to come and do it for them. Then he and his family had something to eat, and the rest of the time they got along without much! Perhaps they would have done pretty well, but the father drank up some of his scanty earnings, and, altogether, made his home so miserable that his older sons made haste to get away and do for themselves. One went to London and one to New York, and little John Jacob was left at home to help his father, and to take care of his little half sisters. His own good, patient, and industrious mother was dead, and I dare say the poor little fellow often wished he was dead too, for he was very unhappy.

However, he had a good school-master who comforted him, and while he was still quite young he made up his mind to go to the New Land, as the Germans in those days called America. But just then — there was going on the war of the Revolution, and John Jacob waited to see how it would go with them. His brothers would write letters to tell them all about it, and once the little fellow walked forty-five miles to get one of these precious letters. The news of the surrender of Cornwallis came when he was seventeen years old, and then he determined to start. It was hard to part with them all, for he loved his friends and his native village. But he had a brave heart, so he wrapped his spare clothing in a little bundle, took a few shillings in his pocket, and set out on foot. When he got out to a hill he stopped to look back on the village, and then on to the future, and there he made three resolutions—to be honest, to be industrious, and not to gamble.

He walked to the Rhine, worked his passage on a boat to the sea, and found his way to London. Here he went to work for his brother, who was engaged in making pianos. He worked early and late, learned the English language, picked up all the information he could about America, and saved up his money. And how much do you suppose he was able to save in two years? Just \$75. Only think of John Jacob Astor working two years to save \$75!

When at last the treaty of peace was signed he started for America. He paid \$25 for his passage, carried along seven flutes which cost him \$25, and \$25 in money. He had a long and tedious voyage, and when within a day's sail of port the ship was frozen in and lay in the ice two months. "Bad luck," you say. Not a bit of it. For here he improved the acquaintance of a man in the fur business, which was far the most profitable thing in America in which a poor man could engage. So, when he had found his brother in New York and talked the matter over, he engaged with a furrier, and soon afterward went into business for himself. After a while he was able to send furs to London, then to China, and then he became a tea-merchant and had ships of his own. Then he bought lands and speculated on them, and in the end he was worth twenty millions of dollars.

Now, would you like to know the secret of his great success? It is this—whatever he did was



done well. He learned all that he could about his business. When he first commenced with his furs he made them his study. He talked with everybody about them. He asked questions of the hunters, and trappers, and traders, so that in the end he might always know just the best thing to do and how to do it. If you want to prosper in anything, learn all that you can about it and do as well as you know.

But Mr. Astor was very close in his dealings; he drove very hard bargains, and he had the name of being stingy even after he became very rich. Perhaps it was some excuse for him that he saw so many hardships in childhood, and that his first earnings came so hard. Still, they were great faults in his character, and I hope if you are tempted to copy them you will look up and remember that God loveth a cheerful giver. It is not necessary that you should become very rich, for "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth," but it is necessary that you should have the favor of your heavenly Father. You can't very well get along without that.

When Mr. Astor made his will he gave some large sums to worthy objects. He did not forget little Waldorf. He gave \$50,000 to the poor of his native village. But the largest item was \$400,000 to establish a public library in the city of New York. The above is a picture of the first building in which it was kept. It was opened to the public in 1854. Another building has been added of the same size, and they contain a very fine collection of books and papers, and any one can go in and examine them and sit down and read as much as they like in the middle of the day. If you go to spend any time in New York, be sure to visit the Astor Library. It is in Lafayette Place, not far from the American Bible House and the Cooper Institute, which are in Astor Place. You will be well repaid for visiting that neighborhood.

AUNT JULIA.

THE GENTLE BOY.

"Be very gentle with her, my son," said Mrs. B., as she tied on her little girl's bonnet, and sent her out to play with her elder brother.

They had not been out long before a cry was heard, and presently J. came in and threw down his hat,

saying, "I hate playing with girls! there's no fun with them; they cry in a minute."

"What have you been doing with your sister? I see her lying there on the gravel walk; you have torn her frock, and pushed her down. I am afraid you forgot my caution to be gentle."

"Gentle? Boys can't be gentle, mother. It is their nature to be rough and hardy; they are the stuff soldiers and sailors are made of. It is very well to talk of a gentle girl; but a gentle boy—it sounds ridiculous!"

"And yet, J., a few years hence you would be very angry if any one were to say you were not a gentle-man."

"A gentle-man! I had never thought of dividing the word that way before. Being gentle always seems to me like being weak and womanish."

"This is so far from being the case, my son, that you will always find the bravest men are the most gentle. The spirit of chivalry that you so much admire was a spirit of the noblest courage and the utmost gentleness combined. Still, I dare say you would rather be called a manly than a gentle boy?"

"Yes, indeed, mother."

"Well, then, my son, it is my great wish that you should endeavor to unite the two. Show yourself manly when you are exposed to danger, or see others in peril; be manly when called upon to speak the truth, though the speaking of it may bring reproach upon you; be manly when you are in sickness and pain. At the same time be gentle, whether you are with females or men; be gentle toward all men. By putting the two spirits together, you will deserve a name which, perhaps, you will not so greatly object to."

"I see what you mean, dear mother; and I will endeavor to be what you wish—a gentlemanly boy."

TRUE OBEDIENCE.

"I wish I could mind God as my pet eagle minds me," said a little boy, looking at his feathery friend. "He always looks so pleased to mind, and I don't."

What a painful truth did this child speak! Shall the eagle thus readily obey his master, and we rebel against God, who is our Creator, our Preserver, our Father, our Saviour, and the bountiful Giver of everything we have?

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