

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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The Sweetest Lives.

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close-knit straws of an unbroken
thread,
Where love ennobleth all,
The world may sound no trumpets, ring
no bells,
The Book of Life the shining record tells.
Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life-working. A child's
kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee
glad;
A poor man served by thee shall make
thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make
thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every
sense
Of service which thou renderest.

JOHN WESLEY.

John Wesley, like all the Epworth

family, was short of stature. He measured not quite five feet six inches, and weighed one hundred and twenty-five pounds. He seemed not to have an atom of superfluous flesh, but was muscular and strong. His face was remarkably fine, even to old age. A clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived, conspired to render him a venerable and most interesting figure. In youth his hair was black; in old age, when it was white as snow, it added fresh grace to his appearance, which was like that of an apostle. He wore a narrow plaited stock, and a coat with a small, upright collar. He allowed himself no knee-buckles, and no silk or velvet in any part of his dress.

Wesley was scrupulously neat in his person and habits. Henry Moore never saw a book misplaced, or a scrap of paper lying about his study in London. His punctuality and exactness enabled him to transact the enormous work which rested on him for half a century with perfect composure. He once told a friend that he had no time to be in a hurry. "Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry, because I never undertake any more work than I can get through with perfect calmness of spirit."

He wrote to all who sought his counsel, and had, perhaps, a greater number of pious correspondents than any man of his century. He did everything deliberately, because he had no time to spend in going over it again. Moore says he was the slowest writer he ever saw.

Wesley on one occasion said to his brother Charles' youngest son: "Sammy, be punctual. Whenever I am to go to a place, the first thing I do is to get ready; then what time remains is all my own." His coachman was expected to be at the door exactly at the moment fixed. If anything detained his carriage, Wesley would walk on until it overtook him. Every minute, both of day and night, had its appointed work. "Joshua, when I go to bed, I go to bed to sleep, and not to talk," was his rebuke to a young preacher who once shared his room, and wished to steal some of Wesley's precious moments of repose for conversation on some difficult problems. To one who asked him how it was that he got through so much work in so short a time, he answered: "Brother, I do only one thing at a time, and I do it with all my might."

Wesley was greatly beloved in the homes where he was entertained during his long itinerancy. He would spend an hour after dinner with his friends, pouring forth his rich store of anecdotes, to the delight of young and old. "He was always at home, and quite at liberty." He generally closed the con-

versation with two or three verses of some hymn strikingly appropriate to the occasion, and made every one feel at ease by his unaffected courtesy and his varied conversation. Two years before his death, his friend, Alexander Knox, had an opportunity of spending some days in his company. He endeavoured to form an impartial judgment of the venerable evangelist. The result was, that every moment afforded fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. "So fine an old man I never saw! The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent.'"

"Wherever Wesley went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect plety. In his conversation we might be at a loss whether to

bright coins. He would take the children in his arms, and bless them, reconcile their little differences, and teach them to love one another. In his last years he greatly rejoiced at the rise of Sunday-schools all over the country, and preached sermons on their behalf in various places. The singing of the boys and girls, selected out of the Sunday school at Bolton, seemed to him a blessed anticipation of the song of angels in our Father's house. One who loved children more than Wesley it would be hard indeed to find. "I reverence the young," he said, "because they may be useful after I am dead."

Wesley and a preacher of his were once invited to luncheon with a gentleman, after service. The itinerant was a man of very plain manners—quite unconscious of the restraints belonging to good society. While talking with their host's daughter, who was remarkable for her beauty, and had been profoundly impressed by Mr. Wesley's preaching, this

indelible impression. I can retrace no word but of tenderness, no action but of condescension and generosity." She clearly shows how great a mistake it was to represent Wesley as stern and stolid. "It behooves a relative," she adds, "to render justice to his private virtues, and attest from experience that no human being was more alive to all the tender charities of domestic life than John Wesley. His indifference to calumny, and inflexible perseverance in what he believed his duty, has been the cause of this idea."

Miss Wesley has also given a charming description of their visit to Canterbury in 1775. "He said in the carriage. 'You are just the right age to travel with me. No one can censure you and me.' The instances of his tender care are fresh in my mind. As we journeyed the weather was very cold. The preacher—who rode on horseback by the side of the carriage—at the first stage, brought a hassock, with some straw, to keep his feet warm. Instantly he asked: 'Where is one for my little girl?' Nor would he proceed till I was as well accommodated as himself. You knew him. Did you ever see him inattentive to the feelings of others, when those feelings did not impede his plan of usefulness? As we proceeded, he pointed out every remarkable place we passed, and condescended to delight and instruct, with the same benign spirit which distinguished him in public. I remember reading to him part of the way Beattie's 'Minstrel'—a book just published, and which, he said, as I loved poetry, would entertain me, making remarks as we went upon the other poems. He would not allow the people to call me up till six in the morning, though he himself preached at five, and always procured me the most comfortable accommodation in every place where we sojourned.

"My brother Charles had an attachment in early life to an amiable girl of low birth. This was much opposed by my mother and her family, who mentioned it with concern to my uncle. Finding 'from my father that this was the chief objection, he observed: 'Then there is no family, but I hear the girl is good.' 'Nor no fortune, either,' said my mother, 'and she is a dawdle.' He made no reply, but sent my brother fifty pounds for his wedding dinner, and, I believe, sincerely regretted he was crossed in his inclination—as she married another. But he always showed peculiar sympathy to young persons in love."

Lord Macaulay's judgment, that Wesley possessed as great a genius for government as Richelieu, is repeated on every hand. In a confidential letter to his sister, Mrs. Hall, dated November 17, 1742, Wesley acknowledges with gratitude the gift he possessed of the management of his societies. "I know this is the peculiar talent God has given me," are his words.

No great statesman ever watched the course of public opinion more carefully than Wesley watched the progress of events in Methodism. He did not think out a system and force it on his people. There is no special evidence of inventive power in Wesley's administration. He himself speaks of his want of any plan for financial matters. His rule over the united societies owed its success to the fact that he was always availing himself of the fresh light which experience gave. Methodist organization was a gradual growth. Local experiments which approved themselves in practice were introduced into all the societies. Leaders, stewards and lay preachers the main instruments in spreading and conserving the results of the evangelical revival, were all the fruit of this growth.

admire most his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless, and both saw, in his uninterrupted cheerfulness, the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourses. No apologetic retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently: "May my latter end be like his!" Wesley's relations to children and young people set his character in a peculiarly attractive light. His visits were eagerly anticipated by his young friends. He provided himself with a stock of new money, and often gave them one of these

good man noticed that she wore a number of rings. During a pause in the meal, he took hold of the young lady's hand, and, raising it, called Wesley's attention to the sparkling gems. "What do you think of this, sir," said he, "for a Methodist's hand?" The girl turned crimson. The question was extremely awkward for Wesley, whose aversion for all display of jewellery was so well known. But the aged evangelist showed a tact which Lord Chesterfield might have envied. With a quiet, benevolent smile, he looked up, and simply said: "The hand is very beautiful." The young lady appeared at evening worship without her jewels, and became a firm and decided Christian.

In 1821, Wesley's niece sent Adam Clarke a sketch of some incidents in his life, in which she says: "His distinguished kindness to me, from the earliest period I can remember, made an



JOHN WESLEY.