

## Mr. Aaron Blank

Joel and Salome Blank, good Pennsylvania Dutch stock, gave to the world a large family, four sons, Jonas, Harrison, Jesse, Aaron were well known in this section of Illinois. These who lived, toiled and loved among you are held in tender memory by all.

Mr. Aaron Blank was born June 17, 1825 and left this world for a better one January 20, 1914, a span of life of nearly ninety one years. He came to Illinois in 1840 and married Miss Louise Barnes in 1852. This home remained unbroken, save for the death of a little daughter, for sixty six years. None of these years was happier than the closing ones. Their married life was spent in Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. Mr. Blank's ninetieth birthday was a time of special rejoicing, four generations joining in the merriment of that glad day. Perhaps no one present had quite the satisfaction over the event as did the frail wife and the daughter, Mrs. J. G. Van Ness.

It is not easy to sum up the characteristics of this unobtrusive man. Some lines of the immortal poem "The Village Blacksmith" chase through my mind as I think of Mr. Blank.

"His hair is crisp and black and long,  
His face is like the tan;  
His brow is wet with honest sweat-  
He earns what'er he can.  
And looks the whole world in the face  
For he owes not any man."

One of Mr. Blank's eminent good qualities was his

HONESTY. He was honest in speech. Never loquacious, brief in what he had to say, his sincere words carried weight. "Did Aaron Blank say that? then it is true." His word was his bond and bond enough.

He was honest in his dealings with men. His active years preceded the plunging, hectic, speculative period from which we have just begun to emerge, I hope but had he lived, the frenzied hurrah of

the last decade would not have affected him. Does some one say "An honest man is the noblest work of God." Well God does not make any other kind. Mr. Blank gave God a chance to make him honest and He did it. Mr. Blank was honest from preference.

He was honest in his toil.

By choice he was a carpenter, a cabinet maker; he spent years in learning his trade. How often have I heard his condemnation fall upon the cheap, careless or worse, work of incompetent hands. Many buy the trade apron, pick up hammer and saw, and announce themselves as followers of the Nazarene carpenter. An insult to the toiler of Nazareth. Mr. Blank's work was the kind that "shall laugh at all disaster" so carefully did he do his work.

Another characteristic was his Lack of Love for Money.

He counted financial success of little importance. Money was of no value save as it contained the answer of human need, this and no more. Were his neighbors rich, there was no envy, they were welcome to its care. He was no spendthrift, each dollar must do its duty but he somehow felt that by earning all he could, and using wisely what he earned, no time of actual want would threaten his hearth. And he was right. Every need was met until there was no more earthly need. He simply refused to be a money worshipper. He flung money shackles far afield and lived the simple trusting busy life.

His affectionate disposition was rarely manifest--that is in words. But his thoughtful mind was always planning how to make home duties and tasks easier. His grandchildren were almost idolized, and his great grandchildren not less so.

The writer of this unpretentious sketch had an opportunity lasting through many years to study this man closely, and marked

appreciation of his character resulted. Never complaining, always cheerful and grateful the years sped on in happy companionship.

In harmony with all the other characteristics of this quiet unassuming life was his reticence concerning his religious convictions and hopes. No doubt of things divine ever escaped his lips. Who among the middle aged people here to-day can ever forget the horse and buggy, always half an hour early, that halted Sunday after Sunday, year after year at the door of the church in Wayne and the two worshippers who went in together to pay their vows in the Lord's House? And now they have entered into that "House Not Made with Hands" to go no more out.

It may be only fancy but perhaps as they crossed the threshold of that Invisible Home, youth was once more theirs and they sought some gracious place where, surrounded by trusted friends of earthly days, they could begin heavenly house-keeping even as they had their home on earth. Why not? Memory is immortal. We know our wives and children here, shall we know less in heaven than we know on earth? We shall know them there. Love is deathless. The joy of His children is the supreme satisfaction of God.

97 N. E. 60 St.,

Miami Florida.

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John G. Van Ness.