

HOPE'S QUIET HOUR

"THE GLORY OF THE SECOND MILE"

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.—S. Matt. v., 41.

The other day I heard a sermon on this subject, which was both interesting and helpful. The preacher began by explaining that he had read, some time before, an article on "The glory of the second mile," and that his sermon would be based on that. He said that when Cyrus was King of Persia, he had made a law that anyone who was acting as a postman, in the employ of the Government, could demand assistance, if he needed it, and "compel" a man of any rank to assist him on his journey. But he could only compel a man to go "a mile" with him, after that he was free—if he wished—to return to his own business. The Romans adopted the same plan, and anyone in Government service could "compel" a stranger to "go a mile" with him. The Jews, hating their Roman conquerors, might be compelled to give their help; but not one step beyond the necessary mile were they likely to go, no matter how urgent the need for their services might be.

Here may be seen the "glory" of the "second" mile. The first was compulsory, but the second was voluntary. Only a man of rare greatness of spirit would be willing to do more than was absolutely necessary for those who were oppressing him and his people.

The preacher, in enlarging on this opportunity for service, described how a boy, sent to the berry-patch with orders to pick a quart of berries, might drag wearily along, thinking himself hardly used, and only obeying because he was compelled. Then, when the work was begun, his interest in it might awaken. Before the required quart was picked, the thought, "Why not surprise mother by taking home two quarts?" would change the tiresome task into pleasure. To work because he was "compelled" might be drudgery, but the very same task would be transformed and glorified by cheerful willingness and the real desire to help.

How wonderfully this fits in with every-day life. Certain tasks are laid upon you, circumstances compel you to attend to them. There are hundreds of little humdrum duties which must be done. Why not accept them in the spirit of the "second mile," doing them because you are glad of the opportunity of helping somebody—though that "somebody" may be domineering or irritating. Don't say, nor think: "Of course, I must do my necessary work, but I won't do a stroke more than I have to!" People who are so jealous of their own rights, so afraid of being imposed upon that they will never do more than they are paid to do, will fail to grasp the "glory of the second mile," and will also put very poor workmanship into their handling of the first mile. Whether they work at home or among strangers, they will not be a success. Others will leave them far behind in the race of life. We can't do anything well unless we do it heartily. Adam Bede expressed strong disapproval of a workman who would drop his tools instantly at the stroke of six. To do anything properly, we must rouse interest in it, and press forward with the desire to make it a success—it may be sweeping a room, or it may be ruling a kingdom.

Gannett says that the wife of President Garfield changed toil to victory once, when she was forced by circumstances to do her own household work. She wrote to her husband: "Here I am, compelled by an inevitable necessity, to make our bread this summer. Why not consider it a pleasant occupation, and make it so by trying to see what perfect bread I can make? It seemed like an inspiration, and the whole of life grew brighter. The very sunshine seemed

flowing down through my spirit into the white loaves; and now I believe my table is better furnished than ever before. And this truth, old as creation, seems just now to have become fully mine—that I need not be the slave of toil, but its regal master, making whatever I do yield its best fruits."

No one can possibly learn that truth except from inside. We look at men and women who are compelled by the stress of circumstances to toil for many years, and perhaps we feel that their lives are too hard for the chance of glory. And yet—always—it is possible to be "not the slave of toil, but its regal master." I feel more and more that this wonderful Christianity of ours has power to glorify any situation. It sounds so cold and difficult to try to do necessary work in the spirit of a noble philosopher. Perhaps we think sadly that we have not time to cultivate such grand ideals as are put forward by the people of leisure who hardly

known to be "holy ground" because God is there—and the necessary "chores," as well as the odd jobs which might be left for other hands to do, may be holy offerings, sacrifices bound with golden chains to the horns of the altar.

And they are not "trifling tasks," which may be faithfully done or carelessly neglected without serious consequences. Every "cup of cold water," given gladly for love's sake, is gathered into God's treasury of jewels. It always shines in His sight, if it was really "cold water"—fresh and sparkling from the living spring of love within the heart. Can He treasure the dull, spiritless, lukewarm offerings which drop carelessly from hands which hang down? Oh, let us lift up our daily gifts, offering them to our King as we look up exultingly into His Face. Then they can never be "trifling," never be "commonplace."

Christ looked sorrowfully on as the rich dropped gold carelessly into the Temple Treasury, but his heart leaped with joy when the poor widow cast in thither two mites. He is the same to-day. God still loves a "cheerful" giver. Are you bringing joy to Him, even once a day, by your

dazzle us with beauty, when we have the solemn glory of the stars? God knows that we need beautiful sights and sweet sounds, therefore He gave trees and flowers and sunsets, the song of birds, the hushed rustle of the woods, the indescribable sound of many waters. I picked up just now an "Advocate" which came this morning from Winnipeg, and found in it a description of how a man had sought God in earth and space, and was despairingly giving up the search, when he found Him suddenly in the roses at his window. If we can find God in the things and people beside us, then we can find Him anywhere. If we fail to find Him at home, then it is useless to search the universe. Heaven is within us and around us. Why should we not enter more into its glory?

"Inmost heaven its radiance pours.
Round thy windows, at thy doors,
Asking but to be let in,
Waiting to flood out thy sin,
Offering thee unfailing health,
Love's refreshment, boundless wealth;
Voices at thy life's gate say,
'Be immortal, Soul, To-day!'"

DORA FARNCOMB.

Letters dealing with the question given below will be forwarded to "Enquirer" if stamps are enclosed. Address: "Enquirer," The Quiet Hour, "The Farmer's Advocate." Dear Hope,—When you have space in the Quiet Hour, will you and others please answer the following:
How is eternal salvation obtained?
Can there be assurance of it in this life?
ENQUIRER.

BRAVE LOVE

James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet, was once asked to name his favorite poem, and responded by giving the following bit of verse, written many years ago by Mary Kyle Dallas:

He'd nothing but his violin,
I'd nothing but my song,
But we were wed when skies were blue
And summer days were long.
And when we rested by the hedge
The robins came and told
How they had dared to woo and win
When early spring was cold.

We sometimes supped on dewberries,
Or slept among the hay,
But oft the farmers' wives at eve
Came out to hear us play
The rare old tunes—the dear old tunes—
We could not starve for long
While my man had his violin
And I my sweet love song.

The world has aye gone well with us,
Old man, since we were one
Our homeless wanderings down the lanes—
It long ago was done.

But those who wait for gold or gear,
For houses and for kine,
Till youth's sweet spring grows brown and sere,
And love and beauty tine,
Will never know the joy of hearts
That met without a fear
When you had but your violin
And I a song, my dear.

THE HABIT BUILDER

"How shall I a habit break?"
As you did that habit make,
As you gather you must lose;
As you yielded, now refuse.
Thread by thread the strands we twist,
Till they bind us, neck and wrist;
Must untwine, ere free we stand.
As we builded, stone by stone,
We must toil, unhelped, alone,
Till that wall is overthrown.

Ah, the precious years we waste
Levelling what we raised in haste;
Doing what must be undone,
Ere content or love be won!
First across the gulf we cast
Kite-borne threads, till lines are passed,
And habit builds the bridge at last!

—JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.



A LUMP OF SWEETNESS.

know what hard work means. But we all wake up at the touch of Love's magic wand. When an only child is dangerously ill, the mother does not consider it hard because she must work day and night in eager ministry. She does not say: "I have done my full share of the nursing to-day, and now it is the duty of someone else to take hold."

No; she is far more likely to say, when urged to secure a little needed rest: "Oh, must I go? Surely I can stay a little longer!"

When we are given the opportunity of serving those who are dearest to us, joy can make any work or sacrifice a glory. And here is where a true Christian can gain his inspiration, both for the "first mile"—or work which he is compelled to do—and for the "second mile"—or work which he may undertake voluntarily. He may appear to be serving a hard master, but his heart leaps up at the thought that he is serving the Master he loves.

Not "must I do it?" but "may I do it?" is his daily, hourly question. Then the house or office or field will become a Temple—it will be

gift of a small service—a service that is bright and sparkling, never dull and dispirited? If not, will you not offer Him one now? If you do not love Him, the best way to cultivate love is to serve willingly. If you do love Him, then you are missing the glory and gladness of life if you are not constantly pouring yourself out in willing service to your Brother and your brothers.

Hezekiah was a king, but his kingliness consisted in this: "In every work that he began in the service of the house of God. . . he did it with all his heart, and prospered." Everything that God gives us to do should be "the service of the house of God." If we do it in kingly, regal fashion—even with all our hearts—we also shall live in the truest prosperity, we also shall live gloriously. Willing service is always noble and splendid, unwilling service is always mean and sordid. The poorest little shack on the prairie opens straight into the glory of God's wonderful "Out-of-doors" as certainly as the grandest of palaces—often more certainly. Why should we feel poor because we have no diamonds to