

### A Double Bond

In one of his imperishable stories, Sir Walter Scott refers to some young people associated for study and mutual profit. The expression he gives to their communion is suggestive. He says, "There was a bond betwixt them, a strong and interesting tie, the desire of obtaining knowledge, the pride of surmounting difficulties." Surely such a spirit of helpful fellowship is beautiful to see wherever it may exist among the young, and no other bond can unite a company of youth with such lasting profit to themselves and advantage to the homes and communities in which they live and labor. Whether the number of persons be two, or twenty, or a hundred, does not matter, and the same spirit produces similar results wherever the sphere of its operations may be. Brothers and sisters at home, pupils at school, students at college, members of Church or League, of Brotherhood or Club, of Circle or Class,—the same tie must bind them together if reciprocal advantage is to accrue from their association. The two-fold purpose mentioned by the great novelist is a most worthy one.—"to increase in knowledge," "surmounting difficulties." Every reader of this brief paragraph should be moved by it to the highest fellowship with those about him. Every Society to which this paper ministers must fulfil it or fall of its high and noble calling. To this end we exist, and in proportion as we accomplish it is our existence justified and made a blessing.

### Let Them Laugh

A thirteen-year-old boy, though sitting in the next room, was far away. With the characters in the book he was reading, he had little immediate concern for the people close at hand. All unconscious of everybody near by, he was alive to the scenes and incidents in which the hero of his story was playing so well his part. An occasional grunt of approval or displeasure came from his throat, and then all unannounced a merry laugh was heard. Louder and louder it rang, until the whole flat was filled with its melody. For to all who heard, it was melodious without a doubt. "Just listen to that boy laugh," one remarked. But he neither heard nor heeded. Another merry peal resounded. "What are you laughing at, —?" was asked. "Just laughing," came the reasonable reply. And I have thought of it many a time since. And why shouldn't he laugh, pray? Who has a better right to be merry than a healthy boy or girl? Who ought to laugh if such be denied the right? For a right it is. Some may account it a privilege and dote it out begrudgingly, but not I. Let the child laugh. Encourage them in the practice. Trouble and care will furrow the brow and give them cause for tears soon enough; let us keep the dimples in their cheeks as long as we can, and give them no occasion for premature weeping.

I dare say some of our old Sobersides will remind me that Solomon said of laughter, "It is mad," and I do not wonder that he did. The kind of mirth he tried I would advise every man, and woman, too, to shun. It was "mad" in Solomon's day, is "mad" now, and never will be any other else. It never was sane, and never will or can be. But Solomon was not thinking of that kind when he said, "There is a time to laugh." So there is, and if we could all be childlike in our real enjoyment of it, happier would many of us be, and happier would we all make somebody else. So let the children laugh, say I, and, better still, laugh with them.

If for no other reason, laugh for your stomach's sake. And if no other argument moves you, let that of a celebrated physician set you a-laughing. Said he, "Laughter is a most healthful exertion; it is one of the greatest helps to digestion with which I am acquainted; and the custom prevalent among our forefathers of exciting it at table by jesters and buffoons, was founded on true medical principles." Surely that will make you laugh. Do it now!

### The Way They Used To Do

Of course we do it now; but when a man complains of present-day over-organization and the tendency to multiply committees to do the work contemplated, I feel like reminding him that such a plan is by no means a new one. It is hardly a creation of the present generation, which Carlyle wrote,

"Has any man, or any society of men, a truth to speak, a piece of spiritual work to do; they can nowise proceed at once and with the mere natural organs, but must first call a public meeting, appoint committees, issue prospectuses, call a public dinner; in a word, construct or borrow machinery wherewith to speak it and do it. Without machinery they were hopeless, helpless; a colony of Hindoo weavers squatting in the heart of Lancashire." Doubtless, there is too much disposition to shirk personal responsibility by delegating necessary work to a committee, and in no place is this more marked in our Church than in the Epworth League; but, notwithstanding this, the benefits of wisely directed committees have been most practical, and a great volume of work has been done through their agency that without them would never have been accomplished. If we are no better than they were a half century ago in this regard, let us see to it that we grow no worse than we are. There are too many inactive committees among us. Sit them up, and no matter how regularly they may meet or

never pass sweeping and wholesale condemnation on amusements in general; but counsel and guide as to the form they shall take. When amusement becomes the business of life, or when it interferes with the proper discharge of business in life, it is a damage. Goethe well said, "If man had a higher idea of himself and his destiny, he would neither call his business amusement nor amusement his business, but would transacting business." Two extremes should be avoided, making a business of amusement and being so absorbed in business as to grow sordid, by reason of its entire lack. One strong objection to much present-day amusement is that it consumes hours that should be put in recreative sleep, and so unfits its votaries for the active duties of the succeeding day. Amusement that so robs a young man or woman, is wrong, no matter what form it takes. But in this strenuous age some form of amusement is necessary to all, and if it be selected so as to combine recreation and pleasure, and if it be so arranged to minister to, rather than rob body and mind, nothing can be said adversely to it. That popular amusements might be improved in these respects we should admit, and that the Church, the Home, and the School might do more for their improvement, I think we may all agree.

### Self-Discovery

"It was Thomas à Kempis who said, "The better you understand yourself, the less cause you will find to love yourself." True and honest self-examination may reveal much that is unlovely, no matter how far advanced we may be in Christian experience; yet it is wise that we really know ourselves intimately. Perhaps many people are more concerned about their relations to themselves; but that is no excuse to you and me for having but a superficial acquaintance with our own real inner selves. How much do you know, not simply about yourself, but of yourself, as no other being, but God can know you? There are days of hurry and bustle, of jostling crowds and thronging multitudes. One is seldom alone. And even if he seek solitude the tingling of the telephone bell scarce leaves him solitary for a quarter of an hour. One has hardly time to get alone and think. Little wonder, therefore, if a man is but poorly acquainted with himself. Yet self-examination pays, and to discover oneself, no matter what the analysis reveals, is profitable. Are my motives pure, my spirit kind, my principles sound, and my actions the genuine springs of action right, my ambition noble, my heart clean? A host of such queries confront us when we give God a chance to speak to our souls. Much that is unlovely will certainly be exposed to our self-examining eye, and yet, with it all will come the glory of the thought that God loves us, and by the omnipotence of Love will transform us if we but give Him right-of-way in our lives. Though such submission may seem to involve present loss in the self-denial involved, it will bring permanent gain as the results of the process become manifest. The cause of spiritual unrest is self-will; the secret of abiding peace is self-surrender. God's way for us is one of blessedness accruing from His daily dominance of our lives. We may prevent it by willful insubordination, and, choosing our own path, enjoy the passing pleasure of self-gratification; but so doing, we rob ourselves of the enduring profit that only those can know who keep themselves in cheerful harmony with His mind and will. To discover one's real relation to God, and to subjugate oneself to His control, are the first steps to such a life of blessedness.

### THE LAUGH OF A CHILD

I love it—I love it—the laugh of a child,  
Now rippling and gentle, now merry  
and wild;  
Blinging out on the air with its innocent gush,  
Like the trill of a bird in the twi-  
light's soft hush;  
Floating up on the breeze like the  
tones of a bell,  
Or the music that dwells in the heart  
of a shell;  
Oh, the laugh of a child, so wild and  
so free,  
Is the merriest sound in the world  
for me.  
—Atheiwood.

methodically do their allotted work, remember that generally the best way to do something that you see needs doing, is to form yourself into a committee of one and do it.

### The Amusement Craze

I heard this expression the other day, and at first was disposed to sympathize with it. But on second thought it was suggested to me that this generation is no more under its spell than previous ones have been. It is easy to rail at youth and judge it censoriously; but it is hardly wise or fair to condemn the young for the very things that their fathers have done before them. The desire for amusements is natural to the human race, and in some form or other all its members seek it. We should