

CHURCH and HOME

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Time has increased in value in these days. Men have more to do in the same compass of days than they had before. The people we meet therefore seem always in a hurry. As we read descriptions of old world times their great claim for us lies in the ample leisure the people there had for enjoying life. Letters were few and far between. Trains were unknown. The penny post had not been evolved. Only at rare intervals did anything disturb the even tenor of life. The boundary of the town or country was for most people the boundary of the world. Beyond lay a vague, mysterious, illimitable void, out of which came occasionally strange messages, perhaps of disturbances in another land, or of the death of a hero dear to the national heart. Merchants received their mails at uncertain intervals. Fast steamship lines were unheard of then. Merchandise was wafted across the ocean in ships tyrannized over by wind and storm. Once then answering letters were dispatched the merchant rested patiently for weeks and months without fear of troublesome thunderbolts flashed across the speaking wires. As we glance back to these times we are sometimes tempted to envy the peace and quietude of mind in which our forefathers spent their lives. Yet they doubtless had their own troubles

in the opening up of a new country which to them would be real and quite as heavy as we imagine ours to be. Undoubtedly, however, the pressure of life, the strain upon our bodies and minds is far greater now than ever it was before. We are never off the rack. At any moment a message from the uttermost ends of the earth may wreck our plans and mar our hopes. As Burns said when moralising on the fate of the mouse whose little shield his cruel coulter had so rudely destroyed, "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley." To-day a man may be rich and honoured, to-morrow he may stand among the ruins of house and home.

This uncertainty in which we live might have been expected to infallibly drive us back upon One who is unchangeable, so that we might find a happier life in the quiet development of our spiritual selves. On every side we hear constant complaints of the incessant claims of business. Yet those who, according to their own account, are thus sorely harassed, do not seem inclined to moderate their desires, and rest content with a modest competence. The spirit of emulation is ever urging nations, cities and individuals ever forward in an unceasing effort to outstrip the other. The columns of our journals constantly contain