

wicked. Not at all. I simply mean that the world has gone crazy on what is commonly called pleasure, but which is nothing more or less than nonsense. Just consider how a social evening is spent. Doesn't the "pleasure" consist largely in eating indigestible cakes, playing games of chance, and laughing at jokes without points? In other words, Wordsworth's line, "Plain living and high thinking are no more," is too applicable to us. Not that, as young people, we are not sensible. We are when by ourselves, but there seems to be the thought current that when the opposite sexes get together, even in a private residence, to spend a social evening, all seriousness must be carefully shoved back into the books, and not allowed to make its appearance again that night.

This thought that serious persons have to act foolishly on such occasions, is the sad part. I can understand how illiterate people can spend an evening in nothing but levity, but I cannot understand why the graduates of our universities, scholarship men, etc., think they must do it. And should you chance to question them about the advisability of going with girls, in nine cases out of ten they'll say, by all means go with the girls. Why? To develop the other side of your character. And inference teaches me that this "other side" of our character is nonsense, and to develop it we must watch girls act foolishly, contrary to their best reason (the reason they do it, some tell me, is because they think the boys like it). It seems to me an insult to the girls to say, "We go with them to get our characters developed," when we spend nearly the whole time in frivolity. If we must laugh, wouldn't it be a good thing to keep something to amuse us? We might, for instance, keep a cage of monkeys for the purpose, and save the girls for the purpose for which they were created.

Possibly I am not lucid, but my idea is to raise the standard of association between boys and girls, from one of pleasure to one of companionship, in the fullest sense of the word, including, primarily, common sense. By so doing, we shall make the friendship of the opposite sex something to be desired by the sensible class of each, and hence be the means of eliminating two common blunders in the path of successful marriage: ignorance and misunderstanding. There is a barrier in the way of this step, and that is that no one seems willing to take the initiative. Sensible boys and girls are willing to reform, but each are waiting for the other to take the first step. Girls think boys must like nonsense, and vice versa.

Just a short time ago, I had an interview with a sensible boy, who had started "keeping company" with a girl. I was naturally anxious to find out whether he, too, had decided to act foolishly, so I asked him whether he talked sense with the girl or not, and he replied that, of course, the first few times they met, they had to talk silliness, but after that they talked just as much sense as if they were both boys.

Ah, when are we going to get over thinking we must have some nonsense before we can talk sense? The only solution for the problem is for you and me to reform, without waiting for the others—if we think it's right. One trouble is, we don't think enough, but follow customs too much.

Granting that we do reform in this respect, we still have before us the second phase of our subject to discuss, namely, using common sense. Some boys are very emphatic in denouncing girls, but in nine cases out of ten these same boys had their fights, when little, as to their right to be the "fellow" of some pretty girl in school. Why, then, do they not like them now? Because they have found out that the girls they thought so much of are not the angels they at first imagined.

I remember several girls that I thought, when I was little, would make splendid wives for me (only one at a time, of course), and I wished I was old enough to be married. And now, since I've got my wisdom teeth, I would feel like kicking myself all the day long had my hopes been realized. The trouble was I didn't know what I wanted, and so was captivated by some insignificant charm about them. This is a weakness of mankind in general, not only in love, but in other things as well. For instance, a man without a correct understanding of the purpose of life, sees the pleasures that wealth will bring, and soon he is engrossed with the money-making spirit. He places his affections upon wealth, and the more he concentrates his mind along this line, the less he sees in better things. Finally, often too late, he realizes that he has been blind to realities, and has grasped only the shadow.

Knowing our proneness to err, wise are we if we guard against erring in love. How? By not allowing our affections to be drawn out by the insignificant. How can we prevent it? By having an ideal of the woman we want to marry. Certainly, let us associate with any worthy girls it may be our privilege to meet, but let us be careful we do not "glide" into love with them.

Of course, it is possible to have too high an ideal. As I picture my own, I realize that there is only about one girl in a thousand who comes up to it; but then, if I am going to be so particular whom I marry, the girl has just as good a right to be particular whom she chooses, and if there is only one in a thousand comes up to her ideal, it makes my chances of getting married infinitesimal. Yet, "Aim high" is a good motto. Let us not think we are done with common sense when we have formed our ideal. We have all been surprised to see how "soft" a couple act when they get in love. If we would use a little common sense at this stage, it would save a lot of gush. When a fellow gets in love, he acts as if he thought the girl of his choice was an angel. Well, he should think she is the best there is (for him, at any rate), or he should not contemplate marrying her. But when you come to think it over, how is it that he is the only one who thinks so? The only account I can give for it is that love is partly, if not largely, enthusiasm. I made up my mind long ago that when I feel myself in love, I'll knock off about 50 per cent. of the enchantment as enthusiasm, and then see how my ideal looks in the light of the other 50 per cent. common sense.

As I said before, I am somewhat of a pessimist, and, judging by the experience of others, I am already beginning to fear that, in the critical moment, my good resolutions will mount up as on eagle's wings, leaving me to my fate. But whatever that fate may be, I am sure I shall always find consolation in the thought that I did what I could.

Norfolk Co., Ont.

This question is, joking aside, a serious one, as "Pensons" has evidently divined. Cannot our young men and women help us to an interesting discussion on the following topics: (1) What are the qualities which a young man most admires in a young woman? (2) What are the qualities which a young woman most admires in a young man?

Let me but do my work from day to day
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roiling market place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
"This is my work, my blessing, not my doom."
Of all who live, I am only one by whom
This work can best be done in the right way.

—Henry Van Dyke.

The Quiet Hour.

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.—S. John vi.: 68, 69.

Can you echo those confident words, spoken by one who knew the private as well as the public life of his Master? If not, would you be glad to echo them? In this age, as in all other ages of the Christian era, there are two classes of people who say, "We are not sure that Jesus is the Christ." One class is eagerly seeking for proof that He is the Son of God, while the other is delighted with every new difficulty that is found to lie in the path of faith. If you belong to this latter class you will not be likely to read this column, so my message will not be addressed to you. I will ask of the former class the question which drew from St. Peter his famous expression of confident assurance, the question put by the Master to His disciples: "Will ye also go away?" Surely, if you have looked into history and the human soul at all, you will be able to say: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Look through the history of the Christian nations, and you can count on your fingers the atheists who were noble and pure and good, pouring out their lives in consecrated service, helping and uplifting their fellows. But who can count the multitudes who have been constrained by the love of Christ to devote the best years of life in self-sacrificing service? Who but God could count those who, even now, are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, in city and country, in tropic heat and arctic cold? Judging by their fruits, we must own that the words of Christ and the inspiration of His Life have power to make dark places light and foul places fair, and to bring joy into sorrowful lives.

Yesterday I was talking to a young and unusually clever woman, who said that everyone had "one time of delirious happiness in life, and after that was over, life was gray." She said she was looking forward to death "to end it all." And yet she is healthy and busy, with artistic surroundings and a devoted father and mother. She says she is "never glad to see another day dawn." What is the matter with her? Simply this—she knows nothing of God or the joy of serving Him. Death, in her eyes, is the "end" of life; instead of being the door leading into a grander life. She fancies she can look down on those who are still old-fashioned enough to believe in Christ—and what does she gain by her "cleverness"? Nothing but a miserable heart-hunger and unhappiness. She will not go to Him for rest and peace, and to whom else can she go for those priceless treasures? No millionaire has money enough to buy them, and yet the most ignorant slave may win them for his own. I have just read a book in which the hero reads all the sceptical writings he can procure, looking down with easy contempt on what he is pleased to call the "fable" of Christianity. And he is in a constant whirl of disquiet, life has no meaning in his eyes, sorrow and pain must be endured, but he can see no profit in them. Even character is of little worth if it is to crumble into nothingness at death. Love at last opens his eyes to the fact that if he does not turn to the ever-present God, there is no one else to go to. When his wife is passing out of his sight, the empty creed—which is the absence of a creed—of agnosticism is torn to pieces in a moment by the soul that refuses to lose its hold on another soul.

But life as well as death should convince us that Christ has the words of eternal life. If it is hard to believe that the Ten Commandments were written by God in tables of stone, we cannot break them without finding out to our cost that they are written in our bodies and souls. The nations that break them are uncivilized, the men who break them are brutalized and feeble. But Christ's enforcement of them goes deeper than the outside act; even to break the Sixth and Seventh Commandments in "thought," he declares, with authority, is degrading. Can anyone teach higher morality than

is given in the Sermon on the Mount? God does not leave Himself without a witness. Though well-doing often brings sorrow, yet—in the end—it results in happiness; and sin—though its first-fruits may be outward prosperity—yet it is like "Dead Sea fruit," turning to ashes in the mouth. If God is not always judging the world, how strange it is that sin should always be the path to misery, and righteousness should lead to honor, peace and happiness! This could not be the case if the world were governed by chance.

A sure trust in God gives buoyant courage. Think of Luther, when a messenger from the Pope told him that he need not expect any prince to take up arms to defend him. "Where will you be then—where will you be then?" was the terrible question, which he answered in calm confidence: "Where I am now; in the hands of Almighty God." Do you want proofs of the truth of Christianity? Then look at it! It is its own proof. If you look at an apple-tree, year after year, and find it bearing flowers and fruit, can anyone convince you that it has been dead all the time? Look at the history of Christianity. See how it has changed common men and women into heroes and saints, by the thousands; see how churches to uplift souls, hospitals, orphanages and asylums of various kinds to help bodies, and schools of all kinds to instruct minds, spring up where it takes root. Look at the marvellous literature turned out by those who have been illuminated by it—though a few writers, who would have been ignorant enough but for their education in Christian countries, strike the mother who has nourished them in the face. To whom shall we go if not to "Christian" countries, if we wish to find these things growing naturally as fruit on a tree that is alive?

And what if we can't always understand the reason for God's apparent carelessness when His children are treated unjustly. We can surely trust Him a little, when we remember how often, since the world began, good has triumphed over the evil. How can we expect to understand the whole of life, when the infinite part of it—the division that lies on the other side of death—is unknown to us? If we reject Christ, this life of ours is a riddle without solution; if we accept Him, light is thrown on much of it, and our love for Him makes us willing to trust the dark bits in His keeping. "To whom shall we go" but to one who has found the living Christ, for such beautiful thoughts as these? What inexpressible joy for me, to look up through the apple blossoms and the fluttering leaves and to see God's love there; to listen to the thrush that has built his nest among them, and to feel God's love, who cares for the birds, in every note that swells his little throat; to look beyond to the bright, blue depths of the sky, and feel they are a canopy of blessing—the roof of the house of my Father; that if clouds pass over it, it is the unchangeable light they veil; that, even when the day itself passes, I shall see that the night only unveils new worlds of light, and to know that if I could unwrap fold after fold of God's universe, I should only unfold more and more blessing and see deeper and deeper into the love which is at the heart of it all. If you want joy and peace that will grow more radiant year after year, go to Christ for it—you will certainly find it nowhere else.

HOPE.

ON MAKING THE BEST OF ONE ANOTHER.

There is an art that needs to be generally cultivated. It is that of making the best of one another. No two persons are constituted just alike, nor do they see things in exactly the same way. This is characteristic of us all, and constitutes the main reason why in all our dealings we should be charitable. To see things through the eyes of another is not easy. We are naturally biased in our own favor, and are apt to consider our judgment superior. Even if it be so, we should make some allowance for the right of personal judgment on the other person's part, and not be arbitrary. No one knows it all, and it may be that with all our confidence in our own superior discernment time will prove us wrong.