

## The Quiet Hour.

### Neighborhood Work.

Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.—Rom. xv.: 2.

"Not by sorrow or by sighing  
Can we lift the heavy load  
Of the poor, the sick, the dying,  
Whom we meet upon the road;  
For we only help when bringing  
Faith and courage to their need,  
When we set the joy bells ringing  
In their hearts by words and deed.

"By the glow of thoughts uplifted  
To God's everlasting hills,  
We can melt away the drifted  
Snow some lonely life that fills;  
By the hand-clasp strong, unfailing,  
Thrilling hope from palm to palm,  
We can nerve some soul for scaling  
Heights that rise in sunny calm.

"All around are those who linger,  
Weak, despairing, full of fear,  
While with feeble beckoning finger  
They implore us to draw near.  
Let us pour the oil of gladness  
On their hopeless misery,  
Banishing their grief and sadness  
By our radiant sympathy."

I don't know who coined the phrase, "Neighborhood Work," but it is a splendid definition of the duty and privilege which belongs to us all. Years ago, it was only in the country that people went "neighboring." Those who lived in great cities thought it no shame to be entirely unacquainted with their next-door neighbors. But this age has been awakened to the glory of humanity. The quiet, steady influence of Christianity has at last convinced the civilized world of the infinite value of each human being, and we look on our neighbors with different eyes. It is not only that God has raised man to an infinite height by becoming Man, but we are beginning to understand the innate glory of a nature that could receive and become one with the Divine Nature. The human body in its perfection is acknowledged to be the most perfect model for the painter or sculptor to copy, the human mind seems to be infinite in its capacity for growing and improving. As for the human spirit—who can begin to understand the mystery of its infinite powers? Read the beautiful thoughts of men who are daily drinking in more and more of God's Spirit, and you will catch faint glimpses of the Holy of Holies within the soul where only God and the man himself can enter. And this glory and beauty of humanity is not only within the reach of a favored few. It is there, in each of us, ready to be developed. Let us try to realize that in our neighbors, though they may be dirty and ragged or respectably uninteresting, we may—if we will approach them with tender reverence—touch the living Christ, God manifest in flesh. Then "Neighborhood Work," whether done in city or country, will have a new sacredness and awaken in us a new and wonderful joy. Then we can see the importance of "pleasing our neighbor for his good," and no kindness or sacrifice—from the cup of cold water up to Christ's death on the Cross—will seem either trifling or too great.

Formerly, as Dean Hodges remarks, "it was supposed that the child's mind went to school, only bringing its body along for the purpose of annoying the teacher, but now we understand that the whole child goes to school." There are school nurses provided in many places to look after the children's bodies, the lessons become a pleasure instead of torture to the little ones, because they are so varied with gesture and exercises and brightened with gay music. The "vacation-schools," especially, help the children to grow vigorous in body and mind, developing their powers naturally and joyously. I fear that the training of the spirit is still rather allowed to look after itself, but at least things have improved wonderfully, and the Church is fully awake to the value of the new movement, and will not be satisfied to attempt practical Christianity while ignoring Christ—as some of the "Settlements" seem to be doing. The practical proofs of His Divine mission that our Lord gave to the imprisoned and doubtful Baptist are the proofs the Church offers a doubting

world to-day, according to her ability. She, like her Lord, is going about "doing good" wherever she sees an opportunity. The young people in the tenement district of the city have practically no social life in the home—only going there to eat and sleep—the Church gathers them in from the streets, provides bright rooms with music and games, books and papers, lectures, clubs and evening schools. The children who have no home nurseries are gathered in and "mothered" for several hours each day, and are given outings and picnics as often as possible. The boys' "gangs" are transformed into "clubs," where the boys gain new ideals of manliness, self-respect and self-control, and are inspired to do "neighborhood work" on their own account. When we heard of the disaster at San Francisco, all our boys' clubs immediately subscribed something, according to the state of their finances. The men are provided with comfortable club-rooms as a counter-attraction to the bar-rooms, which used to be their only opportunity for social intercourse. Of course, this kind of neighborhood work is not so necessary in the country, where people have real homes, as they cannot have here, where a number of families live in each house. I read the other day that one Church settlement in New York gets into helpful touch with about 15,000 people each year, through various clubs and classes. But big as these undertakings seem, they should not discourage anyone from working in a small way. Our Lord devoted His time to thoroughly training a few men, instead of trying to make an im-

parties each week—and see how they enjoy wading in the water. I always take plenty of pins, but they go in far enough to get the pinned-up clothes very wet and dirty—but little do they care for that.

I stopped my writing there, finding that the mercury stood at 90 in our tiny sitting-room, so I picked up pencil and paper and fled to a cooler spot. I am now sitting at the very end of a "recreation pier," which is built far out into the water, especially for the benefit of us dwellers in tenement-houses. It is almost cold out here, and there are boats of all kinds picturesquely scattered about in the foreground, not to speak of hundreds of happy children paddling about on the beach. These long piers, with their hundreds of comfortable seats, may well be classed under the heading of city neighborhood work—more particularly as they afford a wholesome and delightful change from the neighborhood in which we live into God's glorious fresh air. It has been said: "If a sceptic regarding the usefulness of institutional Church work lived in the best of the New York tenements, he would connect himself with one of our Church houses within a week. Hallways dark, even on the brightest day, rooms small at the largest and few in number, with neighbors intemperate and immoral, would drive him to such a refuge."

One observer says that some of the kindergarten children, trying to carry into effect their school lessons in gardening, planted a few oats, which they had picked up, on the street between some

being steadily and surely built up by apparently trifling acts and thoughts. It is always small things that make character, great crises only show to the world the character which has been already built—or at least they add very little to it. But this character-building is imperceptible in its growth, it is hard to trace out just when and where certain ideals were absorbed and assimilated. Children are great hero-worshippers, and very clear-sighted. Let anyone with high ideals live amongst them, and get into close touch with them, and the ideals will surely prove catching. God has taught us by example the necessity of living among our neighbors if we want to help them. A God far off in heaven, living in glory, having no experimental knowledge of pain and sorrow, could never have drawn our hearts up after Him; but God Incarnate, dying as He had lived in holy tenderness among His neighbors, attracts us irresistibly. It has been said that "when Christian in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' found himself in the City of Destruction, he departed out of it as speedily as possible. Christian to-day knows his duty better. He has no thought of flight. Straight he goes and gathers other men like-minded with himself and undertakes the problem of the city."

But I don't wish to give you the false impression that "neighborhood work" is for the city only, and has nothing to do with you who live in the country. Wherever we find our Lord in His brethren—and where can we not find Him?—there is our chance to render Him glad service. Though He ascended into Heaven, He is still here to be ministered to. What opportunities we have of showing our love to Him by being kind to the people within reach. Each little kindness, which is so easy to do, we can lay as a precious gift in His outstretched hand, and so find gladness all along the road of life, for it is always more blessed to give than to receive. Neighborhood work—in city or in country—flows from Him who practiced both and inspires both. If Christ is reigning as King within the temple of your own soul, you cannot help reaching out to seek Him in the souls of others. You will find it to be such a glorious privilege to live a life of service that you will almost forget that it is also a duty. We can never help others by throwing good advice at them wholesale from a distance. We must get as near them as possible, feeling it to be a high honor if—like our master—we are classed as the friends of publicans and sinners. We have no right to live negative lives, fancying that we are not doing any harm if we are not trying enthusiastically to do good. In our Lord's wonderful parable of the sheep and the goats, those who were utterly rejected by the King might easily have thought that they had done no harm. They were punished for their negative lives—they had not been actively kind. In nearly all the parables, the teaching is the same. God demands some positive good from those He has placed in this world. To bury His talent, or store away His pound in a safe place, is to be unfaithful to the trust committed to us; and to be unfaithful in little things is to actively injure both ourselves and the cause of Christ. To do no good is to do harm to the lives of others, for in that case we are depriving them of the good that God put into our hands for them. We are stewards, all of us, and must render an account for the time, money, health and all other talents entrusted to us. You can do some neighborhood work wherever you are. Will you not look round you and see what cup of cold water you can offer to the King? Be sure that in accepting your gift He can transform it into choicest wine—wine that maketh glad the heart of man.

"I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,  
Through constant watching wise,  
To meet the glad with joyful smiles  
And wipe the weeping eyes;  
And a heart at leisure from itself  
To soothe and sympathize.  
Wherever in the world I am,  
In whatsoever estate,  
I have a fellowship with hearts  
To keep and cultivate,  
And a work of lowly love to do,  
For the LORD on Whom I wait."

HOPE.



Hairy Woodpecker.

pression on a great many, and both faith and experience declare that His plan is the best. Individual work is always the most satisfactory.

Some of my girls told me the other day that last year their club had a garden in the country. They went out there one day each week, and grew vegetables and flowers. That certainly was "pleasing them for their good to edification," as you would feel if you saw how hard it is to get enough earth to fill a flower-pot, and if you saw how the children crowd round anyone who is walking along the street with a bunch of flowers. "Please, lady, give me a flower!" is the cry of each little dirty-faced child, and how delighted they are when their coaxing is successful. But a great many flowers are sent in to supply this need also. They come in regularly each week for our kindergarten—about 100 bunches at a time—and some of the vacation-schools are supplied with flowers nearly every day. That is a bit of "neighborhood work" you people in the country might do. Flowers are grand missionaries here, where they are scarce. It is a great delight to take 15 or 20 children away from these hot streets to the sea—we are taking two or three picnic

cobblestones. They proudly invited their teacher to see this, "our own garden," saying: "We watered it every day. Won't everybody in the kind garden be glad?"

The good results of this work, especially among the young, cannot be measured by man. Think of the young girls, for instance, growing up in wild freedom on the streets. They are inclined to be rough and bold in their intercourse with their boy-friends—can you wonder at it? Their language is anything but lady-like, and would probably shock you dreadfully. But the sweetness of womanly purity is often underneath the rude exterior, and they are quick to admire and try to follow a high ideal when it is presented to them by one who really cares for them individually. There is something very beautiful and winning in a young girl standing on the threshold of life, and these are not blind to the true glory and crown of womanhood when they are given a chance to see it. They also gain refinement through learning little niceties in cooking and sewing, music and embroidery, and appreciate the advantage of calisthenics and gymnastic exercises. God works slowly, and so must we. Day after day, character is