

question or hesitation. He must know how to use his weapons, and, between himself and his comrades, there must be unity of purpose and effort if victory is to be won.

You and I, dear girls, are surely of one mind in this. We wish to be truly God's children, and if so, we must be soldiers of Christ and possess all the qualities I have named, to equip us for the fight which must go on whilst we live on earth. We have to war against ourselves, first of all, and to conquer by God's help, the sin which most easily besets us.

This is not the kind of battle for an army, but for each soldier individually, yet all can help the one.

You and I can do this, and now, for the one amongst us who tries, but owns with sorrow that hitherto she has failed to attain what she desires. Let me ask each of you to pray that she may have strength from above to enable her to continue the struggle, patience to persevere until she comes off even more than conqueror, and that as the soldier looks to his captain, follows his lead and obeys his commands, so she may follow the Great Captain of our salvation until she is able to exclaim, "Thanks be to God who hath given me the victory over my besetting sin."

I want you also to pray unitedly that our second year's twilight gatherings may be fruitful of good to each and all of us, that the Holy Spirit may guide us in choosing subjects to speak about, and that after every meeting we may have a sense of greater nearness to God, and be in more loving touch with our neighbour.

I suppose we all know what temptation assails us most powerfully and is the hardest to resist. If we could compare notes, I have no doubt that many would own that the tendency to get angry about little things holds the first place.

Many people think that a hasty temper is not such a bad thing after all. They will say, "Give me a quick-tempered, sharp-spoken person to deal with; such a one is not often deceitful. He says straight out what he has to say. No beating about the bush." Or, "She is fiery enough. Up in a moment if a word is said that makes her angry; but there is no malice about hasty people. The temper is over directly, and then—"

What then? Can the hard words be recalled? Does the effect of them pass away with the sound of the voice which uttered them? Have they inflicted no wound which will be long in healing, or may never heal? At best a scar is left as a reminder of past suffering, and the most forgiving natures

cannot always forget, however much they may wish to do so.

It too often happens that those we really love best, the members of our own families, are the ones who suffer most from our hasty tempers, and their outcome, sharp and bitter words. We are less under restraint beneath our own roof-tree than when amongst strangers. Common civility, to say nothing of social refinement, constrains us to exercise decent self-control over temper and tongue, or we should be shunned by our acquaintances and friendship would be impossible.

The fact that we do control our tempers in society shows that the power rests with ourselves to a great extent, and besides and above all, a better safeguard is to be had for the asking. Only we must want it. We must be convinced of our own weakness, and, like my dear girl correspondent who grieves over her failures at home, we must seek help where we may be sure of finding it.

Let us together take the measure of the enemy we have to fight against and the harm that it can effect as shown in God's word.

Can we find in the Bible a picture of a braver man than David was, so far as personal courage was concerned? He feared neither the paw of the lion nor of the bear; but mere lad though he was, he faced them and slew them in defence of his father's flock from which they had stolen a lamb. With only a sling and stones for armour, David, the ruddy youth, met and slew the giant Philistine.

Many a long year after, when he was King over Israel, and the father of grown-up children, we find him crying to God for help against enemies of another kind.

He, who had feared neither savage beast nor heathen giant, prayed that his life might be preserved, and that God would hide him from those whose tongues were sharpened like a sword and their bitter words like arrows.

Patient Job, amidst his many sore trials, appealed to his friends not to aggravate them by their reproaches. "How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?" he cried. "Grievous words stir up anger," said the Wise King. They are the outcome of a hasty temper, and are infectious, for they make others angry too. "An angry man stirreth up strife."

The Old Testament abounds with warning passages which show how strong a foe we have to battle with in the hasty temper which vents itself in sharp words. Turn from it to the New Testament. There the tongue is compared to a fire, an unruly evil, which needs to be kept by bit and bridle.

I could go on quoting passages of this kind,

but it will be far better for each of you, dear girl friends, to look them out for yourselves. We know enough to be sure that, in our own unaided strength, we cannot conquer a hasty spirit or keep our tongues from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile. David realised this when he cried, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Like David we must pray for God's help first of all. I often think that he must have tried and failed, and felt his utter weakness when fighting against this besetting sin of speaking hasty words, and so he asks for a sentry to be set and a restraining hand to act as a lock to his lips. We must ask in a like spirit of self-distrust.

We have sometimes seen a mother place her hand over her child's mouth to prevent some foolish utterance. David asked for such a remedy, an invisible restraining power, and we cannot doubt that his petition would be granted.

So with all the armour we need to insure success, God can give it, and in His word we read, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and unbridled not, and it shall be given him."

Such words must take away all our doubts and fears. Besides, we are not further encouraged by the words of our great Captain—Christ? "Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

We must look upward in confidence, resolved to follow our Glorious Leader, and in His name let us ask for patience, perseverance, watchfulness and more of Christian love. It is those who possess a large measure of this last named, but chief amongst Christian graces, who are "not easily provoked."

Strive on, work on, fight on against the hasty spirit which vents itself in anger and sharp words. Think how glorious the victory will be when won—glorious and precious in God's sight.

Many a general, both in ancient and modern days, has come home after gaining a victory by siege or battle. His countrymen have bidden him welcome and honours have been heaped upon him on all sides. But something far better awaits you, dear ones, who try and try again; until, despite many failures, you realise that you have won a bloodless victory over a besetting sin. For the still small voice of a quiet conscience will say to you, "Well done!" and God Himself has declared, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

(To be continued.)

VARIETIES.

THE ACTIVE CHRISTIAN.

"I earnestly wish," says Count Tolstoi, "that every Christian of our time would devote herself with heart and soul to two kinds of activity—the abstaining from all unchristian deeds, and the bold confession of the whole truth."

"The Christian would then feel not only that her life was full, but how short it is for the fulfilment of all that is in store for her and is required of her by the Lord."

MUSHROOMS.

Annie: "It's always in damp places where mushrooms grow, papa?"

Papa: "Yes, little one."

Annie: "Is that why they look like umbrellas, papa?"

UNDYING DEEDS.

"Great deeds cannot die;

They with the sun and moon renew their light,
For ever blessing those that look on them."
Tennyson.

BRIDAL SUPERSTITIONS.—According to an old superstition no bride must go to the altar without "something old and something new, something borrowed, and something blue." Neither must she, after her toilet is complete, look at herself in the mirror. She must see that no bridal guest wears a costume entirely black, as that would bring her sorrow. On changing her gown, she must throw away every pin used in the bridal attire.

GOLD DIGGING.—In the rugged hills of toil and hardship life's finest gold is found.

HIGH AND HIGHER.

"The peak is high, and flushed

At his highest with sunrise fire,
The peak is high and the stars are high,
But the thought of man is higher."

THE BEST WEAPON OF ALL.—"Woman's best weapon is her tongue," says an old philosopher. This is a mistake. She has a far better one, and the wisest woman is she who has learned to use it. That weapon is a sweet temper.

A GOOD HABIT.—"Get the habit—a glorious one—of referring all to Christ. How did He feel, think, act? So then must I feel, and think, and act. Should I please myself? For even Christ pleased not Himself."

Frederick W. Robertson.