

Hope's Quiet Hour.

Welcome the MASTER.

The Master saith, Where is thy guest-chamber? And he will himself show you a large upper room furnished and ready: and there make ready for us.—S. Mark xiv.: 14, 15, R. V.

"My garden must be beautiful,
For when the shadows play
In length'ning shapes along the wall,
And comes the cool of day,
Perchance my Lord might come to see
The place where roses bloom for me.
And, if He asked to come within
This house of mine to rest,
How fair and sweet the rooms should be
For such a wondrous Guest!
'Twere better far to keep them so,
Lest He might come before I know.
And, if He stayed for friendly speech
As fell the light of day,
How should I know to talk with Him,
Or holy things to say,
Unless my soul acquainted be
With some of heaven's mystery?"

During the Great Forty Days, between Easter and Ascension Day, the disciples of Christ must have been living in a state of eager expectation. When they gathered together for public worship on the first day of each week, they had good reason to think that suddenly they might see their Master in their midst. No one would try to manufacture excuses for staying at home, no one would be inattentive, or think of bringing only his body to church, leaving his spirit to wander elsewhere. When two friends went out for a walk together, they would look with friendly attention at every stranger they met—for had not two of the friends of Christ walked miles with Him along the public road, on Easter Day, without recognizing Him? If a woman were working alone in her house, she knew that the Master, who a few days before had stopped a woman's frantic weeping by saying quietly to her, "Mary!" might any moment call her by name.

The men were just as expectant, no matter what they were doing; for they knew of the secret interview which the repentant Apostle had been granted with his Living, Loving Lord. No wonder St. Peter silently pondered over that sacred meeting, which he could not have described if he would. There are some things which are secrets between the soul and God. We all have within us a hidden place, like the Holy of Holies in the Temple, where only the High Priest has the right of entrance. To throw open that Holy Place is not only desecration, but it is ruinous to our soul's life. Expose the physical heart, and the life ebbs and dies, expose the root of a plant, and every leaf withers. So, if a man is able and willing to tell the world all about his meetings with Christ—the life, which should be hidden in the depths of the soul, will grow thin and poor.

We want to help our comrades, and therefore we must go to our Master for the messages He wants to send through us. Nothing could give me greater joy than the statement recently made by one of our readers, that Hope's weekly message was "our Lord's message, through her," bringing special answers to private and unexpected questions. But, though we are sent like the women on Easter Day, to tell the wondering, incredulous world, that its rightful King is Living, and near; still there are some things which He whispers to us which are not to be published. Would a true woman publish the love-letters of her beloved? Would she tell to this friend or that acquaintance the words he intended for her alone? St. Paul declared that he had seen wonderful visions, and "heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful (or possible) for a man to utter."

It is the hidden life which sways the outer life; thoughts are seeds, hidden in the soil of the heart, from which words and actions grow. If our lives are good outwardly, and our thoughts are not beautiful, then we are hypocrites. We shrink away from the word, which is so detestable in the eyes of men, and which called forth terrible indignation from

Him Who was—and always is—the Friend of sinners. If we don't want to be like whitewashed sepulchres, which make a fine show outwardly, but within are foul and loathsome, then we must keep the hidden rooms of the heart fair and sweet. The guest-chamber must be always ready, so that the Master may keep the feast of joy with His disciples. Are you feeling lonely because one who is very dear to you is far away? Then seek the guest-chamber, where the Master waits to welcome you among His other guests. As you kneel at His feet, you can clasp the hand of that other servant of His who is close beside Him. Long before the discovery of "the wireless," men and women had found out that they had a common meeting-ground in the Presence of their Master. We need not be parted from our friends, for

"God keeps watch 'tween thee and me,
Both are His care.
One arm round thee and one round me,
Will keep us near."

The Master loves to hold friends always near to each other; and very often He brings them far nearer together in reality by the very distance that seems to be a barrier between them.

"And though our paths be separate,
And thy way be not mine,
Yet, coming to the mercy seat,
My soul shall meet with thine."

Let us seek out our Master and tell Him about our troubles, so that we may gain strength from Him to endure them bravely. St. Paul preached the manly doctrine that everyone should bear his own burden (Gal. vi.: 5). That does not mean going about groaning over every discomfort, as if life were a misery and sunshine only a luxury for millionaires. It means courage and cheeriness in hard times. It means forgetting one's own troubles in a daily custom of helping other people.

To-day, as I write, the papers are full of the horrors of the Ohio floods. When we know that many weak women and tender children are enduring hunger and cold, and many brave men are risking their lives and bearing hardships in trying to rescue them, we feel ashamed of grumbling about the weather, or some other trifling unpleasantness.

And, if you keep very near to our Master, we shall learn from Him to endure hardness as good soldiers should. Someone has slighted us, or been unkind in a small way. We feel like resenting it indignantly—but one look at our Lord so kindly in His love for the disloyal disciple who had broken faith with Him, and in His forgiveness of the men who heaped insult and mockery upon Him, makes us ashamed of our paltry selfishness.

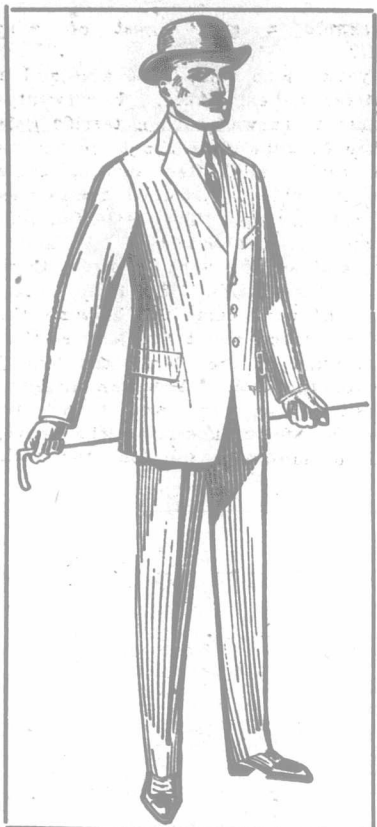
We never know when the Master will manifest His Presence vividly. Perhaps it may be when we are praying—just our usual everyday prayer, which is so often a wearisome duty rather than a privilege. Last night it was so with me. I knelt down as usual—and suddenly I felt that my Lord was there. Very often I only know it, but it is a great help to feel it sometimes. To say one's prayers as a duty is a necessity, if we want to make steady progress. It is fatal to only pray when our feelings are stirred—and yet the Lord knows well that our love is fanned into a brighter flame by the touch of His hand and the sound of His voice.

The ordinary work is pressing to be done, as you get up in the morning, but do not begin it without first kneeling at the feet of Christ, to take His special orders for the day, and to gain needed power from Him. Go to meet Him often, and then your heart will be glad when the wonderful message comes that you are summoned to see His Face. He says, through one of His servants:

"With the long day's work before you,
You rise up with the sun,
And the neighbors come in to talk a little

Of all that must be done;
But remember that I may be the next
To come in at the door,
To call you from your busy work
For evermore:

As you work, your heart must watch,
For the door is on the latch
In your room,
And it may be in the morning
I will come."



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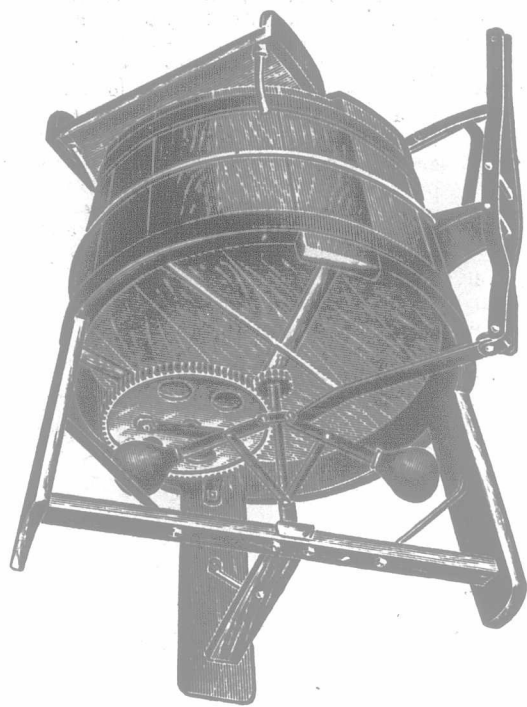
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