

and it is only used once a year. And oh, you farmers, no wonder you sometimes get grouchy. What you all need, what you all deserve is a holiday at least once a year for two or three weeks, the same as city folk. Get out of the rut, go to see something different and come back with new ideas and fresh vim to carry on.

Each year we like to celebrate Victoria Day and so as each member of the family has a birthday let us do some little thing to show we are glad they are still with us. Try to make Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter mean something for even in these trying times we still have our joys and blessing. We must bear in mind the kiddies, they must not be cheated of all their pleasures for time passes quickly and they are children no longer. Gather young people into your home make it a place where they love to come and your own young people will love to be there too. Keep as keen an interest and as big an enthusiasm in the affairs of church and state as is possible for you. Be alive and keep on growing, that life may be a thing of beauty increasing in joy forever.

Hope's Quiet Hour.

What is Your Life?

What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.—S. Jam. 4: 14.

"The evening shadows deepen,
The hours of day are past—
What have we done since rise of sun
To prove love standeth fast?

The answer given by the Apostle to his solemn question: "What is your life?" seems at first rather discouraging. In the R. V. the answer is still more discouraging: "For ye are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." If we had no other information on the subject we might say recklessly: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!"—A heathen motto. Or, to use a more modern expression—which sounds rather heathenish to me—"It will be all the same a hundred years hence." As a matter of fact, that common remark is absolutely untrue, for the most trifling action or the most secret thought will be built into character and will leave its impress for all eternity. It is folly to think that what we do or think in secret is of no consequence. It is only a fool who says in his heart: "God hath forgotten: He hideth His face, He will never see it."

The patriarch Job compared this short earthly life of man to that of a flower, which is swiftly cut down, and says, "he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." He also asked the solemn question: "Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Yet he did not think this passing life was like a moving picture, which looks real for a little while and then is wiped out, leaving no mark. He lived always consciously in the presence of God, and said, "Thou numberest my steps; dost not Thou watch over my sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity." He knew that strong rocks and great mountains should wear away and come to nought, yet he was able to trust his own frail life in the hand of the Almighty Father, saying: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

If our life's aim is low—if we only want to slip comfortably through this short stage of existence—we may reach our ideal. But if we aim high—if we want to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect—then we are sure to fail. I mean we shall fail to climb to our ideal on this side of death. And yet it is the only way to make a real success of this schooltime of God's children.

"Others mistrust, and say, 'But time escapes:
Live now or never!'
He said, 'What's Time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has For Ever!'"

If we live only for Time, we must

drop all that we have gained as we pass through the narrow door of death. If we are laying up treasure in God's Treasury—the lasting gold of character—not one little grain will slip through our fingers and be lost.

Yesterday I received a letter from a friend of mine—the brother of a bishop who is loved and revered in both sides of the Atlantic. He told me how he had visited many country homes in Ontario lately, and said that he found many women who read our "Quiet Hour"—so I must be careful to sow seeds which will result in a harvest of good. He enclosed some thoughts which he had jotted down, telling me I might pass them on to you. These are his reflections on the subject: "Virtue is its own Reward."

"The scoffer hath said: 'Be good and you will miss much fun.' The fool hath said: 'Eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die.' God hath said: 'Be pure and you shall see Me,'—shall see the King in His Beauty, have some insight into the length and breadth and depth of the love of God, and of the beauty of His holiness.

O scoffer! dost thou not know that the body thou hast soiled was built to be the temple of God, and that He cannot enter into a defiled temple! Neither canst thou—whilst thou art still a scoffer—have such a vision of God which can alone lift thee up, and make thee akin to those great and high souls who have lived and worked, and lifted humanity up a little nearer to the vision; and then died and joined that innumerable company of saints and angels who surround His throne. In that day, O scoffer, thy body will be in the dust, and where and what will be thy soul? Knowest thou not, too, O scoffer! that in this life also, if thou art pure and good, great and noble souls will claim kinship with thee, and little children will trust and love thee, and thou shalt have Peace with God. What hast thou to offer, O scoffer, for all these things? Nothing but a mess of pottage, for which thou hast sold thy birthright."

What is your life? Is it your vocation to fill up a few years with a meaningless succession of trifling duties; and are you then to be snuffed out like the flame of a candle, leaving behind only a passing memory of one who had once lived?

We are already living in eternity. Everything we do is important, because it is helping or injuring character—our own and others—and character is eternal in its nature. The work God gives each of us to do is worth doing with all our might—whether it is work the world knows about or not.

A friend of mine, who is very interested in the possibilities of education, asked me to put before you the following questions.

"1. Is it desirable that a definite course in 'citizenship' be included in the curriculum for the final year of compulsory school attendance?

"2. Is it desirable in the interests of our national and individual life that the people of our country should be familiar with the story and teaching of the Bible?

"3. Is it desirable for an understanding and for the preservation of the distinctive ideals of our democratic civilization that the four Gospels should be used as textbooks for study in our Public Schools?"

These questions are designed to obtain an expression of public opinion and my friend told me that all readers in Ontario—who wished to express an opinion on these matters—should send their answers to the Educational Department, City Hall, Toronto. The third question does not mean that school-teachers should impose their own religious views on their scholars; but simply that the high ideals and incomparable Life, held up in the Gospels, should be studied as literature. They cannot fail to uplift the ideals of a nation if they are carefully studied.

It may be that the expression of your opinion will help to hold up before our loved Canada the ideal of love in practical service, which may smother out the spirit of selfish greed which the war has failed to conquer. In these days we hear a lot about "profiteering"—which is simply another name for selfishness. If our life is selfish in its aim, it is a cancer preying on the life of the community.

Just because the time is short, because to-day or to-morrow, this year or next year, we may be stopped short in our everyday work by the startling message: "The Master is come, and calleth for

thee,"—because the night is far spent and the long day is at hand—we must make the most of the remaining hours and have some gift ready when the Bridegroom appears. Have we even a cup of cold water to offer Him?

"If we to-night should hear Him
Ask what our Love has done
Through all the day, what could we say
To Christ the loving One?"
DORA FARNCOMB.

Gifts From Readers.

Several parcels of papers for the "shut-in" arrived this week (the postage on printed matter is one cent for four ounces—some friends use more stamps than are necessary.) Two parcels of children's clothing arrived from a reader in N. B.—which passed on at once to the children of a poor widow. Very few weeks pass without some outward visible proof of the kindness of "Quiet Hour" readers. I am grateful, and so also are the sick and needy people who receive your gifts.

DORA FARNCOMB,
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The Ingle Nook

Rules for correspondence in this and other Departments: (1) Kindly write on one side of paper only. (2) Always send name and address with communications. If pen name is also given the real name will not be published. (3) When enclosing a letter to be forwarded to anyone, place it in a stamped envelope ready to be sent on. (4) Allow one month in this department for answers to questions to appear.

THE other day I received a letter from a farmer which pleased me very much. It was marked "not for publication", and so I do not publish it, but I think the writer will forgive me if I quote but a single sentence. One of the items of the letter was approval of what I said a few weeks ago in regard to the obnoxiousness of having trained animals at shows, because of the cruelty required, usually, in training them; also the writer approved of my dislike of the ugly and vulgar exhibits shown along the "Midway" of the Exhibitions held in various parts of our beautiful country.—Now here is the sentence I want to quote: "I like to look at beautiful things. When one gets accustomed to looking for beauty one soon dislikes things that are ugly, sordid and unwholesome."

The thought expressed in that sentence I endorse with my whole heart, and I am sure you do, too, reader, or will if you stop a minute to think about it. If one can look at beautiful exhibits, beautiful plays, graceful Grecian dances and tableaux, and pretty, interesting folk dances, why waste one's time gazing at calves with six legs, and half naked women with snakes twined about them, and men so fat they are monstrosities (probably fed up for the purpose), and all the other unelevating things that usually make up the side-shows of the Midway? The public gets just what it smiles upon. If people, generally, "cut" such exhibitions they will soon cease to be. They are only put on as a money-making scheme, and will exist just as long as unthinking people choose to throw their money away—and worse than throw it away—by patronizing them;—not a day longer.

I am quite sure that the great majority of people love beautiful things, and hate ugly ones, just as much as this farmer who has been kind enough to write to me. The trouble is that many people have not tried themselves out in the matter. They have accepted, unquestioningly, everything thrust upon them, letting themselves drift with the tide instead of making a stand and demanding—or making—something better.

Take, for instance, the bleak and bare homes to be seen on almost every street in any city and almost every road the country over. The house, probably, is comfortable enough. But there is not a vine not a shrub, not a tree, to break the bareness. The inhabitants of the place have been just letting things drift—and missing all the delight of taking a bit of action in the matter.

Reader, I don't know your home, but if it is one such as I have just described, why not try out the truth of what I have said by doing something right now in this fall planting season? Pick out a

spot in your back yard and two or three spots in your front yard where trees would look well. Dig up a nice deep root-bed, mixing some decayed fertilizer in with the soil. Next go down to the bush and very carefully dig up a few of the nicest little trees you can find—not forgetting that the quite small ones are best. Also dig up a wild grape vine and a wild clematis vine, if you can find them. Put the trees where you have planned for them, and the vines near the porch or verandah, or near any old fence that would look better covered (a stone fence is lovely when covered with vines). When that has been done beg a root or two of perennial flowers from your neighbors—phlox, hollyhocks, anything at all—and put them in somewhere near the house where they will be visible from the windows.

Next year there will not be a very great showing.—But in three or four year's time, if I am still with this paper, please write me and tell me if you are not glad that you tried the experiment.

When I was in Toronto at Exhibition time I met a very interesting woman, Mrs. Hector Prenter, who has lectured in many parts of Canada and the United States, even as far away as Los Angeles. A few days ago I saw in the Toronto papers that she had been re-elected President of the Single Tax Association of Ontario.—And now I suppose you are wondering what Mrs. Hector Prenter has to do with the subject in hand. Simply this. That owing to the efforts of herself and her fellow-workers a marked victory for Single Tax has been scored recently in Ontario—right in the capital city of the Dominion at that. In the city of Ottawa a by-law has recently been passed reducing the tax on houses by 25 per cent. each year until none shall remain, the tax remaining on land only.

As you know, if you paint your house, put up new verandahs, build a nice addition, etc., at once your taxes go up. For this reason many people refuse to make improvements. Therefore the present system puts a premium on ugliness. It slaps Beauty in the face by taxing it wherever it makes an appearance.

I have just been talking the matter over with one of the men on our staff and he says single tax would be a boon to all farmers, encouraging them to make improvements, and spoiling the nice little scheme of the man who holds property unimproved, for mere speculation, paying low taxes on it and trusting to the hard work of his neighbors in improving their land (paying high taxes the while) to push the value of his land up. By Single Tax, all the taxes would be levied on the land, none on buildings, and idle land, held for speculation, would be taxed as heavily as the improved land next to it. So, if we work for Single Tax, we shall be working for Beauty also, shall we not?

Think about that.

Reading Harriet Martineau's "Autobiography" recently, I came to a paragraph in which she spoke of some literary woman having remarked to her her inability to read anything merely for pleasure, or to go anywhere in the same spirit, her mind being always on the lookout for "copy". It is perfectly true. When you write as your life-work, you are always on the lookout for something to pass on.

The other night we had our first frost and the next evening, while out for a walk, it occurred to me to make a list of the flowers I saw that had best survived the attack, so that I might pass on to you my observations. It is so nice, you know, to have a garden that retains some of its beauty quite until the last minute before snow comes.

I noticed that, while the coleus and amaranthus and some other juicy species were quite black and limp, the foliage of the peonies and irises was untouched, also the gray-green of clumps of the garden pink. Unless in very exposed positions, the salvia was still bright and glowing, while the beautiful fall anemone and the pretty little verbenas were in the very heyday of their beauty;—verbenas, as you may know, are almost unfreezeable. Very conspicuously beautiful, even after snowfall each year, are the tall ornamental grasses, which are well worthy of a place about any lawn, and which develop in a few years, into handsome, graceful clumps that are even more beautiful—if that could be—than flowers. If you