

THE QUIET HOUR

GROWING CHRISTLIKE

Till we all come . . . unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. — Eph. iv., 13.

"Turn not in vain regret
To thy fond yesterdays,
But forward face, and set
Thy feet toward the untrodden
ways."

I have just subscribed for a magazine, called "Eternal Progress," attracted by the name, for I know nothing about the magazine or its merits. Eternal Progress is the business of us all. We know very little about the life beyond the veil, but we feel intuitively that there is no stagnation there. Our Lord commands us to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. St. Paul tells us to press on, with earnest purpose, until we reach the holiness of "perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Certainly we shall need the opportunity of all eternity before we reach that standard. A great tree may grow out of a tiny acorn, and God gives us all the time needed for our development. He is very patient, for a Christlike character is a glorious result, well worth waiting for. But are we growing? That is a question to be gravely and thoughtfully considered. Are we really more like the perfect Example than we were last year?

I once read a story called "The Measuring Rod." An angel came down once a year and set a tall golden rod upright in the ground. Over it were the words: "The measure of a perfect man." The people came one by one to be measured, and the measurements were recorded by the angel in a book.

"No one could escape the terrible accuracy of that strange rod. Each one shrank from or increased to his true dimensions—his spiritual dimensions. It was an index of the soul-growth which was shown in this mysterious way."

One who worked very hard for many charitable societies, grew shorter and shorter as she touched the mystic rod. The angel said very gravely: "This would be a soul of high stature, if only the zeal for outside works, which can be seen of men, had not checked the lowly, secret graces of humility and trust and patience under little trials. These, too, are needed for perfect soul-growth."

Then the surprised philanthropist moved sadly away to make room for a poor little sewing-woman. As she stood by the rod she increased in height, and her face shone with glad surprise as the angel wrote in the book, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Then came one who was very rich, but she shrank so low that no one noticed the beautiful clothes which she had considered so important.

"Old Jerry, the cobbler, came next—poor, old, clumsy Jerry—but as he hobbled up the steps, the angel's face fairly blazed with light, and he smiled on him and led him to the rod; and behold! Jerry's measure was higher than any of the others. The angel's voice rang out loud and clear, saying: 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

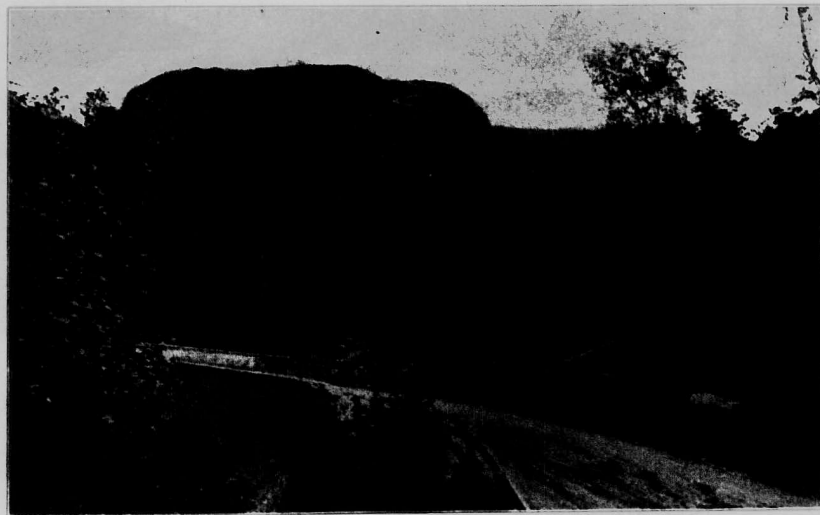
"Surely it is true that God does keep a record of our progress. He knows whether we are more Christlike than a year ago. Are we growing steadily, or slipping imperceptibly back? To stand still is impossible, and we may grow if we will. Where there's a will there's a way. If we are not making progress, then it is certain we are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness."

A man who is bent on being a successful farmer, will eagerly seek for

information which may be helpful. He will throw heart and energy into his work, and, of course, he will improve all the time. It is exactly the same in spiritual growth. One who really cares about it will surely make headway, no matter how often he may fall. The progress may be like the incoming tide; a wave comes a trifle higher, then, perhaps, several may fall short, then another gains an inch or two, until, by slow degrees, the place which was beach an hour ago, is flooded.

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

But determination and persistence can never make a man grow by his own power, they make him search until he finds the Lord and Giver of Life. No blade of grass can develop without divine help. God must clothe the lily of the field, it can never put on its robe of beauty alone. And a soul that longs for beauty and holiness must reach out to the Holy One for that great gift. Certainly, its pleading will be heard and the Life of God will pour continually into it, making it grow and bear fruit.



BLACK ROCK.

Through the prophet Hosea, God pleads with His people to give up their iniquity and accept of His love. He says: "I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots like Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree . . . they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine."

Christ is the Life of the whole Vine, pouring Himself continually into every branch and every tiny twig. The Christian life is not a dull round of hard duty; it is vigorous, eager life, pushing upwards towards the light for very gladness. It is fellowship with an unseen Friend:

"Loud mockers in the roaring
street
Say Christ is crucified again:
Twice pierced His gospel-bearing
feet,
Twice broken His great heart in
vain."

I hear and to myself I smile,
For Christ talks with me all the
while."

We may not be able to give mathematical proof of our dear Master's presence with us—and such proof would be useless, anyway, for it could never raise a soul out of sin nearer to holiness—but we who know Him can say, "to me to live is Christ." That is the only fact which is of vital importance. He is watching our every step, planning out each day, making everything

that comes our way an opportunity for our growth. He rejoices over our every victory—though it may seem very trivial to men—He is disappointed every time we are defeated. Even the tones of our voice are of moment to him; the peevish or plaintive tone which reveals a heart out of tune, or the glad ring which shows that all is well within—nothing is too small for His notice.

We should put ourselves into touch with God, and then His Life can make us grow as unconsciously as a flower that is bathing itself in the sunshine without caring about its own beauty. We all might well use the prayer of an English schoolmaster, which is quoted by Bishop Brent in his latest book, "Leadership."

"O, Lord, I have a busy world around me. Eye, ear, and thought will be needed for all my work to be done in this busy world. Now ere I enter on it, I would commit eye, ear and thought to Thee. Do thou bless them and keep their work Thine, that as through Thy natural laws my heart beats, and my blood beats without any thought of mine, so my spiritual life may hold on its course at these times when my mind cannot consciously turn to Thee to commit each particular thought to Thy service."

If we want to grow, we must hold out our hands for all the gifts God showers on us every day. There are gifts of sunshine and rain, of storm and peace, frost and warmth. We must send our roots deeper and deeper, making the hidden life minister to the life that is visible, we must never

—that glorious work of God—can only be developed slowly. But everything will help the work along, if we only give it a chance.

Our business is to climb. If we measure our attainments against the holiness of Christ, we can never cry "Enough." The road is always uphill.

"A road of lonely morn and
midnight, sloping
O'er earth's dim bars;
Where out at last the soul, life's
pinnacles topping,
Stands with the stars."

DORA FARNCOMB (HOPE.)

AN EASTER SONG

The golden sun climbs up the sky,
The shadows flee away,
Oh! weary heart, forget to sigh
God sends the Easter Day!
Long was that night, chill was the
air,
And grief o'er brooded long,
Yet is the new world white and fair,
Uplift thine Easter song!

The cross that bowed Thee with its
weight
By strength of prayer is stirred,
Till it shall bear thee soon or late,
As wings upbear the bird.
The life that thrills from star to
star,
And beats in leaf and stem,
Is wider than the heavens are,
And blesses thee from them.

Wert thou cast down, wert thou
dismayed,
Dear child of One above,
Behold the earth in light arrayed,
The light of deathless love.
Oh! listen to the word that wakes
In every budding flower,
And take the bread the Master
breaks,
In His triumphal hour.

For those who hear, and hearing
yearn,
The King hath secrets sweet;
Their hearts within them thrill and
burn.
They wait His coming feet.
Then swift the sun climbs up the sky!
The shadows flee away!
Oh! weary heart, forget to sigh,
God sends the Easter Day:
—Selected.

INGLE NOOK

RULES FOR WINNING A WIFE

Dear Sir,—Will you kindly inform me, through the valuable columns of your paper, the best way to make love to a girl about eighteen, so that I could win her for my wife? I am a man nearly fifty years of age. Hoping you will be able to help me in this matter. A. H.

The man who could invent or discover an infallible method for winning a girl's love could quit the newspaper business without giving notice and become a millionaire. But there is little likelihood that that will ever occur, for this reason: No one can ever guess what particular characteristic of a man is going to do the winning. A girl may fall in love with a man for his beauty, or his youth, or his cleverness, or his kindness, but the chances are even that it is his ugliness that attracts, or his age that augurs constancy, or his stupidity that makes her maternal instincts desire to look after him, or she surrenders to his dominating masterfulness. And nobody has the faintest chance of knowing just which of these qualities will win—the

man in the case least chance of all.

A girl—especially a young girl—resents being proposed to as if it were a business transaction. She has a right to be wooed, and expects it, but the man must be wise enough to steer clear of any degree of sentimentality that is going to make either of them appear ridiculous in the eyes of others. To be ardent with dignity; to be thoughtful and attentive without being oppressive in his attentions—these are the light tasks a man sets himself when he undertakes to win the feminine fancy.

In your case the difficulties are increased, because of the disparity in your ages. Unless a man is very young for his years, he is no fitting mate at fifty for a child of eighteen. The difference is too great, and will increase in effect rather than diminish with the years. Before she has barely reached the prime of life, you will have finished the span allotted by the psalmist; you will be an old man when she is still a young woman, with the best of her life before her. Even if you should capture her romantic fancy now—and