

The Quiet Hour

ENTHUSIASTIC LIVING.

Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.—St. Matt. xvi., 25.

Could we but crush that ever-craving lust

For bliss, which kills all bliss, and lose our Life—

Our barren unit-life—to find again

A thousand lives in those for whom we die—

So were we men and women! and should hold

Our rightful rank in God's great Universe,

Wherein, in heaven and earth, by will or nature

Nought lives for Self!

All spend themselves for others! And shall man,

Earth's rosy blossom—image of God—

Whose twofold being is the mystic knot

Which couples Earth and Heaven—doubly bound

As being both worm and angel, to that service

By which both worms and angels hold their life—

Shall he, whose every breath is debt on debt,

Refuse, without some hope of further wage

Which he calls Heaven, to be what God has made him?

No! let him show himself the creature's lord

By freewill gift of that Self-sacrifice

Which they, perforce, by Nature's law must suffer.

—KINGSLEY.

All the Universe, as Kingsley says, is preaching the same strange doctrine, the doctrine plainly stated by our Lord in the text given above. From God Himself, who pours out His life ceaselessly in the service of all creation; from the angels, who never tire of ministering; from the glorious sun, running a race of life-giving service; down to the plants and insects which feed the life of others by their death, we find the law of self-sacrifice everywhere. But most of all do we see the beauty of this law of pouring out life for others, when we look at it from the Christian's standpoint. Our business in life, if we are really trying to copy our Master, must be to help others at any cost to ourselves. It would have been strange, indeed, if Infinite Love had not drawn Him irresistibly down from heaven to suffer with, and for, mankind. Do we not recognize it as the natural and right use of riches and talents, when they are poured out enthusiastically for the good of humanity and the glory of God? A man who hoards up wealth is losing all the good of his money—he might just as well be collecting a pile of pebbles. A man who spends it in selfish pleasure is sure to find life unsatisfactory—he is wasting it instead of living it to the full. Every seed that falls into the ground gains a fuller life through death; unless it gives out its life it "lieth alone." Without the sacrifice of seed no one can get a harvest at all, and he that soweth bountifully will in the long run reap bountifully, while he that soweth sparingly and grudgingly need not be surprised if the crop is poor and scanty. This principle holds good in the spiritual as well as in the natural field. Did you ever notice that the happiest people around you are almost always the most unselfish, while the discontented grumblers are like children who are on the watch to secure the biggest piece of cake or candy? They may think that they are unhappy because they can't get exactly what they want, but the trouble is that they have aimed wrongly—attempting to "save" their life, they are losing it. A forced or grudging sacrifice is poor and colorless; it must be enthusiastic to fill each day with gladness. Long ago a prince with a few rough soldiers sought shelter from the intense cold of Russia in a walled shed. The prince was unused to hardships, and—so the story goes—

those rough men took off their cloaks and laid them over him as he slept. When morning came he woke, warm and rested, but he found his faithful soldiers had indeed been faithful unto death, giving their lives for him. I don't know whether the story is true, but it seems to me to be splendid. To give life in order to save another life always seems the right and noble thing even though the life sacrificed may be apparently worth far more than the one saved.

There is one great difference between the sacrifice of seed grain and the noble enthusiasm of self-sacrifice for others. The first is done deliberately, with an eye to the future harvest, while the second is poor indeed if it is done for reward in this life or the next. "If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again." The disciples showed how little they understood their Master's example when, after mentioning things they had given up for His sake, they asked, "What shall we have therefor?" If a man tries to buy Heaven with earthly gold, he may be wise and prudent, but his bargain can hardly be considered noble, any more than Jacob's compact to give the tenth of everything to God would bless him. The widow of Zarephath was surely not acting from interested motives when she shared her last morsel with a hungry stranger—although he did not promise that she should lose nothing by her kindness. Yet that sublime act of self-sacrifice was the direct means of preserving her own and her son's life all through the days of famine. If she had not given the means of subsistence away, she would soon have starved to death. By being willing to lose her life she saved it, even in this world. But God does not always make such a return as this. Indulgent mothers only educate their sons in selfishness when they instantly reward them for every generous act. The children soon learn to expect it, feel injured if no notice is taken of their sacrifice, and entirely lose the true spirit of joy and giving. David was certainly right when he declared that he would not offer to God a gift which cost him nothing. Children should be encouraged to give their own coppers in Sunday school or church, rather than receive them just for that purpose. The son of an Irish clergyman once asked his father for money for a miserable, ragged child who was begging at the door. The father explained that that he could not do anything, as he already had so many of his own people to help. "However," he said, "if you like to go without your own dinner and give it to the child, you may." The boy adopted this plan, and declares that it was the best lesson about charity that he ever had in his life—it was a true giving of himself.

"The Holy Supper is kept, indeed, In whatso we share with another's need; Not what we give, but what we share, For the Gift without the Giver is bare; Who gives himself, with his alms feeds three— Himself, his hungry neighbor, and Me."

And no one can tell how far a little act of self-sacrifice may reach, nor how many people it may inspire to do likewise. For instance, a few weeks ago a young Jewish boy of 13 years old earned a quarter by scrubbing some floors for us. Soon after his mother was calling on me, and she told me how Israel had hurried to a store with his money and bought bread and milk; then he had called in his brothers and sisters to have a feast. Of course, if the little chap had dreamed that his kindly deed would become known to many thousands of people, and would rouse them to do something worth while, it would not have been a beautiful act at all. The beauty of it lay in its quiet inconspicuousness. And we all have a chance every day to offer to God some little gift that costs us something, and that the

world knows nothing about. Robertson says: "The most trifling act which is marked by usefulness to others is nobler in God's sight than the most brilliant accomplishment of genius. To teach a few Sunday-school children, week after week, commonplace, simple truths—persevering in spite of dulness and mean capacities—is a more glorious occupation than the highest meditations or creations of genius which edify or instruct only our own solitary soul." Who can tell how far a light may shine? A writer says that one day she was on her way down town when a pale little face looked from a fourth-storey window opposite, and a child's pleading voice said: "Please don't forget to light your fire to-night." There was a sick child, in a bare little room, who was alone all day and got lonely as the dark came on. Every night he watched for the light in the room opposite, and when it failed to appear he found the darkness very dreary. It is apt to be so in life. Those who are enthusiastically trying to brighten one little spot always send good cheer farther than they know. A city missionary said once of a man who was very useful in getting warmly into touch with people: "He isn't much of a man if you measure him some ways, but he's worth a hundred dollars a year as kindling-wood in a prayer-meeting." In this connection I wish to thank the writer of the letter given below for her kindly encouragement.

HOPE.

H. W.

Literary Society

FIRST MEETING AND CONTEST

Bryant's song describing autumn days as "melancholy" and the "saddest of the year" prove conclusively that he never spent a fall in the prairie provinces. Bright sunny days, starry nippy nights, the memory of a gathered harvest and the prospect of a rest from the heaviest physical toil, are no reasons for melancholy. It is a time to live and enjoy. It is a time to begin mental exercises energetically since the body is no longer under heavy strain.

So we begin again the work of our Literary Society. It has always been a pleasure to a few people; this year we want to make it a pleasure and profit to many people. We have a hundred members; why not five hundred?

To increase the number of people interested in the Society we are going to increase the subjects of interest. You need not feel "out of it" if your knowledge of literature is not very extensive, there will be a place for those who are interested in music, drawing, photography, history and geography, current events.

The prizes this year will be either Literary Society pins, or books—a list of which is given here. They are all cloth bound, with good print and paper and of convenient size:

1. Harold—Lord Lytton.
2. Ivanhoe—Sir Walter Scott.
3. Westward Ho!—Charles Kingsley.
4. Adam Bede—George Eliot.
5. The Three Musketeers—Alexandre Dumas.
6. Cranford—Mrs. Gaskell.
7. Tale of Two Cities—Dickens.
8. Kenilworth—Scott.
9. Redgauntlet—Scott.
10. Old Curiosity Shop—Dickens.
11. Little Dorrit—Dickens.
12. Bleak House—Dickens.
13. Our Mutual Friend—Dickens.
14. Jane Eyre—Charlotte Brontë.
15. Shirley—Brontë.
16. Vicar of Wakefield—Oliver Goldsmith.
17. Lorna Doone—William Blackmore.
18. Tales from Shakespeare—Charles Lamb.
19. Tom Brown's School Days—Thomas Hughes.
20. Little Women—Louisa Alcott.
21. The Dove in the Eagle's Nest—Charlotte Yonge.
22. Mill on the Floss—George Eliot.
23. Long Will, a Story of Chaucer's Day—Florence Converse.
24. Montcalm and Wolfe, Vol. I.—Parkman.
25. Montcalm and Wolfe, Vol. II.—Parkman.

26. Pepys Diary.
27. Life of Nelson—Southey.
28. Bacon's Essays.
29. Emerson's Essays.
30. Lamb's Essays.
31. Autocrat of the Breakfast Table—Holmes.
32. Sesame and Lilies—John Ruskin.
33. Crown of Wild Olive—John Ruskin.
34. Macaulay's Essays.
35. Sartor Resartus—Carlyle.
36. Heroes and Hero Worship—Carlyle.
37. Lincoln's Speeches.
38. Pitt's Orations.
39. John Bright's Addresses.
40. Browning's Poems.
41. Tennyson's Poems.
42. Burns' Poems and Songs.
43. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.
44. Palgrave's Golden Treasury.
45. Shakespeare's Tragedies.
46. Shakespeare's Comedies.
47. Shakespeare's Historical Plays.

Keep this list by you as we cannot spare space to reprint it every week. Then when you win a prize send word what book you wish. They are each worthy a place in any library.

For the first contest we will make use of a form that was very popular last year. There were ten times as many answers received as came for any other competition.

1. Give the authors of the following quotations.
2. Write on one side of paper only.
3. Give full name and address.
4. Have your answer in this office by November 15th.

The three members who supply the most complete lists will be awarded prizes.

AUTHORS OF QUOTATIONS

1. To make virtue of necessity.
2. Order is Heaven's first law.
3. The short and simple annals of the poor.
4. Love me little, love me long.
5. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.
6. Man proposes but God disposes.
7. After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.
8. 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.
9. Homekeeping youth have ever homely wits.
10. Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.
11. Butchered to make a Roman holiday.
12. Cleanliness is next to godliness.
13. Am I my brother's keeper?
14. Many waters cannot quench love.
15. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest.