

Do you see that it is something the same with prayer meetings? They, too, have their mechanics. Some one is responsible for the executive programme. Programmes are mechanical—often very mechanical—but necessary.

Now it is not pleasant to see prayer meeting mechanics obtruding themselves. Yet they will, and most persistently. You go some night to the lecture-room, hoping for a refreshing, soul-delighting meeting. You try not to be disappointed. But the music is not appropriate, the topic is not thoroughly grasped by the leader, the papers show hurried preparation. There is an air of incompleteness about the whole service. The mechanics are obtruding. You can't help thinking of ways in which the meeting could have been bettered. Not that in this meeting there was not earnestness and devotion; but from the purely mechanical standpoint of what a prayer meeting, as a definitely arranged plan, ought to be, you were conscious of something lacking. Everyone did not notice it, but we are supposing that you are one of those sensitive persons who love artistic orderliness, and you felt what others perhaps did not notice at all.

Or you may have had a share in the arrangement of the evening's programme. You were chairman of the Prayer Meeting Committee, it may be. You had done your best to secure a good meeting; you had asked several members to take a certain part; you had especially requested the organist to be in practice; you had invited some young men for whom you thought the leader would have a word. You had introduced some new feature which was thus to have its first experiment. And then, when the meeting commenced, you sat in your seat and you watched how things went. You knew the whole mechanics. You knew the significance of each little detail, and you were nervously expectant. Other people did not see or think of the mechanics. To them there was a good meeting or a bad meeting, but to you it was a mechanical success or a mechanical failure. You couldn't help it.

Just as there are those whose especial forte it is to put machinery together, so there are those whose especial ability in Christian Endeavor work is in the arranging of prayer meetings. Such an one will see the mechanics every time. He will not be annoyed, for it is his delight. It is his business, in the dictionary of Endeavor duty, to keep other people from seeing the bare details. Let them have the finished result, but there must be some one to look closely after the mechanics.

Halifax, N.S.

Trouble, the Refiner.

WITH more than a father's affection, with more than a mother's love, God sends pain to men. Suffering comes under Divine commission. Sorrows do not riot through life. Men are not atoms buffeted hither and

thither. Troubles are appointed to refine away our grossness; to transmute selfishness into self-sacrifice; to destroy vice, to transfigure all our life. Refused, troubles bruise without softening; crush without maturing. Accepted and rightly used they change their nature and become joys. Tears are seeds; planted, they blossom into joy and gladness. In his celebrated painting Delacroix has assembled a court of universal genius. Around an imaginary art tribunal stand the sages, orators, philosophers, reformers, and martyrs who have achieved eminence.

Strange, passing strange, that those who stand in the forefront, preeminent for their ability, are alike preeminent for their sufferings! Denied his ambition and the promised land, Moses leads the immortal band. Blind, Homer feels his way. Then comes Paul, flogged and stoned out of all semblance of a man. Exiled, Dante, too, is there, whose *Inferno* in life best interprets his *inferno* of death. There, too, is Milton, broken-hearted and blind. Now comes One who leads all that goodly company. His name is "above every name." And whence His supremacy? This is His secret: "His face was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."—*Newell Dwight Hillis.*

Seeing the Invisible.

THERE are to be found to-day men and women to whom Christ is as real as though they held His fleshly hand and looked into His sweet human face. They are as sure that heaven is round them as that their hearts beat within them, as certainly as if He awoke them each morning with a kiss.

Some time ago I met with a picture representing two women in great sorrow. Standing just behind the chairs on which they were sitting there appeared the figure of Christ stretching out His hand over them. They could not see Him, because their eyes were dim, but He was none the less present with them. He was near in all His effulgent brightness, with all His sympathetic consolation, and with all His helpful power. At the foot of the picture this verse was written:

"Unheard, because our ears are dull,
Unseen, because our eyes are dim,
He walks on earth—the Wonderful—
And all great deeds are done for Him."

What we need is the power to see—to see the chariots and horses on the mountains; to see God all about us; to see that the darkest clouds and most threatening surroundings are under the all-controlling power of the Everlasting Father. And seeing this, we shall have the prophet's hope, and the prophet's faith, and the prophet's trust that they who are with us are more than they who are against us. The prayer, then, that befits our lips day and night continually, is, "Lord; we pray Thee, open our eyes, that we may see."—*Forward.*