

disappointment. There is no necessity to be what is called Puritanical about our pleasures, but all the same when the love of amusement leads us to the saloon, the gambling-table, or the low theatre, when these become the sole end and aim of our existence, and when it becomes a positive hindrance to what we know is a higher and nobler life, such as Pythianism teaches, then such should be avoided and given up, without the slightest hesitation. Amusement should always be a means to an end—never an end in itself. This should come into our life to help us to grow stronger and better, to relax brain and muscle, to give rest and change. But when the heart rests there, and when the virtues are submerged as in a flood, then not weal but woe will be the result. We are going to turn over a new leaf—well then, see to it what amuses you, and what power that has over you. See whether your amusements are helping you or hindering you. See whether you are being made a better or a worse knight. Remember, however, that we cannot become better, if that which is our burning desire clips the wings on which we should soar, cripples the feet which ought to carry us forward, and blocks up the avenues along which we should walk and rise to grander things. As Pythians these thoughts must suggest others, bearing more particularly on our Pythian life. Ah, our principles. We will all admit that they are of the highest and best. These are taught us in the most interesting way and exemplified in the most striking manner. The Pythian Knight is a man of principle. That is the ideal set before us. That is the picture which is continually set before us. We never get away from that. It follows and haunts us wherever we go, and whatever we do. Well, can we make no change here? Have we during the past been trying to become a true knight? Have we adopted and made the principles of Pythianism ours? Or are we sensible that, in spite of teaching by precept and example, we are still far short of our man? Most of us, we think, will at once confess, that we have not thought our best or done our best. Turn over a new leaf. Read over the principles of Pythianism. Think over them; look at them as you would look at a beautiful face, until you grow to love them, then go out into the world to live them, and enshrine them in noble deeds. Commit the following to heart:

“If I should see  
A brother languishing in sore distress,  
And I should turn and leave him comfortless,  
When I might be  
A messenger of hope and happiness,  
How could I ask to have what I denied  
In my own hour of bitterness supplied?

If I might share  
A brother's load along the dusty way,  
And I should turn and walk alone that day,  
How could I dare,  
When in the evening watch I knelt to pray,  
To ask for help to bear my pain and loss,  
If I had heeded not my brother's cross?

If I might sing  
A little song to cheer a fainting heart,  
And I should seal my lips and sit apart  
When I might bring  
A bit of sunshine for life's ache and smart,  
How could I hope to have my grief relieved  
If I kept silent when my brother grieved?

And so I know  
That day is lost, wherein I fail to lend  
A helping hand to some way-faring friend;  
But if it show  
A burden lightened by the cheer I sent,  
Then do I hold the golden hours well spent  
And lay me down in rest in sweet content.”

Then with our habits. We require to form good habits to carry out our principles. A knight is not made in a hap-hazard way. How are our habits? Are we regular in our attendance at our castle halls? Are we trying, however feeble, to give a helping hand? Are we getting into the habit of being anywhere and everywhere where Duty calls? We suppose the best of us will own we have formed careless habits. Turn over a new leaf and begin now to form habits that will robe you with a dress or character that will surpass the splendors of Solomon.

Then with your amusements. We will not dictate to others, but a true knight—composed as he is of true principles, and shaped by true habits—will ever find his joy of joys coming to him through doing good. Try this amusement. Now do not say we are aiming too high and that we are soaring beyond the capabilities of the average man. We believe in the power of the average man, for

“When it comes to a question of trusting  
Yourself to the risk of the road,  
When the thing is the sharing of burdens,  
The lifting the heft of a load,  
In the hour of peril or trial,  
In the hour you meet as you can,  
You may safely depend on the wisdom  
And skill of the average man.

’Tis the average man and no other  
Who does his plain duty each day,  
The small thing his wage is for doing,  
On the commonplace bit of the way.  
’Tis the average man, may God bless him,  
Who pilots us, still in the van,  
Over land, over sea, as we travel,  
Just the plain, hardy, average man.

So on through the days of existence,  
All mingled in shadow and shine,  
We may count on the every-day hero,  
Whom haply the gods may divine,  
But who wears the swart grime of his calling  
And labors and earns as he can,  
And stands at the last with the noblest,  
The commonplace, average man.”

Let us be at least an average man, and let us at the last stand, among the noblest of our Pythian band.