

flawlessly. He does not offer us a robe that is faded and shabby, one that has been washed so often that all its fair freshness is gone. No, His washing is able to restore lost beauty—impossible though that may seem. Has He not graciously promised: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Has He not promised to put our sins as far away from us as the east is far from the west—do you know how far in infinite space that is? He has said that He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, refining His servants as gold and silver, that they may offer unto Him an offering in righteousness. Such promises—and they are scattered broadcast through the Bible—are good tidings to us all, for we have all sinned over and over again, and surely we all long to wear the beauty of holiness, we all want to be robed in stainless white. It seems almost too good to be true that sin can really be blotted out. Some people don't seem to wish this Gospel of forgiveness to be true. Like the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son—which has been called "the gospel in the gospel"—they object to have a sinner received with rejoicings, they don't think it is fair that he should wear a fresh and beautiful robe and be clasped close to a loving Father's heart without any period of probation. Forgiveness, full and free and instantaneous, seems almost like injustice, and repentance seems too easy a price to pay in order to have years of wilful sin wiped out like writing on a slate—wiped out as though it had never been. But do we not sometimes confuse the guilt of sin and its painful consequences? Christ died in order that the guilt of sin might be removed, in order that we might be cleansed from stain; but dare anyone say that he can sin without feeling the sad consequences? When the frightened Apostle denied his loved Master he repented instantly as he met the look of love and forgiveness. He was forgiven. He was soon after reinstated by the threefold commission as he had thrice denied; the sin was blotted out, and he was white again, but he could not escape the sad consequences of his sin. Just a few short words, and he must suffer from them all his life! That hurt, disappointed, loving look from his dearest Friend, that look which caused him to weep bitterly, must have cut him to the heart as often as he remembered it—and when could he ever quite forget it? His shame before his fellow-disciples at that weak denial was a pain that he would hardly think of in the shame and pain of his own remembrance of his disloyalty. You elder brothers, who keep the prodigals coldly at a distance from a sense of justice, don't you think that St. Peter, though he was instantly forgiven, suffered enough for his sin? So, also, it was in the case of David. When he said, in sudden but heart-felt repentance, "I have sinned against the Lord!" his fainting spirit was instantly upheld from despair by the ready words of absolution, by God's pardon, delivered by His ambassador. But David had to endure all the rest of his life not only the outward consequences of his sin, but the far more terrible inward shame and sorrow. His repentance could not restore to life the man he had caused to be cruelly murdered, could not make him forget that he had stained the beauty of high innocence and trodden his treasured purity in the mire of foul sin. As a man soweth so shall he also reap, and no one need think that because repentance can bring instant forgiveness, sin is therefore a pleasure that may be lightly indulged. Every sin brings punishment, and usually swift punishment too. A career of vice and dissipation is a most miserable and unsatisfying one. The way of transgressors is hard.

But repentance is not only for those who have lived careless or ungodly lives, it is wrought into the texture of every Christian's daily life. In fact, the nearer we get to God the more instinctive and habitual our repentance must needs be. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance," says St. Paul, and as we keep our eyes fixed on the beauty of our holy King, we grow more and more dissatisfied with our own measure of holiness, we are continually repenting with that kind of repentance that inspires us to climb higher. Those who have their eyes fixed on God can never be satisfied to rest down in easy content with their

own spiritual condition. Goodness, even in men and women like ourselves, is the greatest incentive to us to be good too. It makes us dissatisfied with ourselves, and inspires us to aim at the highest goodness. The goodness of GOD, if kept always before our eyes, must lead us to repentance. Seeing His marvellous beauty of holiness we cannot help trying to be holy too, cannot help being ashamed of our own stained robes, cannot help longing with an increasing heart-hunger for the washing which can restore our soiled garments, and make them more dazzling white than any fuller on earth can whiten them. A worker among the poor, who was distressed at the dirty hands and faces of the women who came to the mothers' meeting every week, did not say a word about it to them, but simply showed them the beauty of purity and the ugliness of uncleanness. She bought a pair of white kid gloves and shook hands with every woman as she entered the room. Then she wore the soiled gloves all the evening. The next week she had another pair of white kid gloves, and again the women ruined them. After a few weeks, the women took the hint and came with cleaner hands, until at last she found that dirty hands were the exception rather than the rule. Another worker in the slums said that the most refining influence you could exert was to invite poor people to a meal, and let them sit down to a table which was covered with a snow-white cloth. He found that the vision of purity had a refining influence on mind and heart. Another man declared that "the best way to keep a man out of the mud is to black his boots." So the surest incentive to repentance is to keep always before our eyes the vision of the King in His beauty, and the best way of rousing other people to be sorry for their sins and enthusiastic in the pursuit of holiness, is not to talk continually to them about the wickedness of sin, but to let them see the beauty of holiness from Sunday morning to Saturday night. We all naturally resent being driven with a scourge, but those who show forth in their everyday life the beauty of purity, humility, love and joy, cannot fail to be strong magnets attracting all souls around them to struggle after the same shining virtues. Why else has GOD come down to live a life of spotless beauty here on earth? Can anyone really gaze on the wonderful forgiveness of the King on His cross, and then go out cherishing resentment against those who have been unjust or unkind in some petty matter towards himself? Can anyone see a Life of perfect self-sacrifice, poured out generously and enthusiastically in the service of men, and not be inspired to make some attempt to walk in the same difficult but glorious path? Repentance, if it means anything, means that we are sorry for past sins and are earnestly bent on doing better for the future. But we all know that we are desperately weak. Perhaps we make a strong resolve to be loving towards our fellows. We see the ugliness of cross looks, and the harshness of irritable tones. We see what a black and ungenerous thing it is to speak unkindly of others—others who think we are their loyal friends—behind their backs, and we resolve that we will not again be guilty of such low treachery. And then—terribly soon—we again wake to the knowledge that we have been poor and weak and wanting in real love. We have failed, but we do not lose courage because we are sure that GOD loves us and that He will lift us tenderly from the place where we have fallen, and will wash us from the stains we loathe. He is always willing to give us a fresh chance. No wonder the "woman who was a sinner" was encouraged to make the necessary struggle after purity again. Scorn and shame and disgrace might fail to help her, might crush her down in hopeless despair, but the hope of possible beauty of soul, the sight of One who wore the "white flower of a blameless life," and whose holy thoughts made themselves felt—as holy thoughts always do make their presence known—filled her with sorrow for her own stained garments, and an eager desire for the whiteness she had recklessly thrown away. It is not so much God's hatred of sin, as His tender love of sinners that makes us see our need of cleansing. Why do women instinctively want to clean their houses in the spring? Why

do the clothes they have worn in comfort all winter suddenly look shabby and dirty? Is it not because the world is putting on new clothes everywhere, the blossoming trees and fresh green grass and glorious sunshine make us all feel ashamed of being dirty and untidy. We want to be spotless, because we see beauty all around us. We hate our sins, and long for real cleansing, because we look up into the pity and purity of our Most Holy God. We have all sinned, have sinned over and over again, and we are cheered and encouraged to make a fresh start every day by the picture of our dear Lord's tenderness towards the weeping woman who washed His feet with her tears and poured out fragrant ointment in token of her penitent love. His anger could not have accomplished more than the terrifying her from the commission of sins, but His tender love and promise of a new and fresh beauty of soul made her place every secret thought of her soul before Him to be purified. Despair may crush, but hope gives courage for the fight—and the deeper we have fallen, the harder the fight must necessarily be. Let no one imagine that repentance is an easy thing; let no one go on lightly in a career of careless or wilful sin fancying that his soul can be easily made white again, and, therefore, it does not matter. The woman who was drawn to repentance by seeing the hideousness of her sinfulness as it showed so plainly against the purity of Christ's shining beauty, would have given all she possessed if only she could know that the past was a terrible dream, to know that she had kept the most priceless possession undefiled. The loving tenderness of Christ cut her to the heart when the scorn of the proud Pharisee only fell on hard indifference. Repentance, if it is worthy of the name, is real pain, just because God's forgiveness is so instant and so complete. The prodigal son must have felt the shame of his ungrateful disobedience with tenfold power when he was received with such undeserved tenderness.

"I have a message—I have more to say!
Shall Sorrow win His pity, and not Sin—
That burden ten times heavier to be borne?
What think you? Shall the virtuous have His care
Alone! O ye good Women! it is hard to leave
The paths of virtue and return again!—
What if this sinner wept and none of you
Comforted her? And what if she did strive
To mend, and none of you believed her strife,
Nor looked upon her? Mark, I do not say,
Though it was hard, you therefore were to blame.
But I beseech
Your patience!—Once in old Jerusalem
A woman kneeled at consecrated feet,
Kissed them and washed them with her tears.
What then?
I think that yet our Lord is pitiful."

Think how wonderful it was to see the Master washing His disciples' feet, washing from them all the dust and defilement contracted during the day! And He is ready to do this still. We have been once washed from past sins and started afresh, but every day our robes are stained and soiled with petty sins. Perhaps sometimes they are blackened with terrible defilement, though it may be a secret foulness which is none the less hideous because it is a thought-sin and is only seen by God and the sinner's conscience. Over and over again the Master stoops to wash our feet, to make our stained garments glistening and beautiful. He is so patient, so hopeful, can we fail to try our best, can we fail to be very truly sorry for past failures? Thank God for it! We have all the right to say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." We all need the infinite forgiveness of our dear Master to set us on our feet after every fall. We need the encouraging clasp of His strong hand to hold us up. Without Him we can do nothing, but with Him—with His life pouring ever freshly through our veins—we can hope to stand before the Throne, clothed in white, cleansed from every stain. Our Leader never leaves us alone. He is always at hand to

strengthen such as do stand, to comfort and help the weak-hearted, to raise up them that fall, and, finally, to beat down Satan under our feet. We may go on our way rejoicing, because we can all be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Before closing, I wish to thank the many readers of the Quiet Hour who have written cheering words of encouragement to me. What greater gladness can I have than to find that God is willing to send messages through me? I consider it a rare privilege to be allowed to speak to you who love Him, week after week.

"Our fellow-travellers still
Are gathering on the journey! the
bright electric thrill
Of quick instinctive union, more frequent
And more sweet,
Shall swiftly pass from heart to heart
In true and tender beat.
And closer yet and closer the golden
bonds shall be,
Enlinking all who love our Lord in pure
sincerity:
And wider yet and wider shall the cir-
cling glory glow,
As more and more are taught of GOD,
that mighty love to know."

HOPE.

The Young People's Department.

[All letters for Young People's Department must be addressed to Cousin Dorothy, 52 Victor Ave., Toronto.]

THE MAPLE WOODS.

When the winter storms are over,
And the days are getting warm,
And the snow is slowly melting
In the old woods on the farm;
Then they tap the spreading maples
For their sap so pure and clear,
And carry it in buckets
To the kettles boiling near.

Oh, how we love to gather
Round the blazing fire at night,
And watch the syrup boiling
In the kettles clear and bright,
Then, when everything is ready,
And the fire is burning low,
We have a merry frolic,
Making taffy in the snow.
Wellandport, Ont. KITTIE COHOE.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S TIMES COMPARED WITH OUR OWN.

"A History of Our Own Times" was brought into the library and placed beside another volume entitled "The Reign of Queen Elizabeth." After looking at the new volume for a few moments, the old one said, "My young friend, will you kindly tell me something about what is going on in the world to-day. I have long desired to know, but have not been outside this house for years, and have never before had such a good chance to find out." "Certainly," the younger replied, "on one condition, that you tell your story first."

The elder at once began, "Elizabeth ruled the country on very arbitrary principles, showing that she considered herself above all laws, and could make or unmake them at her pleasure; but as she always chose good advisers, and tried to do everything for the good of the people, this did no harm, and her people loved her, and called her 'Good Queen Bess.' At the beginning of her reign, England was about the lowest among the nations, but at the end she had reached the very highest rank, and made great strides in wealth and prosperity. Seeing the interest other nations were taking in America, England began to do the same, and Sir Walter Raleigh started a colony in New England at his own expense. The Protestant religion gained a firm footing in the country, and there was much disputing between the Protestants and Catholics; but they loved their country equally well, for at the time of the Spanish Armada they forgot their quarrels, and all joined together in fitting out small ships to repel the attack. Paper mills were first established; brick was first used for building purposes, and the poor laws instituted during this reign. Glass windows became common