

Man's Mortality.*"For me to live is Christ."*

[The following poem is justly considered a poetical gem of the highest order. The original was found in an Irish MS. in Trinity College, Dublin. There is reason to think that the poem was written by one of those primitive Christian bards in the reign of King Diarmid, about the year 554, and was sung and chanted at the last grand assembly of kings, chieftains, and bards, held in the famous Halls of Tara. The translation is by Dr. Donne.]

Like a damask rose you see,
Or like a blossom on a tree,
Or like the dainty flower in May,
Or like the morning to the day,
Or like the sun, or like the shade,
Or like the gourd which Jonah made:
Even such is man, whose thread is spun,
Drawn out and out, and so is done.
The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,
The sun sets, the shadow flies,
The gourd consumes, the man—he dies.

Like the grass that's newly sprung,
Or like the tale that's now begun,
Or like the bird that's here to-day,
Or like the pearly dew in May,
Or like an hour, or like a span,
Or like the singing of a swan;
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, not there, in life and death.
The grass withers, the tale is ended,
The bird has flown, the dew's ascended,
The hour is short, the span not long,
The swan's near death, man's life is done.

Like to the bubble in the brook,
Or in a glass much like a look,
Or like the shuttle in weaver's hand,
Or like the writing on the sand,
Or like a thought, or like a dream,
Or like the gliding of the stream,
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death.
The bubble's out, the look's forgot,
The shuttle's flung, the writing's blot,
The thought is past, the dream is gone,
The waters glide, man's life is done.

Like an arrow from a bow,
Or like a swift course of water flow,
Or like the time 'twixt flood and ebb,
Or like the spider's tender web,
Or like a race, or like a goal,
Or like the dealing of a dole;
Even such is man, whose brittle state
Is always subject unto fate.
The arrow shot, the flood soon spent,
The time no time, the web soon rent,
The race soon run, the goal soon won,
The dole soon dealt, man's life soon done.

Like to the lightning from the sky,
Or like a post that quick doth lie,
Or like a quaver in a song,
Or like a journey three days' long,
Or like the snow when summer's come,
Or like a pear, or like a plum;
Even such is man, who heaps up sorrow,
Lives but this day, and dies to-morrow.
The lightning's past, the post must go,
The song is short, the journey so,
The pear doth rot, the plum doth fall,
The snow dissolves, and so must all.

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle.

BY JESSE LYMAN HURLBUT, D.D.

In the summer of 1878 a movement was inaugurated at Lake Chautauqua, in Western New York, for the promotion of intelligence and culture among the people. The thought of this organization first arose in the mind of its originator, the Rev. John H. Vincent, D.D., twenty-five years ago, while he was beginning his ministry as a village pastor in New Jersey; but its practical realization was reserved for a more favourable time and better auspices.

In the early summer of 1878, while Dr. Vincent was crossing the Atlantic, homeward-bound from a breathing-spell under the Alps, the plans of the C. L. S. C. were matured and its details arranged. It was to involve a course of reading and study, covering the principal subjects of the college curriculum, giving to the English reader an

outlook over the field of learning, and some acquaintance with the masterpieces of literature, ancient and modern; employing hand-books and compendiums for the mastery of outlines, and appointing more extensive works to be read; a course which the individual could pursue alone, if necessary, yet adapted for associated study; sufficiently simple to invite the masses, and to lead them on without discouragement from its difficulties or its extent; yet so thorough as not to be deemed superficial by the more learned. Above all, it was to bring the six secular days of the week into harmony of purpose with the Sabbath, not only by recognizing the Bible as a department of its study, but more especially by having the entire course penetrated with the spirit of reverence and of faith.

Among the first who presented themselves as students was a venerable professor in a theological school, then eminent as a scholar, and since called home to rest. As he gave his name to Dr. Vincent, he clasped his hand, looked upward, and with deep feeling said: "Let us keep our heavenly Father in the midst." It was a happy thought of the founder to adopt this as one of the mottoes of the C. L. S. C. Another sentence had been already chosen as expressive of its aim: "We study the Word and the works of God;" and a third was afterward added, as an encouragement: "Never be discouraged."

The course of study is planned to cover four years, and may be accomplished by some readers in an hour a day, during ten months of each year. Of course no unlettered person can secure a finished education by reading an hour *per diem* for four years; yet so much time spent with thoughtful and wisely-chosen books will impart to any mind a knowledge of literature, a measure of intelligence, and an intellectual training, by no means to be despised. It embraces the general subjects of History, Science, Literature, and the Bible study, with a few branches which might be included under Home and Character. In history are included the five most important subjects of General History, and those of Greece, Rome, England, and America; each studied in a small text-book, and read in a more extensive work, such as Green's "Short History of the English People," with an occasional historical story, as "Hypatia." The sciences of Astronomy, Physiology, Biology and Natural Philosophy are taken up in *science primers* and other plain yet philosophical works. General Literature is studied in selections from the greatest works of the greatest authors; translations from Homer, Virgil, Demosthenes and Cicero; selected plays of Shakespeare; poems of Milton; essays of Macaulay; extracts from the writings of the most important periods in English history, and concise manuals; Biblical literature is noticed each year in the departments of evidence. Church history and practical Christianity, in such works as "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation" and Arthur's "Tongue of Fire." This sketch exhibits the course in merely a fragmentary way.

A helpful element of the plan is that of simultaneous study by all classes. The studies for each year are proportioned out among the months, as a suggestion, but not as a requirement, for the students.

The flexibility of the plan is such

that it admits either individual or associated study. Some follow it alone, and without companionship, except in the consciousness that twenty thousand fellow-students are in line with themselves. Others find it helpful to unite in "Local Circles," or segments of the general circle. These local circles aggregate almost a thousand, and are of all sizes, from three members (which are often called "triangles") to several hundred. There are little groups of ladies who meet with their sewing and discuss, not their neighbours' virtues, but the conduct of the Greeks and Romans, or listen to one reading from the course; travellers on the railroad conning their Chautauqua text-books; home circles, where the kings of England are being reviewed at the breakfast-table; social gatherings, with criticism and cream mingled in pleasant proportions; and ambitious organizations with lecture-courses and public discussions in the town-hall. In Cleveland is a circle of three hundred members, and in Pittsburgh one of five hundred, subdivided into smaller associations, but uniting in monthly meetings. The Germans have a branch, with text-books in their own language.

There is an arrangement whereby each member, however distant, is kept in constant connection with the office of the Circle. This is at Plainfield, N. J., where Miss K. F. Kimball, the secretary, aided by her corps of assistants, maintains a supervision over the details of the work. Application for union with the Circle are received, inclosing the annual fee of fifty cents, which is the sole expense of the association, except, of course, the cost of books. Let any may imagine a financial aim in the enterprise, let it be remarked, in passing, that the fees received scarcely cover the expenses of the office, and that the President receives absolutely nothing for his services.

Although every endeavour was made to keep the course inexpensive, it was soon found that seven or eight dollars *per annum* for the purchase of books was an obstacle in the way of many students. Hard-working women in homes where every penny must be counted before the bare necessities are bought, young men struggling with poverty on farms, sewing-girls in factories, wrote of their difficulties and of their sacrifices in the pursuit of knowledge. In 1880 a new departure was taken by the publication of *The Chautauquan*. This is a monthly magazine, of the form of the "Franklin Square library," now so popular, because so cheap. It contains many of the required books as serials, with articles of value selected from both standard and current literature. Through this magazine the cost of the Circle is greatly reduced.

There are several hundred members in the Dominion of Canada, and individual students in England, India, Japan, the Sandwich Islands, and Alaska.

As to the beneficial results of the organization there can scarcely be a question. Any system which will bring thousands of people into communion with the thought of the world cannot fail of blessing the race. Already this movement has quickened many into higher intellectual life. More than one young man has written to the office that by it he has been awakened to a hunger after knowledge, and has left the Circle for the larger culture of the college. In one of the leading

local circles a house-servant became a member, soon showed herself the brightest scholar in the company, resolved to obtain a higher education, and by dint of saving, with some assistance of friends who perceived her talents, entered the State Normal School, where she is now one of the most successful students. It has led many young men to study evenings that might have been wasted, or worse than wasted, in the saloon; and has substituted strong, thoughtful books for sensational novels in the hands of many young ladies.

It has breathed an atmosphere of culture around homes of poverty, and relieved the dull round of woman's never-ending work by worthy themes of thought and conversation. It has enabled middle-aged people to supplement the deficiencies, keenly felt, of their early education. One man wrote:

"I am so grateful to you that I can't express what I feel. I am a hard-working man. I have six children, and I work hard to keep them in school. Since I found out about your Circle I am trying my best to keep up, so that my boys will see what father does, just for an example to them."

Another wrote asking to be excused for not giving the time employed in reading, "for," he says, "I am a night watchman, and I read as I come on my night rounds to the lights." A Mississippi captain wrote that he found the course of great value to him; "because," he says, "when I stand on deck stormy nights I have something to think about; and you know when one has not taken care of his thoughts they will run away with him, and he will think about what he ought not."

We know of a merchant's clerk and his wife who, for two years past, except during the summer vacation, have devoted the morning hours from five to seven o'clock to study, in order to leave their evenings free for the claims of home, society and church. An army officer's wife writes from the plains that no other white woman lives within sixty miles, and the nearest bookstore is three hundred miles distant, so that she was waiting impatiently three months for her text-books, and when they came she fairly wept with delight at the realization that she was at last brought into some communion with seekers after culture. Such testimonies as these might be multiplied by the hundred, if it were necessary, to show that the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle brings valuable results to the world.

"MAMMA, where's papa gone to?" asked a little girl one day. "He's gone to town to earn more bread and butter for you, darling." "Oh mamma, I wish he would sometimes earn buns!" sighed the child.

At a school at Wallsend, near Newcastle, the master asked a class of boys the meaning of the word "appetite;" and after a brief pause one little boy said: "I know, sir; when I'm eatin' I'm appy, and when I'm done I'm tight."

A STREET-CAR conductor carelessly carried his bell-punch home and allowed his children to play with it. The next day the company informed him that he was 9,900,999 fares short. He has offered to leave the children in pawn until he makes up the money.

A Methodist minister at Red Bay, Labrador, has to read the previous year's course, as vessels only reach him about twice a year.—Ed.