

## The Literary Society

### THE QUIET HOUR PAGE HELPS.

I have been in Canada over three years having come here with my wife and family of six children from England and I have thought that the idea of forming a L. S. was a good one as it was likely to give us something to think about besides crops.

There is one thing, however, I think might be helpful to us, namely, a discussion on "How co-operation would be likely to benefit the farmer". I know that the spirit of independence is abroad, yet in newly settled parts of the country where a lot of young men taking up homesteads with very little money at their command. I think some part of a combine would be a good thing for them, and yet the great majority of them seem to make good headway in material things. If anything could be done to help them mentally and spiritually it would be better I think, and after having taken the *Advocate* nearly two years I feel sure that you will do your best in these directions. The "Quiet Hour" page in my opinion goes a long way to "fill the bill" if you will excuse the expression.

JOHN J. LAMB.

### THE BEGINNING OF THINGS.

Since the best way to make a beginning at anything is just to begin, we will plunge at once into serious work in our Literary Society. So many suggestions have been made that it is hard to decide which to use first. One however, we shall use all the way along—that one which spoke of the advisability of variety in the work. It is impossible in any one contest to suit the tastes of everybody, and if several are run at the same time there will be no good grounds for any one losing interest because the subject does not appeal.

The subjects that take most study will be given the longest time, while other topics less difficult will uphold the interest in the meantime. Sometimes just as a brain exerciser, there will be a good conundrum or a problem in chess or something of that sort. Written answers need not be sent in for the last named, but the correct answer to each will be published in the issue following the one in which the problem appeared.

Prizes will take the form of books, badges, or, if preferred, a year's subscription to the *FARMER'S ADVOCATE* for a friend.

A list of books from which a choice can be made will be given in the next issue.

Any subscriber to the *FARMER'S ADVOCATE*, or member of a household in which the paper is taken may become a member of the Literary Society.

Discussion and criticism of any topics appearing in the Literary Society columns is heartily welcomed.

Care should be taken to write legibly and on one side of the paper, to note the conditions of each contest as regards length and time allowed.

Full name and address should always be given as it aids in sending prizes.

Badge pins may be obtained at this office by any member on receipt of sixty cents.

### CONTESTS.

No. 1. Write an account in your own words of some book you have read during 1905, giving your opinion of its merit.

No more than four hundred words to reach this office not later than January 5th, 1907. Prizes given for the three best reviews.

No. 2. Describe briefly what, in your opinion, was the most important event (a) in Canada, (b) in the British Empire, (c) in the world at large, during 1906. Give reasons for your choice.

No more than five hundred words in the whole article, to reach this office not later than January 20th, 1907. Prizes given for the three best essays.

These contests will be a success if you do your best.

### A GOOD CONUNDRUM.

'Twas in heaven pronounced—it was muttered in hell,  
And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell;  
On the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,  
And the depth of the ocean its presence confessed  
'Twill be found in the sphere when 'tis riven asunder,  
Be seen in the lightning and heard in the thunder.  
'Twas allotted to man in his earliest breath,  
Attends at his birth and awaits him at death,

Presides o'er his happiness, honor and health,  
Is the prop of his house, and the end of his wealth.  
In the heaps of the miser 'tis hoarded with care,  
But is sure to be lost on his prodigal heir  
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound,  
With the husbandman toils and with monarchs is crowned.  
Without it the soldier, the seaman may roam,  
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home!  
In the whispers of conscience its voice will be found,  
Nor e'en in the whirlwind of passion is drowned.  
'Twill not soften the heart; and tho' deaf be the ear,  
It will make it acutely and instantly hear.  
Yet in shade let it rest like a delicate flower,  
Ah—breathe on it softly—it dies in an hour.

## THE QUIET HOUR

### THE VALUE OF CHEERFULNESS.

A merry heart is a good medicine (margin: causeth good healing): But a broken spirit drieth up the bones.—Prov. xvii.: 22, R. V.

All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.—Prov. xv.: 15.

"Not by sorrow or by sighing  
Can we lift the heavy load  
Of the poor, the sick, the dying,  
Whom we meet upon the road;  
For we only help when bringing  
Faith and courage to their need,  
When we set the joy bells ringing  
In their hearts by word and deed.

"By the glow of thoughts uplifted  
To God's everlasting hills,  
We can melt away the drifted  
Snow some lonely life that fills;  
By the hand-clasp strong, unfailing,  
Thrilling hope from palm to palm,  
We can nerve some soul for scaling  
Heights that rise in sunny calm.

"All around are those who linger,  
Weak, despairing, full of fear,  
While with feeble beckoning finger  
They implore us to draw near.  
Let us pour the oil of gladness  
On their hopeless misery,  
Banishing their grief and sadness  
By our radiant sympathy."

Of course we all want to enjoy our life in this world, and equally, of course, we want to help others to enjoy themselves. Here is a valuable tonic, as described by a wise man long ago: "A merry heart is a good medicine." And it is food as well as medicine, for "he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." If you doubt the value of the medicine, try it.

But, perhaps, you may object that a merry heart can't be obtained at will—and yet it is true that in this matter as in others, that where there's a will there's a way. Like other valuable accomplishments, it needs plenty of practice. A difficult piece of music that is impossible to a beginner may be easily played after years of earnest effort. These words, which are easily read by you, would be absolutely meaningless marks on paper to many of my Russian neighbors, and could only be read after years of pains-taking application. So it is with the far more valuable accomplishment of gladness—gladness that can shine in the darkness where it is most needed. Anyone can rejoice "When there's nothing whatever to grumble at"—though some people often fail to do it, even then—but, as Mark Tapley would say, there's "some credit in being jolly" when everything goes dead wrong. Even the easy kind of "merry heart," that is uncultivated, and goes down before adversity, is a good medicine. What a pleasure it is to see anyone with a beaming smile, even though we know that the face wearing it often looks gloomy or cross. But, when the joyous look may be depended on, the effect is magical.

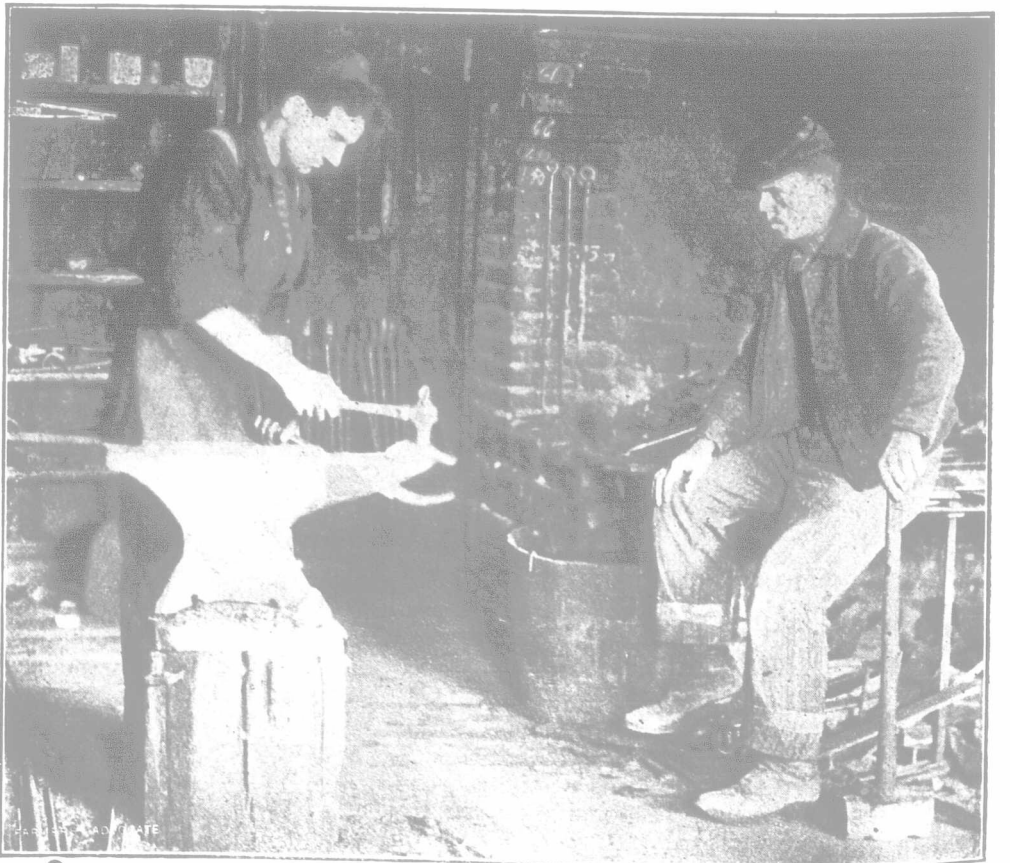
Happy people are like sunshine, cheering up everybody around them. When we meet one of these glad souls, we find our smiles rising to match theirs, and we go on our way feeling cheered and helped. I am not talking about aggressively cheering people—who are often very wearing—but those who are glad at heart like a sunshiny child.

But, it is quite true that no one can make himself happy, though everyone may rejoice if he will. This is a medicine to cure life's ills, for which we must apply direct to the Good Physician. The first step when faith has brought a sick soul to seek His help, is to give Him full control of the case, telling Him everything without reserve and submitting unquestioningly to His directions. Though he knows our sins far better than we can do, yet confession is necessary before the disease can be cured, and sometimes He demands of us a harder kind of confession, without which no peace of mind can be obtained. It is far harder to tell a person we have injured or deceived, than it is to tell God. But when the hand of the Good Physician is pressing painfully upon a tender spot, giving a constant feeling of discomfort, and the conscience leaves no doubt about the fact that He wants us to confess some particular sin to the person to whom we owe a frank apology or explanation, it is useless to ask Him to heal the sin when we are afraid to obey orders. Such a sin is like an ulcer slowly eating

his way into the soul, and the sooner it is removed the better for us, and the less painful it will be. When once we have obeyed the order, given so imperiously by that mysterious part of our personality which we call conscience, the cloud which hid God's face from us is instantly removed and the heavy burden of unforgiven sin slips off at the foot of the Cross. Conscience is not to be trifled with. We may say that it is only a part of our own nature, but it takes and keeps the position of our stern, unrelenting judge, and we are at its mercy in a very mysterious way. We can't enjoy real peace of mind when it condemns us, and it is a just judge which we can neither coerce, bribe, nor escape from. St. Paul says that "an heretick . . . sinneth, being condemned of himself," and St. John shows us the reverse side of this strange law-court, a court from which there is no possibility of appeal, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

Having found the peace of relief from sin, through repentance and confession, we must be careful to start and maintain the habit of gladness. This is not easy, but it is grandly worth while. We must try to check the tendency to find fault with everything and every body, the critical spirit which, if it is allowed to grow strong, will make any soul ugly and unattractive. It is not only the great sin of backbiting and harsh judgment of our neighbors against which we should be on our guard but also the fault-finding spirit which makes us look at everything from the darkest point of view. This is illustrated by the familiar story of the two children, who described the same garden in such an opposite fashion. One said that it was a horrid garden, for every rose had a thorn, and the other said it was a beautiful garden, because there was not a thorn in it without a rose. So it is in life. Two people will come home from the same picnic, and one will talk about the overpowering heat, describe how the ants got into the food, and say that it was a stupid affair. The other may come in with a radiant face and talk about all the nice things that happened—really forgetting the small disagreeables. There are always pleasant things to talk about; and there are also unpleasant things, which we only intensify and fix in our memories when we expatiate on them.

Dorothy Quigley tells about a girl who grumbled at everything, thus making life a burden to her roommate at the boarding school. Her companion turned upon her one day, and said, "I wouldn't be you for all the money in the world, even if you are the first in all your classes. You always see the worst side of things. Nothing pleases you. Do you know I've been keeping an account of the things you've grumbled at this morning? It is only eleven o'clock and you have scolded



THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH