

Rest in the Lord.

(Psalm xxxvii : 7.)

Come unto ME, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—S. Matt. xi.: 28.
Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest.—Heb. iv.: 11.

"Come unto ME
And I will give you rest." Once more the voice
Is in my ear. It seems to echo now
The mournful hope that Death should give me Rest;
And yet I know this is no dream-like sound
Of sad Death making answer. This the Voice
Of Life and not of Death! . . . He spake
Of giving Rest, and on the bitter Cross
He gave the promised Rest."

An invitation from a king to a subject is always a command. What of this gracious invitation to "Rest"? Are we accepting the priceless gift held out to us: or are we hurrying on, thinking that rest can only be ours on the other side of Jordan? The Rest offered by our King is not the stagnation of inaction—although, even in the sense of sometimes taking a real holiday from work, people who are too busy to obey the Master's command to "rest awhile" suffer great physical, mental and spiritual loss. But the worn-out woman who thought it would be the height of bliss to "do nothing forever and ever," would soon find such an existence very wearisome. No, the soul-rest which Christ promises to those who take His yoke upon them, is rather a foretaste of "Heaven's unresting rest"—for in heaven "they rest not day and night," although—strange paradox—"there the weary be at rest."

Let us look for a moment at that beautiful picture painted by St. John, that picture in which our Lord's Humanity stands out in such bold relief. He was wearied with His journey—how well our Elder Brother knows what weariness of body and soul means—and also hungry and thirsty. Sitting down at Jacob's well to wait for the food which the disciples had gone away to buy, He soon entered into conversation with a woman who had come to draw water. Beginning with a very natural request for a drink, His tender sympathy soon brought Him into touch with her deepest spiritual longings and needs. Hunger, thirst and weariness vanished before the eager desire to help another soul: and the returning disciples were astonished to find that their food was not needed. He had meat to eat that they knew not of, and they wondered, saying, "Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?"

One way, then, to obtain soul-rest is to turn the attention resolutely from one's own personal cares, troubles and heart-sick longings in an earnest desire to help someone else. Self-centered persons are always restless, and minding one's own business may become a vice, if it mean taking no interest in other people.

But the great secret of Rest is Trust: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." What an atmosphere of quiet restfulness breathes in those well-known words. To translate them into actual fact—to live them—just think what that would be like! In the press of work, in the thick of care, to lean always on Jesus' breast and know that all is well! There is a beautiful touch in the Revised translation of St. John's Gospel which seems to me to express the very essence of restfulness. St. Peter beckoned to the loved disciple to ask a question that was troubling them all, and he—"leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast"—put the question in simple, childlike confidence. We, too, if we accept our privilege, need not go to Him with anything that troubles us. If we are already resting confidently on His everlasting strength, we have only to "lean back, as we are," and look our request into His eyes. What need of many words when the quick instinctive thrill of perfect sympathy makes us feel our living unity with Him, as we meet the smile which answers all anxious questions and satisfies our utmost need.

Once, in a storm at sea, a woman asked her husband why he did not seem in the least afraid. His answer was to draw his sword and press its sharp point

against her breast. When she smiled, in happy confidence, he asked why she was not afraid. "Why, because I know you love me and would not hurt me," she answered, unhesitatingly. Then he explained that he also felt perfectly safe in his Father's hands.

If we can only form the habit of trusting God in the little crosses of life, we shall grow strong enough to trust Him even though He should not only hold a sword to the heart of His loving child, but should also drive it home. Many a woman has trusted her husband when, as in the Indian mutiny, he has struck her to the heart with his own hand, and she has fallen asleep as restfully as a little child, with his pledge of undying love upon her lips. So our dear Lord fell asleep in perfect peace on His Father's Heart, as he commended His weary Spirit into those strong and tender hands. Our souls will rest always in happy confidence, if we can only make our own that wonderful self-surrender of the "Imitation of Christ."

"Lord, Thou knowest
In what way it is better.
Let this or that be as Thou wilt.
Give to me what Thou wilt.
How much Thou wilt,
And when Thou wilt.
Do with me as Thou knowest, and as it pleases Thee.
Put me where Thou wilt,
Deal freely with me every day.
In Thine hand I am:
Wheel me and turn me back again.
See, I am Thy slave,

Ready for everything.

I would not live unto myself, but unto Thee:

I wish I could, worthily, perfectly."

Hard indeed it must have been for the mother of our Lord to trust God when the sword pierced her heart—when she saw her only Son tortured to death. But surely many another mother has had to endure a far more terrible trial of faith. How almost impossible it must be to trust God, when the white soul of the child she loved has become the blackened soul of a hardened criminal, and she knows that His execution is only the due reward of His deeds. One who, in such a strait as that, can enfold the poor sinner in her marvellous mother-love and, at the same time, can rest her agonized heart on God's still more marvellous love and trust Him still, must have mighty faith indeed.

Like the Israelites, we can only obtain manna enough to carry us through a few hours of life, but there is always enough for one day ready to be gathered. If we concentrate our strength we can surely trust God for to-day. As Phillips Brooks says: "Why cannot we, slipping our hand in His each day, walk trustingly over that day's appointed path, thorny or flowery, crooked or straight, knowing that evening will bring us sleep, peace and home."

Each member of the great flock is very dear to the heart of the Good Shepherd, and those who have found the day's journey hard and painful are tenderly



cared for, one by one. The expression in the Shepherd Psalm—"Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over"—is beautifully explained in Knight's "Song of our Syrian Guest." The shepherd inspects the sheep one by one, as they pass into the fold. "He has the horn filled with olive oil and he has cedar tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks or a side scratched by thorns. And here come one that is not bruised, but is simply worn and exhausted: he bathes its face and head with the refreshing olive oil, and he takes the large two-handled cup and dips it brimming full from the vessel of water provided for that purpose, and he lets the weary sheep drink."

Surely this is the rest wherewith He may cause the weary to rest: and this is the refreshing. Our dear Lord is waiting to apply healing balm to each wounded soul, no trifling soreness of spirit can pass unnoticed under His searching gaze, and the tender pressure of His hand on a weary, discouraged heart is enough to "still each over-straining throb, each pulsing pain." His Presence not only gives Rest, it is Rest.

Asa made no mistake when he said: "LORD, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on Thee."

"Deep in the heart of pain, God's hand hath set
A hidden rest and bliss.
Take as His gift the pain, the gift brings yet
A truer happiness.
God's voice speaks through it all the high behest
That bids His people enter into rest."
HOPE.

To-day.

By M. C. Hayward, Corinth, Ont.

Thou hast to-day, dear heart.
Its golden opportunities are thine:
To thee a priceless boon, a gift divine.
See thou that in each moment be inwrought
Thy highest ideals and thy noblest thought.

We are so prone to think
"Some future day, when I have time to spare,
I'll help to lighten others' load of care:
Life is so trying now, and so complex,
I'll be more kind when there is less to vex."

And thus we idly dream
Of what life might have been in other spheres;
Or of what it yet may be in future years:
While the good we crave lies all about our way,
Could we but grasp the meaning of "to-day."

This very day may bring
A blessed chance to know the pure delight
Of leading some lost soul back to the light.
A chance to give a kindly word or smile,
Which we might miss in the fancied "after while."

And it may hold for thee,
Privilege to learn sweet patience under trial;
The grace of meekness or of self-denial;
A chance "for Christ's sake" to forgive a wrong,
Thus making thine own life more sweet and strong.

The prize to-day, dear heart:
May thy very best in word and deed and thought
Through all its precious moments be inwrought.
To-day is thine, to-morrow may not be,
Oh, live it then as for eternity!

Under the Trees.

A very Sabbath calm rests under those stately trees: there is hardly a ripple in the winding brook, and not a bud's wing cleaves the air. We may surmise that the scene Mr. Hart depicts for us is taken from one of the mid-Counties of the motherland.
H. A. B.



(Painting by Jas. M. Hart.)

Under the Trees.