

Reaping.

"Reaper," I asked, "among the golden sheaves,
Tolling at noon amid the falling leaves,
What recompense hast thou for all thy toll,
What tithing of all thy Master's wine and oil?
Or dost thou coin thy brow's hot drops to gold,
Or add to house and land, or flock and fold?"

The reaper paused from binding close the grain,
And said, while shone his smile through labor's stain,
"I do my Master's work, as He has taught:
And work of love with gold was never bought.
He knoweth all of which my life hath need:
His servants reap as they have sown the seed.
With all my heart I bind my Master's grain,
And love makes sweet my labor and my pain."

The Dew Unto Israel.

That was what the prophet said the Messiah should be to the soul of the believer, but what does the city man know about dew? What does a boy who has never gone barefoot, know about the dawn, and the calling to the cows which are out in the dewy meadows? What does the bank clerk, whose conception of a breeze is not of a wind fresh from the mountain glen across blue lakes and pastures sweet with violets, but of yesterday's dead atmosphere flung at him out of a wire cage by an electric fan, what does he know of those hours which have inspired prophets, thrilled poets and moved all souls that live in Arcadie?

It is one of the charms of the Bible that it never wanders far from pastoral simplicity. But for this very reason the Bible can not be the same to a man born in the second story back room of a brown-stone mansion, that it is to one born under the slanting shingles of a weather-stained farm-house. The man whose first playground was an attic floor under a flat roof can never make that out of the Bible which he finds in the Word whose cradle was rocked beside the window sweet with the breath of a cinnamon-rose and bright with the hues of morning-glories. Nobody can understand in its fullness the Twenty-third psalm whose idea of a meadow is derived from the twenty-four square feet of grass between the basement window and the stone sidewalk.

"As dew unto Israel!" How many a man as he sits down to his ten o'clock breakfast in his city hotel repeats those words to himself, looking meanwhile over the menu for something that shall tempt his appetite, but dreaming of the morning when the cat-bird sang in the syringa, and the robin in the apple-tree, and the thrush in the elm. The waiter hands him a plate of insipid bananas ripened in a cellar by the aid of a kerosene stove; but he is thinking of the harvest apples which he used to find, golden in the dewy clover, whose fragrance was blended with that of the bountiful breakfast, the aroma of which came to him from the kitchen's open door. Ah, well; he has not forgotten what the dew means; and perhaps these hot and sultry streets and quivering walls help him the better to realize what Hosea promised when he said that the Christ should come unto weary souls as the dew to the heated and the thirsty land.

Silent, widespread, beneficent; that is what the grace of God is to a weary world. In what a contrast to the tempest distils the dew!

And yet, notwithstanding all the prophet's sweet assurances, the Hebrew nation was awaiting a Messiah whose sword should sweep the earth like a cyclone; destructive, punitive, irresistible. His birth should be marked by the shooting of the stars from their spheres; his mission be accompanied by the trembling of the globe, and his victory heralded by the lightning's flash; the thunder's peal. But as in the summer evening we are made conscious of the falling dew only by a sudden stillness and coolness of the air, and we feel the tension of the nerves relaxed under the gracious moisture of which we are as yet but half aware, so came Jesus to a tired world, and stole in upon the sorrows of mankind with gentle, healing touch. No inventive genius has as yet produced a meter that shall give us night by night the precipitation of the dew; but a careful estimate based upon the most reliable data assures us that in most of our country the moisture received by this process of radiation is not less than five inches during a summer. So the grace of our blessed Lord, received oft-

times unconsciously so gentle are its operations, cheers and comforts the soul and ensures its rich fertility.

And like the dew, the spiritual gift we receive in our Saviour is not local, but broadly diffused. The Messiah was not of one race for people, but for a world. Showers water here and there a farm, a township, or it may be half a state; but the dew spreads itself over the sleeping continent. Not here or there, but everywhere it gathers, diffusing benedictions and gathering sweetness. It glistens upon the leaf of the willow, and drops from the tip of the elm, and fills the lily, and nestles in the heart of the rose.

So do we remember of our Lord's grace that it is not bestowed only upon regal natures or queenly characters, but upon the least and humblest and most lowly of mankind. No longer do prophets and wise men stand ages apart; but the sons and daughters of the common people receive that spiritual refreshing which makes of each a source and fount of power. Some of the most precious of our Christian hymns, now as familiar as the psalms of David, were written by pens so modest that to this day they remain unknown.

Surely Hosea was filled with the spirit of prophecy when he foretold that Jesus, coming down upon his mission of redemption, should be "as dew unto Israel;" blessing in silence and blessing everywhere.

The Duty and Uses of Rest.

Most of us look upon rest, especially in the season which we are apt to take at this season of the year, as a reward or recompense, and in a sense that is correct. It often is spoken of also as a duty, but not always, probably, with a complete appreciation of it as such. To take a rest is regarded as a duty but the employment of it is considered less from the point of view of duty, and sometimes we are tempted to act as if our vacation were from obligations as really as from labors.

It is indeed a duty to rest when weary. The position of those—and there are such—who insist that work should be incessant because God forbids idleness may be due to conscientiousness, but it is mistaken, not to add morbid. Most of us, however, probably are more open to a different temptation. All should understand that rest is not only wise but is even necessary to one who leads a busy life, and that sheer idleness, when it has been honestly earned and is not too greatly prolonged or misspent in any way, possesses large recuperative and helpful power. It is true that a change of work is refreshing, but the teacher, the minister, the banker, the mechanic, or the housewife who is content to merely eat, sleep, breathe and be amused during vacation probably resumes the accustomed task with the best power of future usefulness. Yet each must decide for himself.

No time of rest is spent to best advantage, however, which is not made to serve the highest part of our nature. If we are not studying books we can observe men and women and learn from them. If we cease temporarily from making money we may find in our leisure a superior opportunity for making character, for exerting a Christian influence, for learning how unaccustomed temptations assail and are to be conquered, and how forms of virtue hitherto uncalled for specially are to be appreciated and cultivated. And he who fails in vacation to set apart some time more than is usual with him for meditation and prayer and communion with Christ fails of one of its sweetest and most rewarding privileges.

Moreover, if you are one of those whom toil presses hard and for whom there is no respite, take courage. Find your rest and refreshment in renewed study of your Bible, and be sure that Christ will not forget you, but will impart to you His comfort and His peace.—*Congregationalist*

The man who stays at home on Sunday because it is so hot suffers five times as much as if he went to church. He has nothing to do but to think how torrid the temperature is. That makes the furnace seven times hotter. He frets himself into an additional swelter because dinner is not ready, and then "Would God it were Monday!" Now the churchman puts on a fresh cool suit, goes where the air is tempered and associations are restful. It is the most complete change possible from much of his weekly life. The music and the message from the Book, the prayers and the sermon are like the shadow of a rock in a dry land. The soul is refreshed and that invigorates the body. Like snow in harvest is good news from a far country.