

food and water, warm clothing, hospital supplies, and all other necessities are ready for use. The soldiers need not worry about these things, but are free to attend to their special business. So, our Lord says, our Father knows our needs; therefore we are free to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, knowing that all necessities will be added to us.

The message about God's care for little matters, which our Lord made so clear in His Sermon on the Mount, was not a new one. Read the Old Testament carefully and you will see it revealed over and over again. Think of Elijah, flying from his fierce enemy and flinging himself down in utter exhaustion to sleep on the ground. When he awoke there was a freshly-baked cake and a crust of water beside him. He was almost too worn out to wonder, so took the food provided and fell asleep once more. Again the gentle touch of the angel reminded him of his need of food and drink. How thoughtful and considerate God was for the man who had so boldly witnessed for Him in the midst of a godless people: "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee," was the Divine message. Depression and despair arose from physical exhaustion. God did not reason with him, but provided for his needs. He took the plan which has at last been learned by those who try to uplift others—He ministered to the bodily needs and then was able to reach the despairing soul. Our Lord believed in "social service" methods. He healed the sick, and then preached the Gospel to the poor. (S. Matt. xi: 5.)

We read the Book of Jonah and can easily understand God's goodness in sparing the great city—for that seems to us an important matter and worthy of thoughtful attention—but it comes almost as a shock to find that God was considerate enough to cause a plant to grow up as a shelter for the prophet from the heat of the sun. We can understand God's preparing a great fish to save the life of His wayward servant; but we are surprised to learn that a worm was also "prepared," in order that Jonah might learn the lesson that even the people of a heathen city when very precious to the Father of all nations.

Jonah was eager to see the wicked city destroyed, but God was watching eagerly for any sign of repentance. How is it with us? Are we more anxious to see our enemies crushed than to have the broken fellowship with them restored? Are we, in spirit, children of Him Who sends life-giving rain on the just and on the unjust, and Who pours out sunshine every day on the evil as well as on the good? If we are not keeping the law of love ourselves, no wonder we fail to understand our Father's desire to share our everyday interests. If we only admit Him into fellowship with us in great matters, where are we to draw the line? If we are to wait until some "great" thing needs attending to, we shall probably crowd Him out of the largest part of each day. Then, when the great thing—or that which seems to us to be great—at last arrives, we shall be more likely to turn to an earthly friend than to our Father, because we have not got into the habit of looking up into His face for sympathy and help in gladness and in difficulty.

Is it possible that we are afraid of wearying God, of taking up too much of His time, or is it that we don't quite believe that He cares? Yet we know that God has time to consider everything that is of interest to us, or else He has no time to spare for our concerns at all. Among all the millions of creatures in this world of ours, we could have no chance to gain His attention, if it were not that He is infinite in thoughtful care for all. Though the multitudes pressed around our Lord, He knew instantly when one woman reached out a trembling hand and touched the hem of His garment—touched that garment intentionally. He has not changed since that day. He knows when a hand touches Him amid the press of the world's business.

We are willing enough to recognize a great sorrow as "a visitation of God," or a wonderful joy as a gift straight from His hand; but how often—in little matters—our Lord might say of us as He said of Jerusalem—"thou knewest not the

time of thy visitation." The food which multiplied in His hands was not more marvellous than the grain which multiplies in our fields. We understand the yearly miracle as little as the people of Galilee understood that wonderful provision for their needs.

One who has had a narrow escape from death naturally gives God thanks for His watchful Providence, but each child of God, who abides under the shadow of the Almighty, is watched and cared for every moment. Of such it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Such a little thing, is it not?—to hurt the foot against a stone! When such trifling accidents are permitted to hurt us, we must not think that God's tender care has failed. No, He allowed the small trouble in order to give through it some great good. Let us take it as a proof of love, instead of grumbling at what we call our "bad luck." As

## The Ingle Nook.

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Dear Ingle Nook Friends.—Coming down on the train I fell in with a girl whom I had been fortunate enough to know before, a bright-faced girl, not pretty, but carrying with her an air of wholesomeness and vivacity, as though she knew how to live life to its fullest. With her seemed to enter a breath of the glorious, out-of-door January air. She wore a warm coat, a short tweed skirt, and a close little fur hat, and had a pair of snowshoes slung over her shoulder.

"I have just been to the woods," she

would go back to the woods again on her snowshoes and compare the two, the book notes with the actual objects, and soon she would be able to say with authority, "This track was made by a weasel,—that by a snow-bird, and that by a fox. This tree is a butternut, that a black elm, and that beyond a basswood."

Thoroughness, I knew was her watchword, versatility her good fortune. She had graduated from Toronto University; she had belonged to a mountain-climbing club in British Columbia; she could ride, swim, fence, paddle, shoot with bow and arrows, and cook a meal with "the best of them." She had a passion for good literature; one day, I remember, I came upon her when she was drying her hair after washing it, and found her seizing the flying moments as she did so by reading Goethe in the original. She loved people, and now she was plunging into nature-study with the same zest which she put into all other things, and finding it worth while.

After she got off the train, one could not but follow her on, with the mind's eye, seeing her on the journey through life, eternally busy, eternally happy,—and all because of her many resources. She had not left undone anything that came her way that meant added interest or capability, and now she was reaping and would continue to reap even into old age, the rich reward.

One meets many people among the farmers who are true lovers of nature. Those who are not, and who are obliged to live away from crowds, cast upon nature's solitudes, are indeed to be pitied. And yet, perhaps, they do not realize what they miss.

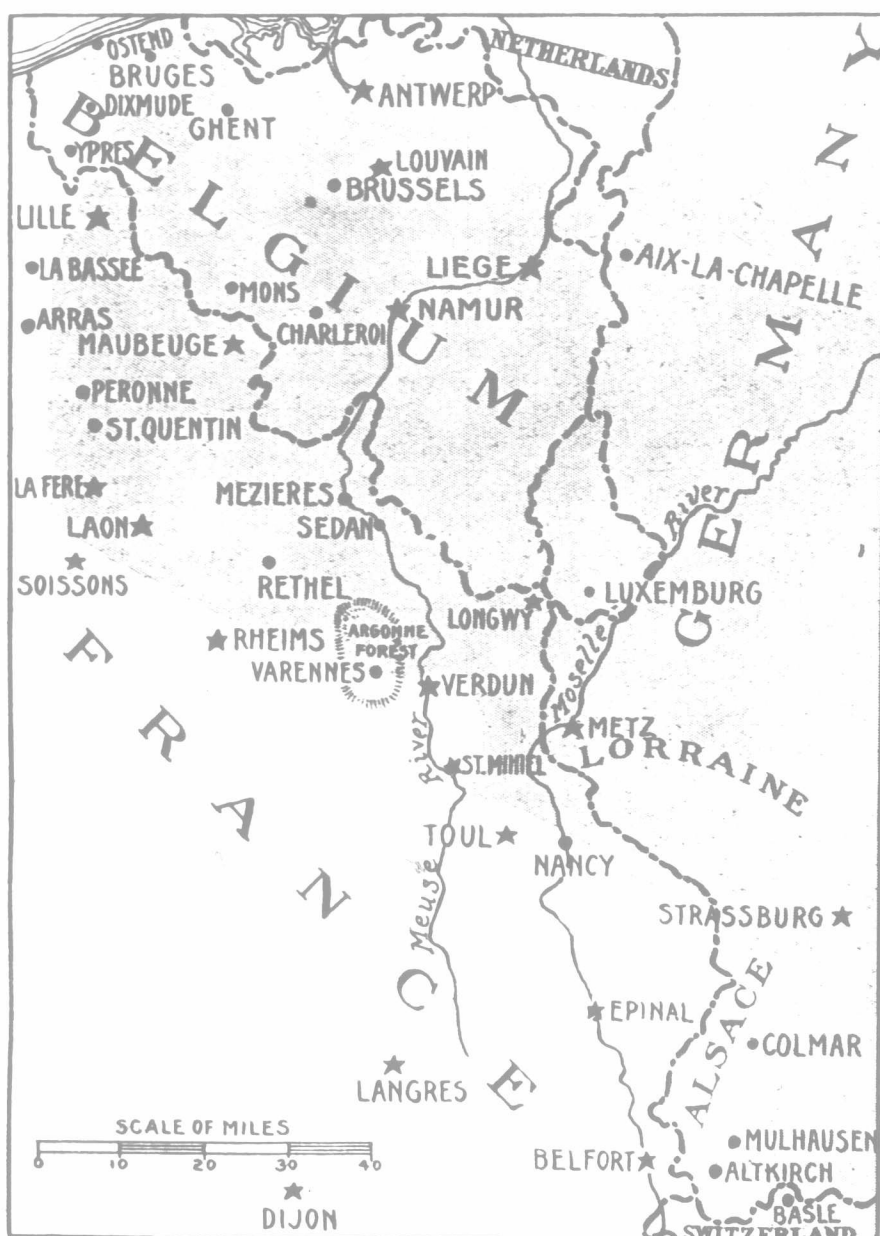
Two men go out in early spring to sow. The one, as he ambles up and down the brown furrowed field on his seeder, takes a keen joy in the softening spring air; he notes the beauty of a white cloud hung high in the heavens, he observes the bursting of the buds and the greening of the grass; the gurgle of a brook, the faint, sweet piping of song-sparrow and meadowlark are music to him; a cluster of pinkish hepatica, or a yellow dog's-tooth violet blooming in a fence-corner brings to him "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." Life is poetry to this man,—even seeding in a field. . . . To the other, however, it is plain prose, the plainest of prose. He sees no cloud, no bank flaming emerald, no flower in a fence-corner; he sees nothing but the day's work and a far-off vision of a wearisome harvest that means money in the end.

Autumn comes. To the one, no gradation of amber light in the ripened wheat-field is lost, no shadow fleeting over the bending ears. "The harvest of a quiet eye" is his, the joy of the artist who sees. . . . To the other, the gold of the uncut field suggests only the gold of dollars, a task to be hurried through and converted as quickly as may be into money.

Back there, too, among the farm-houses are two women, and again it is spring. White-aproned, the two come from the kitchen doorway into the back garden. The one moves about from place to place, noting the bursting leaf-lets, the little green and pink heads pushing up through the soft soil. She knows them all at sight, here a bleeding heart, there the sharp blades of an iris, here a peony, crumpled up like a crow-foot, there the pale-green folded leaves of "Sweet William,"—and she greets one and all happily as old friends. . . . The other woman has no flowers in her garden. "They are too much trouble," she says. "There is nothing out of doors to interest her, for the soul that does not love flowers can see little to love in blue skies or elm trees 'bursting into smoke.'" Perhaps she glances at the rhubarb and wonders vaguely when it will be fit to use. Nature means no more to her than this.

Yes, there are "lives" in the country and there are "rich" lives.

Perhaps on all this continent there is no one who finds a keener interest and delight in nature than dear old John Burroughs, of whom most of you have read. If you do not know his books, I hope you will get some of them from your library and read them—to be sure, read the more ready for spring.



The Western War Zone.  
The shaded portion represents the German position at the first of the year. Along the complete line, from the North Sea to Switzerland, the Allies have assumed the offensive.

though "luck" were possible to a child of God when infinite Love is constantly preparing each step of the way for his lasting good! Let us begin the New Year joyously and securely, sure that the blackest clouds are big with mercy, and that the Sun of our Father's Love is still shining, even when we cannot understand His dealings with the world.

God is always thinking about us. He will give us what we need, and also what we really want if we are trying to serve Him—for we hunger and thirst after holiness and a clearer vision of His Face.

"The thing I ask Thee for—how small! How trivial, must it seem to Thee! Yet, Lord, Thou knowest Who knowest all. It is no little thing to me, So weak, so human as I be! Therefore I make my prayer to-day, And as a father pitieth, then Grant me this little thing, I pray, Through the one sacred Name, Amen!"

DORA FARNCOMB.

said. "Have you ever been there in winter? It's so interesting, isn't it? I don't know all the tracks yet, but I mean to learn all about them."

Not a word about being bored to death in the country; not a grumble about being lonely or unable to find plenty to be interested in. This girl could find interest even in "tracks," the tracks of all the little wild birds and animals that make lace-work over the snow in mid-winter; the hoary trunks of the trees could tell her a story, and the tracery of branches and twigs against the blue sky. "You can get the character of the different species so much better when the leaves are off," she said. "Really the trees are quite as beautiful in winter as in summer, and when there are tufts of snow on the branches they are wonderful. I don't know all the kinds yet, but that will be something to find out, too."

I understood, for I knew her method. She would get books about animals—"tracks" and all—about trees, and