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Quatrains.

STARLIGHT.

Over the rim, a fiery ball,
God's hand the golden sun lets fall;
Then from the blue depths of the skies
The myriad white bubbles rise.

FIRE FANCIES.

Deep in the ashes one live ember
Lingers two similes to show—
June in the arms of old December—
A red rose in a drift of snow.

MOONRISE AT SEA.

A lucent pearl from out the ocean cup
The moon is lifted gradually up
And there, amid the jewels on God's hand,
Sheds its white radiance upon the land.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN, in Congregationalist.

The Sweetest Motive.

BY REV. R. H. HOWARD, PH.D.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law."—*Scripture.*

NOTHING more impresses the modern art student, especially in view of the shameless shams and wholesale deceits characteristic of our time, than the almost infinite painstaking, the honest and thoroughly conscientious work, expended on even the most inaccessible, and hence unobserved, portions of the sacred structures of the Middle Ages. The architectural explorer of the present century is awed and amazed to discover, sometimes on remote portions of a church of the twelfth century, beautifully carved and delicate stone-work, with every detail perfect, which yet no human eye, for over six hundred years, had been able to discern, and hence, of course, to appreciate or enjoy; as if these workmen had cherished these exquisite ornamentations, not for the praise or hire of men, but solely for the eye, as it were, for the love and the praise of God. Their motive may, possibly, have been—doubtless was—more or less complex. These devout artists probably enjoyed doing their best, not so much for the sake of the praise of their fellow men as for their art's sake—also for their own sake. The highest manliness is satisfied with nothing less than absolutely one's very best work. Still, as just intimated, the highest, as well as sweetest, motive actuating these ancient devout workers in stone, there is every reason to believe, was the love of and a desire for the approbation of that Supreme Master Builder, Jesus Christ. Such pious labours as these; such a habit as this of honest, sincere, devout, reverent work, well exemplifies, or realizes, the apostolic or New Testament pattern or ideal of duty. Every reader of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesian church must have been impressed with the strenuousness with which he urges upon the converted slaves connected with that church the importance of rendering to their masters something better than a paltry eye-service (Eph. vi.: 1-12). "With fear and trembling in singleness of heart," they were required to obey their earthly masters, not by any means that these earthly masters were always worthy of or strictly entitled to such loyal, faithful service. No matter, if this ideal service may not, in every instance, be rendered for the earthly master's sake, then let it be

rendered for the heavenly Master's sake; not as men-pleasers, but rather as "servants of Christ," doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, not to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free." What more exalted, more truly, absolutely ideal, than the ethical standard herein set forth, and one possible only under the gospel of Christ? It may be said that it was reasonable enough why these Christian slaves should have sought to render an ideal, a perfect service, that they might thereby show forth by contrast the superior quality or excellency of the new religion which they had embraced as compared with the old discarded faith. This was, of course, a motive worthy, valuable, if not all-sufficient. Besides, sensible now of the essential nobleness of their nature and lofty destiny as children of God and heirs of heaven, they must have realized that they owed it to themselves to be faithful in all the relations of life, to be true to themselves as well as to employer and master, loyal to all their best convictions and loftiest ideals. Paul's ethical teaching covers this whole ground, compasses, sweeps, this entire field of responsible human activity. Yet he never fails to remind his readers that there is still another motive to duty higher, nobler, stronger, sweeter than all others, never failing, all-sufficient: it is that of devout love and loyalty to Christ. The privilege of the Christian believer, then whatever his lot, whatever the nature of the service required of him, is ever to be actuated by a motive, or by motives, adequate to a cheerful, faithful, and even enthusiastic, not to say heroic, discharge of duty. Should his circumstances be of such a nature as to render it impracticable for him to be influenced or actuated by any motives of self interest, or by any motives of human affection, or by the comfortable assurance that his own good intentions are appreciated and honoured, and that his work—duty conscientiously, faithfully, loyally done—will be duly approved and adequately rewarded on the part of those most directly and intimately concerned; still, all the same, he is encouraged to do whatsoever his hand finds to do with his might, if not, indeed, for some human being's sake, yet for the blessed Lord's sake. Thus the Christian need in no case ever be a drudge. Drudgery—what is it? This, I conceive, consists not so much in hard, uncongenial, exhausting toil, as in the performance of such toil without the stimulus, encouragement or inspiration, of a sufficiently high and holy motive; it is work done not for some loved one's sake or in the interest of some noble, worthy cause, at the call of duty, or in the name of something "beautiful to see or grateful to the soul;" no, but in obedience to the behests of stern, imperious necessity. This is drudgery; this is ignoble, ignominious, detestible servitude, unworthy of man and degrading to his very nature. Thank God, no child of His, no disciple of Jesus, is ever obliged to submit to any such humiliation. Most truly as well as sweetly, has our Lord declared: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for my yoke is easy"—since He so well knows how, and never fails to put underneath it a warm and loving heart—"and my burden is light."—New York Observer.