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Farm Dr J. P. Smith
X-Mas 1906.



BRIGHTSIDE IDYLS

Every Week of the Year



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DEDICATED
TO THE
Brightside Mother

Introduction.

CRITICISM and argument have their place, especially in a skeptical and gainsaying generation. And of criticism and argument there has been no lack in our latter day Christian literature. Nor have trumpet calls to the strenuous life been wanting. They are heard on every hand. But criticism and argument and effort are not everything, and we should be grateful to the writer who, in this feverish age, calls us apart to quiet communion with nature and with God. This Dr. Smith does in these devout and restful and cheerful reflections. His method is not argument, but meditation. There are here no scientific discussions of Natural Law in the Spiritual World, after the fashion of Henry Drummond, and no elaborate parables drawn out in detail, after the manner of Hugh Macmillan, but genuine prose idyls, through which there breathes an intimate love of nature and a peaceful trust in God; for the author possesses not only the gift of sight, but the gift of insight as well. To him nature is an apocalypse and man a shekinah. Be-

sides the merely scientific view of nature, and the merely poetic view, there is another, the religious view, which remains valid, through whatever changes the other two may pass; and this is the view taken by our author.

The papers are characterized throughout by "the steady glow of love and the clear light of hope." Their dominant note is the optimism of a serene and cheerful faith. They have already cheered many a heart and brightened many a life. Both those who have read them thus, as they appeared from week to week, and those to whom they now come for the first time, will be glad to have them in this more permanent and attractive form; for this is decidedly a book for the sitting-room table, for the guest room, and for the quiet hour.

W. W. MOORE.

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BRIGHTSIDE IDYLS.

On the Sunny Side.

WHAT a difference there is between the north side of the house and the south. On our north porch, at this season, the sun is not shining. In the shadow and the north wind, the thermometer is below the freezing mark. The vines are dead and the plants have no green leaves. Their life has gone down into the roots. But on the south porch the sun is bright and there is a genial warmth. In the borders beneath the porch are peeping violets and many green things. It is a pleasure to come here on the winter morning and breathe the milder air and feel the cheer of the sun.

Out in the country, one may find the north side of the hill cheerless and forbidding, and be cold and unhappy. He finds nothing but dead leaves, with no sprig of green nor dainty flower to bring home. But on the south side the hill slopes to the warm sun. The cattle and sheep are here to bask and find some green herbage. And here and there are peeping flowers to gather for the surprise and

delight of some shut-in friend. One would like to live always on the sunny, summery side of the sloping hills.

Most of us have the two sides within us, the chilling, gloomy air of a latent pessimism, and the sunny morning of confidence and hope. One may spend the day in regret and complaint, and wrap about him despondency and disappointment, or resolutely go into the sunshine of cheerfulness and trust. There grow living plants of energy and perseverance, and in hidden places sweet flowers of love and hope. Even in the winters of life, how much better it is to dwell on the bright side, and by faithfulness and duty find comfort and joy!

Of this we are sure, that God's side of our lives is the sunny and happy side. Out of the darkness and chill of unbelief and fear, we are bidden to come over on the south side, where shines the Sun of Righteousness, where is the warmth of his love, and where there is life and beauty. There duty is delight and obedience is love. We want to live always in the light of his countenance. There "light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart."

East or West?

AS between the east and the west, we believe we prefer the east. The west is the home of the setting sun, the evening shadows, the growing darkness and the night, while the east is for the rising of the light of the world, the dawn and the spreading beams across the sky, the day and the far-reaching radiance over the earth. The west is the place of night, but the east is the home of the morning.

The east is for going out, and the west is for coming in. The east is for waking up, and energy and strenuous effort and courageous enterprise, while the west is for rest and the decline of activity and the laying down of work. The east is for youth and the going out to battle; the west is for old age and the coming in from the field. The east is for life, and the west is for the end of life and death.

Eastward in Eden was the garden planted, where were innocence and love, and the coming of the Maker. Out of the east came the wise men seeking the babe that was born a King. Learning and

civilization and empire have been coming from the east, and the kingdom that shall have no end goes steadily out to the west, until it will come to the place where it began, and "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

It was very early in the morning that Mary came out and found an empty tomb. What a breaking of the day was that! That was the world's dawn in the east, when darkness and death and their shadows flew away. Out of the new tomb of Joseph rose "the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings." When he comes again there will be another dawning in the east, with a sun rising that shall never set, and it shall be "morning all day."

The Milestone.

THE milestone is reached by the pedestrian with a very distinct sense of satisfaction and encouragement. He stretches his weary limbs on the grass, and on the moss-grown stone slowly spells out its storm-worn figures. He reads of the miles he has already come, and his thought goes back to all that he has left behind. Then he reads of the miles he has yet to go, until he finds his journey's end and rest at home, and retrospect is forgotten in the brighter anticipation.

We call our anniversaries milestones, the birthday and the New Year's Day, or the day that marks the years since the beginning of a happy married life. But these anniversary milestones can only tell us of the past, they are only retrospective. They are not prospective also, as are the milestones, for they bear no inscription of the future. They tell neither of years nor of days that are yet to come. The end of the journey, for aught the anniversary tells, may be very far away, or so near that we may never see another milestone.

Our New Year's Day has had the impressive

emphasis of the dawning of a century. The retrospect of the century is one of the most wonderful reviews ever given to men. Its history, its progress, its achievements, its literature and biography, its science and art, have been amazing, surpassing the growth and work of all that has gone before. Our personal retrospect from the milestone has had great variety, but it has had one thing common to us all; God's "mercies have been new every day." He has "filled all our days with his goodness." And however difficult or painful have been parts of the journey to each one of us, there is written over all, "the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth."

It is a wise and happy thing that our anniversary milestone has no side for the future. God has not written there one word about to-morrow. We know not what a day may bring forth. So one side of our milestone is for sight and memory, and the other is the unwritten side for faith and hope. What we have for the unseen future is the Word which cannot fail. At the foot of each milestone we hear One say, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and we respond, "I will trust and not be afraid," and rise up and go forward.

Pruning the Vines.

THE vines get some severe pruning at this season. The wise keeper of the vineyard uses his knife most relentlessly. He cuts and cuts until there is a great heap of cuttings, which are given to the boys for bonfires. And the vines are little more than stocks. It seems a hard and cruel treatment of the delicate branches that have grown so long and seemed to be the hope of the fruit gathering of another summer. And all this pruning is done in the cheerless winter.

But the sap and life of the vines have gone down into the roots, and left these long branches of the summer's growth dry and almost dead. If they are to be cut away, now is the time, when there will be no loss to the life and vigor of the vine; and when the spring comes, the sap will rise and find its channels in the few short branches we have left, and there will be a new growth and a better fruitage for the pruning.

Pruning is not one of the new things men have learned to do. Far back in the ages, before the days of Moses, the vine-dresser whetted his knife

and pruned his luxuriant vines. In the laws of Moses there were six years in which to sow the field and prune the vineyard, and then a Sabbath year of rest for field and vines, when no man should gather fruit of his vine undressed. The untilled field and the unpruned vineyard would teach them to remember the Sabbath day, and the God who claimed their love and service.

It was in a land of vineyards and vine-dressers that Jesus lived and found his parables on every hillside. He who said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," said also, "And every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." The discipline of our Heavenly Father's pruning seems stern and painful to us. But it is only that which is bearing fruit that is so pruned and tried. That which beareth no fruit, and hath no life that is useful and good, he rooteth up and casteth out. That which hath any life and bears any fruit that is sweet to his taste, he purgeth it, and it is all done "that it may bear more fruit."

The Winter Evening Walk.

THE country walk in the winter evening has its own delights. The crisp, cold air of the open country makes the ears tingle and quickens the steps. The pace grows fast, the lungs dilate, and fresh, pure air finds its way to the blood, and gives refreshment and the sense of new life. A mile or two over the hills and the return by the other road, and, whatever the cares of the day, all things take a brighter color, and more than ever we know that life is worth living.

We want a companion in our winter evening's walk to hear us talk and make response. We play shuttle-cock with our words, and keep them flying thick and fast. The converse sets the thought a-going and elevates it. The mind is diverted into new channels, and the thought of one opens new chambers in the mind of the other, and sets free and active winged things of hope and aspiration. We share the good things of air and breeze, of light and sky, and all else of interest and beauty around us.

"I said it on the meadow path,
I say it on the mountain stairs,
The best things any mortal hath,
Are those which every mortal shares."

Anything is good that helps to take the selfishness out of the heart and makes us think of other's cares and pleasures. Anything is good that breaks the hard spell of anxious care and drives the loneliness away. And the well-mixed preparation of wintry air and evening landscape, of new and rapid thought and genial companionship, is a medicine beyond the skill of the maker of drugs and far above the mysterious prescription of the medical man. We have cast out that which clogs the blood, and that which clogs the hope, and have gone back again to youth and confidence.

How wise and kind was he who "set the solitary together in families"! We were not made for loneliness and solitary work and walk. We were made to go hand in hand through the long walk of the years. The home and the community and the church are for fellowship and mutual defence and succor. The hermit and the monk violate the laws of nature and of God. We were made to dwell in the air of love, and are not well and happy without it. One evening in the winter of our lives we shall not return from our walk, but enter the gate into the land where there is no night nor winter. There we shall walk with friends in perfect love.

In the Gloaming.

THE gloaming is something brighter than the glooming, though the words are the same. The setting sun of a winter evening strives to make amends by the rich and far-spread splendors of the gloaming for the settling gloom of the coming night. Among the mists that cling about the earth, the departed sun sends up its beams of light, until the western sky is all aglow with color. One evening last week the gloaming mounted far up into the sky, and then spread north and south until its arms embraced one-half the world. Then slowly it decreased and faded, and the stars came out in the cloudless night.

That evening the great Queen was borne to her resting-place, with funereal splendors the world had never seen before. Her long day of life and and majesty and rule was over, and her sun went down, as all human life must come to its end. The gloaming of her departure has commanded the attention of the world, and its unwonted impressiveness has embraced the wide earth. Kings and emperors came in solemn state, and the messengers

of all nations brought the tributes of grateful and loving loyalty to a good woman, who had borne herself well for the welfare of her empire and for the blessing of all mankind.

One meaning of the bright gloaming is that though the sun has gone down, it has not gone out. Far beneath the western hills and beyond our sight the sun is as radiant and vigorous as ever. If it has left us in darkness, it has gone to light up other lands, and all the radiance of the evening is a message of an undying life, and a promise of the rising on another day.

It is not given all to close their lives in any rich and gorgeous gloaming. Even to many of God's children the end comes in shadows and under clouds. But the witness remains which we have borne, and the memories of our fidelity and patience and perseverance abide to light up the paths of others. As to ourselves, the promise cannot fail, whatever the clouds and the darkness of the night, "at evening time it shall be light." And beyond the night is coming a day for which there shall be no gloaming.

Snow Flakes.

WE have not often seen the snow flakes this winter. But this evening they are coming down as if they knew the land and were at home. Silent and soft they fall in an uncounted multitude. They flutter about with white and fairy wings, and drift with the air currents, but steadily go about their errand until over in the Square all the ground is white, and the squirrels have gone into their hiding places safe and warm.

We like the snow flakes for their airiness and their spotless purity, and for the heaven from which they come. Something has shaken the woolly clouds, and out of the folds of the garments of the air they come to lay a benediction of the sky upon the earth. They cover all the soiling and filth of the trampled world, and make all things pure and beautiful. This is what heaven is; this is what heaven would make earth to be.

We have never seen anything so fair go up from the world, nor the earth produce anything so pure for itself. All the coloring of earth around us is dark and red and grey; there is nothing white

that earth hath made. We do not know of anything that earth ever gives to heaven that has not its stain, its dark impurity, its "sins as scarlet," and souls which have been "red as crimson." Wherever sinful men have gone there is the scar and the stain and the blackness. Only heaven gives the white and good.

How can anything be whiter than snow? What cleansing power the blood of Christ must have, and what purification is that which is wrought by the Spirit of God! With the robe of the righteousness of the Redeemer, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit within, even a sinner's soul is brought "without spot or blemish or any such thing." That is what heaven, in its white holiness, can do for a sin-blackened and sin-stained world. One day there will be the white linen of the saints in a world unutterably pure and holy.

Interlals of Silence.

INTERVALS of silence are among the growing needs of life. The world is so noisy, and is growing more so. In the city the air is filled with harsh and strident noises, that make incessant and painful assaults upon the ear. The streets are paved, the rails and car wheels are of iron, the bells and the whistles wage perpetual conflict. The nerves are excited and grow weary. Then there is so much noise about the mind. There is the clamor of many papers and many books, and the harsh demand of many talkers; and nerves and thoughts yearn after silence.

How soon we would be wrecked in body and in brain, were it not for the frequent coming of the night! We bless the curtain that shuts out the noisy world, and the balmy sleep that soothes the weary ear and nerve and thought. How kind the ordinance of the night, and how wise are they who consent to its solitude and take refuge in its silence. He knew his people well, and their perpetual want of silence, who appointed the closet, with its closed door, its escape from the noisy, battling

world, its ascent into the quiet of the presence of God.

Of all silent places for retreat, we know none that is equal to the depths of the great forest. The very sounds we hear seem to be voices of the silence. Tall and dark and massive the trees rise as columns of a temple God has built, and far overhead in pointed arches the leafy boughs meet, and make a shrine, where the worshipper feels small and humble as he seeks communion with his Maker. These dim vaults and winding aisles are the sanctuary of silence. There is no human pride or pomp, no fantastic carving, no painted windows, save the little spaces of heaven's blue, through which the stars shine as lamps in the night. All the space is filled with the presence of the unseen Father, who comes to hear and bless the very littleness and quiet of his child.

In a vision of the night, when there was silence, Eliphaz the Temanite heard a voice, saying, "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" It is only in our intervals of silence that we hear voices. The silent hours are the teaching hours. Our best blessings come when we are dumb with silence. In the great crises of our lives we hear God saying, "Be still,

and know that I am God." Even in heaven, amid the songs and shouts of the redeemed, amid the trumpets of angels and the singing which is "as the noise of many waters," there are intervals of silence, for do we not read that "then followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour"?

Making Roads.

HOW we enjoy our good roads! They are graded and drained, stoned and rolled, until the water finds no lodging-place, and the heavy wagons make no impression on them. Hard and firm, they stretch for miles around us and invite us to walk or drive with a great content, in winter as well as summer. Good Margaret Ogilvy, the mother of Mr. Barrie, in her toiling life and her simple Scotch way, could not understand why any one should wish to take a walk. It seemed to her thrifty soul a waste of time. But we suspect she had no such roads as are all around us. For toiling and for leisuring they are a joy forever.

Is not he a benefactor who makes good roads for his neighbors? We should think each farmer would take some pride in having the road that runs by his place in good condition, graded and smoothed, cleaned of stones and free of holes. It would seem to be such an easy way to do an unselfish and generous thing; some unengaged half day to bring the men and the cart and work on a man's own share of public highway. In a little

while the whole mile would be ready for the smiles and blessings of all who travel by. The wayfaring man would be a fool indeed who did not give a benediction to the man who made the road dry and smooth.

It is a kind and generous thing to make safe and smooth the way for our fellows. We are never lacking in opportunity to fill some rutted hole or remove some stumbling-block. It takes so little sometimes to make plain and easy the way for our children. The teacher is making open the ways into light and knowledge for the young. The preacher who removes an error from the mind, who clears the way, and sets up the sign-board, and leads his people, crying in their doubt and fear, "This is the way; walk ye therein," what a road-builder is he!

The great forerunner of Jesus went before the face of the Lord "to prepare his ways." It is "a highway for our God," which his church prepares, "making it straight in the desert." "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." So may the King come speedily to his own! But there is no road to be compared with the way which the mercy

of God hath made in redemption for the coming home of his wandering children. "A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein;" so plain hath he made it by his truth and Spirit. No lion nor ravenous beast besets that way. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

A Visitor in Perseus.

A NEW star is the sensation among the stargazers. It came last week in the constellation Perseus, and was first seen by the astronomers scanning the heavens with their telescopes. But in the last few nights it has been readily found without the glasses. Early in the evening it is seen not far from the North star, and, swinging with the world of stars, it sinks beneath the horizon, and after midnight appears again. Now it is waning, as if it had turned back to go home to the place from which it came.

What a wonder this stranger is, this visitor to the house of Perseus! Where did it come from, and what was its errand? What will it tell of our system when it goes back to its home in the far-off space? It will not be long before the scientific men will be telling us of its size and its weight, the exact character of its light, and its component elements, its orbit and its movement. He is not the first stranger who has visited our heavens from other parts. Again and again visitors have looked in upon us for a little while and gone away again, shining as they go.

One thing the star-visitor has taught, that God's creation is far more vast than we can see. Far beyond the range of any glasses are worlds and systems we know not of, as great and orderly and glorious as that which sweeps around us. This world, on which we live and think, and love and die, is one of the smallest that came from the creative hand. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

How much more wonderful than ever seems the story of redemption? That among the worlds, so many, so much more glorious, this should be true, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." There is but one Son of God. Has he gone to other worlds on errands of love and mercy? Of this we are told that by the marvels of his redeeming love to us God will make himself known and adored in all his vast creation. It was by his Son that he made the worlds, and by the church, which his Son hath gathered and redeemed, he will make known the manifold wisdom of God, "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places."

Sweet Peas.

UNDER the brown earth, deeply buried, are the seeds of our sweet peas. Some were placed in the ground several weeks ago, and lay under the mantle of snow. Through rain and storm and night and cloudy day they have been safely kept. How confident we are of their coming up some sunny morning in all their modest beauty of greenery and color! Before long they will be our charm and pride, and make the place to us like another paradise, and be the promises of many flowers to come.

Last week a friend wrote us, "We planted our sweet peas yesterday, and to-day they are under the snow. One of our neighbors buried his eldest son, aged twenty-three, last Sabbath." What a pathetic contiguity into which to bring the two events! Side by side he tells of the sweet peas and of the buried darling of a home of love and piety. Side by side, too, are the seeds of sweet peas and the mortal remains of a Christian youth, under the same brown earth, beneath the same white pall of snow. How sure we are of the sunny

morning that will come to both, and the blooming in beauty and fragrance!

How many precious things have we which are still beneath the sod; not only seeds and roots, which are waiting eagerly now for the summons of the spring, but so many we have known and loved. Surely the earth is filled with the dead, and yet it hungers for more. We are weary of burying our dead! There is the great Queen of the round-the-world empire, called Victoria; and the little maid from the Valley Manse, called Patience; and the beloved physician who had blessed so many lives; and the stalwart man, strong pillar in home and in business, in college and in church. And with all our best and loveliest and most needed ones the grave is not satisfied.

We could not bear it all, were there no hope of a coming spring! It is not only that —

“The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust;”

but far more than that. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

“But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of Glory passes on his way! Alleluia.”

The Song of the Robin.

IF you have not seen the flash of the bluebird, surely you have heard the song of the robin. He is in the woods now, and out in the fields, running and leaping and sweeping among the trees, piping and calling, as happy as happy can be. The robin is a friendly bird, hardy and noisy, neighborly and folk-loving, and his note is round and true, as though he meant all that he said. He is no aristocrat, vain and pretentious, but a democrat, just one of the plain people; but he has good looks and a turn for music. We do not like the sparrow because he long ago confessed the dark crime of "my bow and arrow."

The very first time, early in March, that you hear the robin's sweet call, "the spell of the winter is thoroughly broken," John Burroughs says, "and the remembrance of it afar off." How surely then is the coming of all the birds, the lark and the brown thrush and the oriole, and all the rest, returning from their trip to Florida! It is a fine thing for Robin Redbreast to come first and tell us that spring is surely coming, and we were not

mistaken in our hope, and the flowers will wake up from their long sleep, and all the choir of winged songsters take their places in our trees, and the full anthem again be sung some bright morning in June.

If there is a song for all these birds, and not one fails of his morning of joy, we are thinking God has a song for every one of his children. The Word cannot fail. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." We, who know so much more of God's love than David did, can look into the future and say, "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance!" What is that which Job saith of "songs in the night"? and Isaiah of the ransomed who shall return, as our birds are returning, "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads?"

Martin Luther in his autobiography says: "I have one preacher that I love better than any other upon earth; it is my little tame robin, which preaches to me daily. I put his crumbs upon my window-sill, especially at night. He hops on to the sill when he wants his supply, and takes as much as he desires to satisfy his need. From thence he always hops on to a little tree close by, and lifts up his voice to God and sings his carol

of praise and gratitude, tucks his little head under his wing, and goes fast to sleep, and leaves to-morrow to look after itself. He is the best preacher that I have on earth."

The Plow and the Plowman.

OF all country things, we like the plow, and of all country sights, nothing is as pleasing, perhaps, as the plodding team with the plow that is turning the soil. Slow and strenuous is the progress across the field. There is the strong, steady pull of the horses, that so bravely and patiently bend their necks to the strain; there is the breaking away of the overturned soil, the fresh smell of the earth, and the birds that come to pick in the open furrow. We saw five plows in a gang, in the James River Valley last week, and the earth turned willingly across the broad low-grounds.

Then will come the great harrow, with its heavy team of three horses, back and forward across the cloggy furrows, and then the roller perhaps, and the harrow again, until the soil is raked and smoothed as fine as a garden spot. Then will come the loaded corn-planters, in long, measured rows, to open the furrow and drop the seed-corn and cover it. Some May morning there will be long lines of light green blades across the brown earth; and we know that in the summer heat the corn

will wave its myriad plumes in serried ranks, like a motionless army waiting for the bugle call and the march.

There is no plowing like that which the great Husbandman of the nations is doing. The plow of God's providence is driven through the nations. He turns and overturns among kings and counsellors, and accomplishes his own wise and righteous purposes among the peoples. Kings and nations, wise men and foolish, drag his plow and fulfil his will, whether they know and consent or not. Then comes the time of planting. When he has made the land ready, the seed-corn of his truth will find a lodgment.

"Where prophets trod his deserts broad,
Where monarchs dragged the plow,
Behold the seedtime of his word;
The Sower comes to sow."

The plowman may find some useful instructions in the Word. He that putteth his hands to the plow must not look back, as there must be no regret, no unbelief, no lack of courage and hope in the service of God. And he that ploweth should plow in hope, as the one who serves Christ must keep before him the vision of his faith, the golden harvest, and the gathering of the nations. It is

Amos, the herdman of Tekoa, who brings his prophecy to this fine climax, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper." So rapid and constant will be the harvest of the gospel among men that in the same season plowman and reaper will be close together, the seed sown will so promptly bring its fruit.

The Violet's Perfume.

THE perfume of the violet has been with us all through the holiday week. It was not only in the little handful of purple flowers gathered from the border, and in the modest glass on the breakfast table, but in the glories of the florist's shop, in the crowded church, and on the street, and in the railroad car. If the tender form of the violet has been draped in purple like a queen, and the tints have come from the blue cloud-rifts and the heart of the rainbow, where is the hidden laboratory where this rare, sweet perfume has been distilled, and who is the alchemist that knows the process and never fails?

If the colors which the flowery sisters wear are a mystery to you, what will you say of the perfumes which they breathe? Why should each flower have its own breath? And why should the modest violet come, year after year, not only arrayed in its own royal blue and purple, but scenting the air with its own exquisite fragrance? It has its own season, its own form, its own coloring, and its own perfume, and it always comes in its

own independent identity. No science can tell you how it is. You have come already to the mystery of life in the world of nature, and not by the violet gates nor any other can you go further.

Perfumes and the pleasure they give must have been familiar to the early Bible writers; for many times they speak of the sacrifices which God's people offered in obedience and faith as "a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord." When Noah builded his altar and offered of every clean beast unto the Lord, "the Lord smelled a sweet savor." And on through Leviticus and Numbers the offering that was acceptable had a sweet savor unto the Lord. It was especially provided that sweet spices should be burned for a rich, sweet-smelling savor in the presence of God. The perfumed incense went up continually before him in the temple.

Paul writes that when Christ loved us and gave himself for us, it was "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor," as was so expressly set forth in the acceptance of all those old-time offerings. And the things which Paul received of Epaphroditus, sent by the Philippians, were "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." There is no perfume so acceptable and so sweet to God as the breathings

toward him of a true piety. When the heart of piety is expressed in prayer and praise, in willing service, and in generous charity, and when that comes with the humility of the lowly violet, half hidden by the leaves, it ascends as a grateful incense before the face of the Father in heaven.

Sunshine and Shower.

SUNSHINE and showers, showers and sunshine — that makes an April day. They are happy companions that will not long be separated. One follows the other as if in merry chase, and between the two they make the world very bright and beautiful indeed. It is as if the alternation of sunshine and shower were just what the world of grass and flowers needed. It is the heaven's double gift to the earth. They come to wake the life beneath the sod, and call it out in greenery and flowers, to bud and blossom and bear fruit. We like the April day both for its own beautiful caprice, and because it will not call in vain upon the earth.

The florist watches his plants with anxious, hopeful care. Now he sprinkles well, and then, fearing the chill and darkness, he opens his frames that the light and warmth of the sun may come in. So our April day alternations of sun and rain speak of the care and hope of the great Gardener. A little rain, an hour of sunshine, and then the shower again; how surely they bring the springing grass

and many-colored flowers; the fruit trees will soon be all in bloom. And when they are all well on their way, he may drive the showers away, and there will be the long bright days of unclouded June.

It is not easy to learn that we need both sunshine and shower in our lives. But fruitful lives are those which have their mingling of joy and sorrow. The sunlight of perpetual happiness is not the best life to produce character and works that have value to ourselves, or the largest blessing to the world, or the highest honor to our Maker. Human hearts and lives must have experiences to make rich and full and true our words and works. It is the hour of cloud and rain that tries the faith and exercises the patience, and when the sunshine of a happier day comes, there are flowers and fruits we could not have otherwise produced. Mr. Longfellow perhaps scarcely grasped the whole truth of Christian discipline and growth when he sang —

“Into all lives some rain must fall.”

Now we have our April weather, and we consent and are thankful. But we hope it will not always be so. Now we accept the rain, and the shadow and the chill, hoping there are roots and seeds

within to be quickened and made to bring forth things that will be acceptable to our Lord. Then there will be no clouds nor rain, but light and joy and gladness for ever and ever. And heaven itself will be richer and happier because it was good for us that we were afflicted.

The Common Flowers.

THE common flowers of the field and wayside are not to be despised. Nowadays there are so many splendid blooming things in garden and conservatory that we are apt to pass by the beauty and kindliness of the plants that bloom about us in freedom and abundance. The yellow dandelion comes unasked in the grass on the wayside, and the daisies spring unbidden far across the field. The wild places in the woods deck themselves in color where no skillful hand has sown the seed or nurtured any plants with care.

What we most like about them is that they come so generously, of their own sweet will. They have not waited for any narrow garden plot to give them place, or any thoughtful hand to prepare the way. They are not helpless and dependent, failing when the water-pot is forgotten. They are strong and self-reliant. Then they give themselves so abundantly to rich and poor alike, and seem to wish to bless and beautify the world, though they be themselves neglected and trampled upon. If there is humility in the common flowers, there is

also the most patient and persistent service, and then the most willing sacrifice for all the world.

One may readily find the lessons of good in common things. Common tasks and toils are not without their compensations. Common days well spent make the years of a good and happy life. Words of cheer by the wayside are the things which express the character within, and which make the lives of others less irksome and unhappy. The deeds of every day which are not an artificial and hot-house production and are not sold for money are by far the most valuable to the world. Where generosity and kindness and love are made the common flowers of each day's life, there is happiness within and blessing without.

We have the best authority for saying we must call nothing in all humanity common or unclean. Our eyes are always seeing differences among men, and our judgments drawing lines of distinction. But there was One who walked among the flowers of Palestine, and said the common lily was to him more gorgeously arrayed than Solomon, and in the human soul of publican and sinner saw a child of God and an heir of heaven. How he loved and sought the common people of his land! The first movings of the weakest faith in the heart of any

poor child of sin, however blackened and stained, was the flower he loved most of all. So to us he commanded, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The Roots of Things.

WE have had a hard battle with the weeds and their roots in our lawn, the docks and the mullens and the pusley. They are coarse and rank growers, and altogether out of place. If we had consented, they would have taken possession, and spoiled the fair beauty of the grass. But they have strong roots and deep, and when the hand could not draw them out we have taken a sharp mattock and gone down after the long tap-roots. Now we have a heaping wheelbarrow load to be cast out, and the fine lawn will be clean and smooth all the summer long.

These marplots, which we did not want, are so strong and vigorous. The grass is so tender, and the flowers are so dainty and frail, that they are easily destroyed. But the weeds and evil things send their roots so deep, and lay hold of the life of the soil and the moisture. No half-way measures would suffice, so that there was nothing to do but to be severe and take them out by the roots. If there is anything left of the roots, we will not hear from them, we are hoping, for another year.

Eradication is a strong word. It means such thorough extermination that the very root is taken out and nothing left of the thing we want cast out. The evil things of the heart of man have deep and vigorous roots. They are strong growers. They take the very life of the soul, and kill out the tender things whose seeds lie on the surface. They claim and spread themselves, like noxious weeds, for entire possession; unbelief and selfishness and worldliness, greed and lust, and all the things of sin and depravity. In the heart "the love of money is a root of all evil." In a church of Christ, unbrotherliness and hatred are "roots of bitterness." Deuteronomy tells of those who turn away from the Lord our God to serve other gods: "lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood."

Only the grace of God, with the sharp, strong tool of the Word, can take out by the roots the love of sin, and "bring all into the captivity of Christ." The Lord says by Jeremiah, of the prophets and ministers of God, "I have set thee to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy," and then "to plant and to build." God's servant declares the truth, "shunning not to declare the whole counsel of God," the law, its majesty,

authority and entire demand, its inevitable and righteous penalty, and its unchanging eternity. And the mighty Spirit uses that Word to eradicate all that is evil and injurious and destructive. It is only when sin is taken out by the roots that any character and life, and any church of Christ, are made the places where the beauty of the Lord grows and all is fair in the sunshine of his love.

Things Out of Place.

THE difference between the weed and the flower is that the weed is a plant out of place. It might do very well somewhere else. Possibly the florist might make it a thing of beauty and perfume, and in the border, or the window pot, we would admire and cherish it. But it is not a flower to us if it persist in coming up in our grass. A Scotch thistle will be a beautiful plant in a large pot on the porch, but out in the field it is a nuisance and a threat. What we love about the flower is that it grows and blooms just where we planted it. It has this first grace of propriety — that it is in its own place.

A large part of the trouble and worry of life comes from the things that are out of place. It is not only the docks that grow on the lawn, but the swine that have crawled into the garden and the stock that has broken into the grain-field. Then there is the tool that is not in its place. We can do nothing without it, and it costs a precious lot of time to find it. Or the book that has stood on

the shelf untouched for a year waiting for the day of its use; and when the day comes and the necessity is upon us, the book is gone. How valuable to us is the friend upon whom we can rely, who is never out of place with us, upon whom we can lay the hand and be sure that he is just what we want!

It is just as true of character as it is of the lawn or the border. The things in place give us happiness; the things out of place give us trouble and sorrow. It is very hard to get the weeds out of the character we are surely forming — errors, prejudices, false estimates, mistaken proportions, low ideals and evil habits. It is hard to think they would be flowers anywhere, or under any culture; but to us they are weeds, plants out of place. It is by watchfulness and prayer and the planting of better things that we make the character all that it should be.

The worldly woman and the covetous man are out of place in any Christian church. They mar the peace and retard the progress of the kingdom of Christ. The great work of the pastor is to weed out the evil, to keep the garden of the Lord clean for his acceptance, and to bring in the plants of

grace, that they may grow in their appointed place. We are not in the place where is our happiness and our hope until we are "set in the way of his steps" and "planted in the house of the Lord."



The Two Nurseries.

NOT far away from our front porch is an extensive nursery. There are many acres of young trees, for fruit and for shade, and for ornament. They are carefully nurtured through their first years, cultivated, nourished, pruned and straightened. They are watched and cleansed from insects and parasites that might dwarf or destroy the life. They are of many varieties. Some will be of large growth and last for many years, and some are dwarf varieties, and will have shorter and more limited usefulness.

The transplanting is a somewhat anxious time. They are to be taken out of this nursery soil and watchful protection, and sent far and wide through the land. What strength of life will they carry with them? What soil will they find about them? What will be the exposures and perils, and what the treatment they will receive from their new environment? It is hoped that they have strong roots, and will grow symmetrical and sturdy, and be bearers of good fruit, to the comfort and happiness of many homes for years to come.

Much nearer to us, in more ways than one, is another nursery, the Theological Seminary of our church in Virginia and Carolina. How precious to the church are these classes of consecrated young men, who are to be ministers to the world of the love of God, and of the truth as it is in Jesus! They have been carefully nourished in doctrine, and skillfully trained. They have been protected from the multiform errors that come in from all sides, and warned of the many misconceptions that spring up in the soil of the natural heart. They are plants of grace appointed for fruit-bearing in the great field of the world. For them destitute places and far-away mission fields are waiting.

The members of the large senior class are to be transplanted indeed. They are to be set in strange places, and to stand alone, amid some exposures, and where much will be expected. We are hoping there is a strong life, mental and spiritual, that will take deep root; that the years will find them growing into stability and vigor; that each year they will be fruitful to the blessing of the world, and being planted by God's rivers of water, will bear much fruit, like the Bible trees, even down to old age!

A Sunrise Song Service.

THE birds have a sunrise meeting every day in the large holly tree at the back of our home. They have all returned from the orange groves, and are busy with their nest-building in a hundred places. But the first thing they do each day is to have a song service in the close foliage of the old tree. There are so many of them, and they sing so many various songs that it would be jarring and discordant if it were not so free and natural and joyful. They are not quarreling, but with one consent are telling each other and the world how happy they are in the dewy brightness of the new morning.

We do not know that they meet with the purpose of calling us from slumber, but there is no folding of the arms to sleep with that happy choir rehearsing for the day. They will not go about their building of nests until they have sung out the happiness of their hearts. No doubt they work better for the meeting and the song. No doubt the day will be a better day, and the nests the better

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builded for this morning hour of peace and praise. So we rub our eyes, and listen to their mingled songs, and wish them well.

We have heard singing in the churches sometimes that was almost as much without tune; and to some ears it was a jargon of discordant sounds, without harmony or melody. Yet sometimes we have been in the humor to like it. It seemed the free expression of many trustful and joyful hearts. Without art or grace, or any artificial training, almost without the semblance of music, it was yet the unrestrained rejoicing of a great company that knew the love of God. They were one body, and with many voices they sang the one song; and work came easier and care was lighter, and hope was more undimmed and filled with the glory of the morning of God.

The prayers and praises, the song and the service of God's people must be a jarring tumult of sound. It is so mingled with things of earth, it is on so many various keys, there cannot be much music in it. There are voices of complaint and sadness, of bereavement and of sorrow. There are notes of want and pain, of doubt and of fear. But if there be one common note of trust, one tone of gratitude and godly desire, how sweet must be the

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harmony to him who gave his life to save the world
from its pain and woe! How grand the chorus
which is the beginning on earth of the new song
of heaven!

The May Roses.

SURELY the rose is the queen of all the floral kingdom, the most beautiful of all the fair daughters of the spring. The rose has beautified and charmed the world ever since there was an eye to see and a pen to write. The ancient Persians found no flower so sweet. The burning Sappho sang of the rose—

“Of shrubs and flowers the sovereign queen to be!”

And the many-sided, all-observant Shakespeare wrote of —

“Morning roses, sweetly washed with dew.”

Wild or cultured, the rose has the same surpassing charm. With choice of many colors and the sweetest perfumes, we choose and love them all. Clambering over rocks or trailing among the ferns, it finds its own setting and never fails of beauty. Yielding to kindly culture, with most cheerful response it becomes more rich and splendid. Dainty tea, or fuller damask, moss roses and clusters, we like the climber that far up on the eaves hangs

out its finest blooms, and preaches of success to those who patiently aspire and ascend.

If you would know your rose in its rarest charm, you will not find it in the vase so long to have "the scent of the roses hang round it still"; but in the early morning, when the night has bedecked it with the pearls of dew, and every rose leaf hangs its jewels out to greet the rising sun. As the rose opens its petals to catch the morning dew, and be revived and sweetened for the day, how wise are they who each morning open their hearts to the sweeter dew of the Spirit of God. This is so freely offered to us, and by it life and power come, and then the beauty of the Lord.

Of all the flowers it is the finest, the rose which has its thorn. As if to say there is nothing worth having without its difficulty, and no rich and fragrant attainment without its peril. In lowly life there is peace, but in a life of larger outlook and wider duties there are responsibility and care and sometimes danger. Some good we attain in lives of even tenor, but out of affliction and sorrows come the discipline that brings the higher, sweeter graces of Christian character. Where the thorns pierce most painfully, there are the flowers and fruits of the Spirit of God.

The Bird in the Rain.

RAIN, rain — how it has rained for almost a month past! It is a wonder where the skies get so much rain. The country has been drenched, and the rivers kept in flood, and the lowgrounds swept. Under the clouds we are almost forgetting what the sunshine is like. The days are dark and gloomy, and there are disappointments in our plans. Sometimes we all have dark days; loss, bereavement, pain or sorrow. They are not far away from any of us.

“Into each life some rain must fall.”

The bird that sang in the rain this morning was a messenger of cheer and courage. We were awakened early by the rush of a heavy shower, and it brought a feeling of disappointment and discouragement. But we had scarcely settled down to the thought that the day was to be dark and wet, when a wee bird at the window piped as sweet and clear a song as we ever hope to hear. So it could not be so bad after all. Dark and dripping as the morning was, that little feathered sprite took heart

of hope, and sang for us its own note of confidence and joy.

It was just the bidding of patience and courage that we needed, and we could not resist. All day long the bird and its cheery song bided with us, and we travelled home to our work somewhat weary in body from the Sunday's preaching, but cheered in heart. The day has been so much better and cheerful. Then before the evening came we wrote some notes of comfort and hope to friends in trouble. Our little bird friend will never know what good it did for us, and what good it started going out in a widening circle among men.

Our kind Father in heaven has filled his wonderful Word with messages of cheer for our dark and rainy days. In the broad field of God's book "light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart." His best gift to the world in its pain and sorrow is the Friend who can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and who is ever crying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." If we will but open our ears to hear there are always given "songs in the night."

A Day in June.

NOT many things are as bright and fair as a day in June. It must have been a June day of which George Herbert sang:

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky."

Spring has come to its crowning day, and nature opens all its richer beauty of greenery and flowers. If it is "the leafy month of June," it is also the month of sweet perfumes, the month of bees and birds, of long, balmy days and of fair, green landscapes. It was our American Lowell who wrote:

"And what is so rare as a day in June,
Then, if ever, come perfect days."

It is well the schools open their doors at the coming of June, and send the throngs of boys and girls out into the lanes and fields. Books are well, but freedom and play are also well. Now must come the happy parties, with their well-stored baskets, to find a picnic place under the trees, beside the streams, and spend a long holiday in joy unrestrained. School days for profit and training,

and June days for fishing and ranging and boating to the heart's content.

What a time it is for commencements! Examinations are all over, and diplomas are awarded, and degrees won, and these bright June days great companies of youth will leave the colleges for good. What a serious time Commencement Day is! It is the ending of so much: school days, book learning, mind training, long years of discipline and education; yet it is the commencement of more. It is the threshold across which they pass from narrow school to the great out-door of free and self-directed manhood and womanhood. Flowers and sheepskins, sermons and appeals, final frolics and silent hand-clasps, tearful home travel, and then come commencements indeed.

What would the world come to if the forces that battle were not reinforced by the June commencements! What a splendid infusion of young life! What a grand addition to the powers working for progress and uplift are the ambitions and hopes of the young! We lay the old warrior down to rest and cover him with laurels, and then turn to meet the young soldier coming on the field and crown him with the roses of June. Long may he stand, strong and brave, win battles in his own

breast, and then win battles for his brothers and for the world. All the future of the home, and the State and the church depend on the army of young men and women who come to their commencements in June.

Growth Everywhere.

HOW fresh and fair the world was when we threw open the blind this morning! The night and the dew had made a wonderful change, and the lawn and the fields looked up to the rising sun with a fresh life and a smiling welcome. A tall lily had hung out a new white flower on its masthead. Two or three rose bushes had opened fine blooms. The lawn grass that was mowed yesterday was again a fresh carpet of green velvet. While we slept the marvelous processes of plant life have been at work, and the world is farther on its way.

We know some of the things that have helped in all this growth, but we do not know all. There were the seeds and the roots, with their own hidden mystery of life; there was the soil, with its fitted food for plants; there were the rains and the sunshine, and the wholesome alternations of day and night. And over all and within all was the power and grace of a marvelous nature that without pause is compelling all things into growth.

One must not be always a child. Charmed as

you are with the ways of the babe, it would be an unspeakable distress if it remained a babe, and there came no toddling steps, no beginnings of prattle, no thought and love growing on the face. The boy must not come back from his play to be fed with a spoon. The young man cannot be always dependent on the father's home. There must be growth for a thousand reasons, and food convenient for growth, and mental acquisition, and opportunity and manly independence and freedom. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

If there is provided milk for babes, there is also meat for strong men. The demand for a simple gospel has a just foundation, but the Christian believer has given to him the great doctrines of the grace of God whereby he must be nourished and grow up into a strong and useful manhood. There are some in the churches who have been babes in Christ for many years. The law of growth is imperative in God's kingdom. It is the craving of our renewed nature. It is the need of the world, and it is the yearning desire of Christ. "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection!"

The Earth and the Sky.

THE flowers and the grass have scarcely lifted up their faces to the sky this season until the rains came. We have never known so willing and so prompt a response. Just an appeal of want and desire, and the waving of the clover and the daisy, like the uplifting of hands, and the clouds have come and given abundant answer. The skies seem to be so near, and to have a sympathy so ready, and a supply so large, that there is scarcely a day without a shower; and the grass is kept green and the flowers multiply their bloom; the grain is filled with golden head, and the fruits are made large and sweet and beautiful.

We do not know what the earth would do if the skies were not so friendly. The earth was surely made to be dependent on the heavens, and would be a desert, unclothed in green and solitary, if there were no clouds to bring the rains. But the heavens above seem so cordial and responsive, giving sunshine to warm and beautify the world beneath, and then pouring out the rain to revive and quicken the very humblest plant. Surely the earth and the

sky were formed to be good friends. "The Lord God made the earth and the heavens."

We do not have to go far to find the meaning of that parable. What a woeful desert is made among men when the heavens withhold their blessings! How entirely dependent is every soul and every life upon the gifts that are from above! When the face is upturned and the hands are uplifted with a true desire and a trustful appeal, the God of heaven comes to give the answer. Without the Spirit's grace we are barren and fruitless, and with his power and grace we can do all things.

We do not, any of us, take home to our hearts how near heaven is and how near God is. We do not know and believe how great is his love, how tender is his sympathy, how ready he is to give what we need, "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." For ourselves, for our homes, for our churches, for the world in its want and sorrow and sin, each morning, let us lift up our hearts and make our appeal. He is never afar off, and a thousand times more willing and able than the clouds. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul!"

Going or Biding?

WARM summer days and nights are drawing us out of doors. Young people in the town are full of excursions and trolley parties and picnics, and older people are dreaming of the mountains and the seaside. Some overworked and weary ones are longing for the day when they can spread the sail, or throw the line, or get into the saddle and feel the life of the fine horse under them, or stretch themselves under the shade of the old elm at the farm house. Fresh, cool air to breathe, and singing birds to hear, and fields of green and gold to see; mountains to climb, and oars to bend across the water, and wild flowers and ferns to gather in shaded nooks, and far-spreading views from mountain-top. What a craving there is to get away, and get out of doors, and be free and without care once more!

The very craving for these things suggests that they are the medicines that are needed. A new air and a fresh air, the ozone on the mountain and the iodine on the salt water; these are the remedies which nature provides so bountifully. You

know the doctor sends the consumptive to sleep on the house-top, or on the fragrant pine straw, or in the hammock in the woods. So it must be good for us all. No doubt diversion of mind is an important part of the summer mixture. Not so much rest of muscle or of mind, but work of brawn and brain in other ways.

"Rest is not quitting the busy career,
Rest is the fitting of self to its sphere."

What a pity it is that we do not live all the time, so that we will not need a spasmodic vacation! Why should we not let each day settle its own account, and each week give the rest we need, and the change of air and the diversion of thought! Many of us are working too strenuously, and keeping the thought on one line too intensely. We are sleeping in closed rooms, or eating too strong food, or working too many hours. Each day we might square the account, and so rise each morning fresh and well and ready for another battle of life.

So those of us who must be stay-at-homes this summer will try to live sane lives, and at home get the rest and diversion we need; and those who go will remember us who toil for them, and for

our sakes get all the good they can. In the city we shall have our green squares, and our music, and our books and Bibles, our baths and our long sleeps. We shall have our cool churches, and our visiting preachers, and our letters from the summer travellers. When the summer is over, we shall not be as sunburnt as our friends, and as anxious for the home breakfast and the good bed, but perhaps we shall be just as tranquil and contented. Let us hope we shall all be well and thankful to the Giver of all blessing.

Giving and Increasing.

WE find the flowers to have some very amiable traits. One of them is that the more you cut and carry away of their beauty and bloom the more they respond and produce their buds and blossoms. That is a most generous spirit. The damask rose has kept itself full of splendid flowers, though we have taken away so many; and the sweet peas have just outdone themselves in blooming when we have cut them again and again. The more they give the more they have to give.

It is just as true of our own mental faculties. They must be constantly used if we wish to grow and expand. They must be drawn upon in effort and production if we wish them to be large and vigorous and useful. The mind left unused and neglected loses vitality and relapses into dullness and stupidity. But with daily exercise of thought there is growth and more generous production. These fine plants of reason and logical faculty, of imagination and memory, of humor and vision, are the gift of the Maker to every one of us. Their

value is according to their use. With daily demand they generously expand, and give delight as freely as do the flowers.

Of the moral and spiritual faculties this great thing is also true. What a marvellous creation is the spirit of man, in its original likeness to the image of its Maker, and in its newly created likeness to the image of Christ! The spiritual faculties of faith and love, of courage and hope, were all made for an energetic use, and expand in their use. They are the dominant energies of the soul just born into the kingdom. From childhood they are designed to grow into a strong manhood. In the daily use of spiritual powers and of Christian graces there come rapid growth, and all spiritual beauty and fruit.

These things point us to the fulness of life, which should be the power and joy of the saint in his older years. When the outward man is perishing the inward man is renewed day by day. Having used our Christian graces, we grow into a larger life, and bring forth fruit in old age. There can be no flowering as fine and rich, as full of the perfumes of heaven as the graces of a matured and saintly old age. It is like the rod of Aaron,

which "brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds." Thus may we bring something of great fragrance to the feet of our Lord and Redeemer.

Voices in the Night.

WE are two miles away from the city, but on Saturday night we heard a city clock strike twelve times. The notes were rich and clear, and came through the quiet night as from another world. All the town, with its long lines of glimmering light, was resting from its toil, and all the harsh machinery stood still. Horses and vehicles of every kind had forsaken the stony streets, and the street cars, with strident armature and clanging bells, had retired from the fray. The day was over, and man and beast were glad to rest. The silence of a city at midnight is deeply impressive.

The week, too, was ended, and as the clock struck the midnight hour the city silently passed into the Sabbath. We stood at the chamber window and saw the far-away lights and the glimmer of the silent stars, and heard no sound until the midnight peal told of the end of toil and of God's bidding to rest. What an unspeakable mercy it is! How wisely measured are the days until man can toil no more with brawn or brain, and must needs have

rest! "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." The Maker knows what we need.

It is in times of silence we distinctly hear voices that do not come to us in the hours of toil and among the confused noises of this world. After the day is done, and the world grows quiet, and thought comes home from its wide wanderings, then speak the memories, and friends of other years are heard again. Pleasures long gone by come back mingled with regrets. Things read long ago and lines of living verse sing themselves in the busy brain. Strong words from the Book of books ring out and are echoed in the conscience. In any still hour that ever comes with the voices that speak and warn and sing and woo we are blessed indeed if they lead us into a Sabbath peace.

It is in the hush of the closet, with its closed door, that God himself comes as in the evening time in the garden to hold communion. It is in the quiet of the vaulted aisle, or the cathedral of the forest, with its pointed arches, that the spirit hears the voices that speak of peace and hope. We are not monks in cloistered cells, or nuns with lips sealed by vows, nor hermits in lonely solitude; nor are we Quietists nor Friends who must always wait

the moving of the Spirit. But happy is the heart that can quiet itself and hold meditation with itself until God speaks, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

Birds on the Roadside.

WHY the birds are willing to remain amid the noises and the confusions of the busy workaday world is a mystery to us. When the green fields and the cool forests are open to them, here they are singing beside the road, where is the stir of horses and dogs and men, in the dust and noise, where the railroad trains rush and the electric cars are screaming. One brown-coated fellow sat last evening on the trolley wire and sang as sweet a song as you will hear in any mountain valley, shaded and cool.

He must have a heart that is brave, patient, contented. All these noises and confusions are as nothing to him. He lives apart from them all, and has his own sources of happiness. He is not greatly disturbed by the barking dogs and the shouting boys, but on his swinging perch warbles and sings in the freshness of the morning and the cool of the evening as one without care or regret or fear. Perhaps he keeps his eye and his ear turned upward, away from the troubled world.

Can we ever hope to keep our hearts calm and

patient in the midst of toil and noise, the world's confusions and cries of pain and sorrow? The monastic idea of the Romish Church is that the true and happy Christian life is to be found by desertion of the world. The hermit in a lonely cell, the monk walled in by stone, the nun shut off from the world, sealing her eyes and ears from the sins and evils of the struggling world, these may find a higher life of faith and communion with God; but the divine Example himself did not dwell apart, nor teach his disciples to desert their homes and their duty and their share in the work and conflict. Not desertion, but a brave stand at the front, is the place of the Christian soldier.

The Christian life is to be lived in the world where God appoints; in the world, though not of it; diligent in business, and yet fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. In the toil and conflict, among men, sharing their cares and their sorrows, yet keeping the eye upward, and the ear open to voices from above, is the direction of our loving Heavenly Father, and the leading of our faithful Saviour. Amid all the dust and struggle of the arena we may keep the calm, sweet sense of God's constant love. Unbroken and melodious, all through our busy, troubled lives we may have the song of the

joyful heart. Like "the hidden brook in the leafy month of June," we hear a voice divine, and, like the bird on the wayside, we keep our song clear and sweet.

The Earth and Man.

WITHOUT a sail, the sea is a dreary and heartless waste. We soon weary of looking out upon the far range of the tossing water, if there be no presence of man, only solitude. In the uninhabited desert of the ocean we have no human response and no interest. But the moment we see the fisherman's boat, or the white sail far out, or, on the very rim of the horizon, the long smoke-trail of the steamer, how immediately the scene changes. Now we feel something in common with the sea, some response seems to come back, and this is a part of our world.

On the mountain top, we look far across a sea of mountains, and if it be a solitude, it seems desolate and forbidding. Vastness, beauty of form and color, perhaps something of the sublime there may be, but it is all foreign and unattractive to us if there be no sign of man, no humanity there. But if we can find on some hillside a fence, and in the valley below a cabin, perhaps a man plowing in a distant field, the scene is no longer a desert, de-

sented, homeless. The world is ours again, beautiful and winning.

What a strong hold our human brotherhood has upon us! We dread loneliness of all things. We want companionship. The earth could never be home to us if we were alone. Neither sea nor mountains, nor valleys nor fields would have any beauty to us if we must dwell in solitude. Our happiness depends so much on our fellowship. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

What a desert indeed this world would be without him who is pre-eminently the Son of man! Across the sea of the world's storms comes one saying, "Peace be still." Among the hills and the mountains of the world's history stands one in human form, "Strong Son of God." He it is who transformed the desert into the paradise of God. The one way to turn the wilderness into a garden and a home is to open the way for the coming of Christ, the Son of man.

Climbing to Rest.

CLIMBING the stairs to rest at night is the inevitable ending of the day's story. At last, from very weariness, we give up the day and surrender to the night. The toil and battle, the care or the pleasure, are all over, and we are compelled to submit. Reluctantly, we turn off the light and bolt the door, and go slowly up the stairway. We look out into the quiet of the night — moonlight on the fields, the silent stars above — and, pulling down the shades, we stretch our tired limbs and compose the weary brain to rest. We have climbed to pause and to forgetfulness, and "tired nature's sweet restorer."

So we climb the mountain, leaving the world below. Out of the turmoil and the dust, the weariness and the heat, up the steep paths we urge our toiling steps, to find rest at last at the top. On the mossy rock, under the shade of a bush, in the sweet, fresh air that sweeps over the lofty ridge, we lie alone and find our rest. Work and care have been left in the busy world below, and no mails nor papers follow us. Far away from the

noise and strenuous struggle, alone on the mountain top, nearer the sky than the earth, we have climbed to rest.

Still must we climb if we would rest. As the plant reaches up out of the hard earth, and in the air waves aloft her flowers, and the young leaf on the very tree-top is most free to sweep among the winds against the sky, and the lark ascends to sing its happy morning lay, it is true for every one of us that we must climb. In knowledge, in character, in right living, in daily duty, there is no rest, save for those who climb.

"I cannot in the valley stay;
The great horizons stretch away!
The very cliffs that wall me round
Are ladders unto higher ground."

It belongs as well to our spiritual life that we must climb, that we may rest. Here is a "natural law in the spiritual world" of which Henry Drummond does not take account. When he writes of "Growth," in a splendid chapter, it is on its passive side, as if it were as natural, as easy, and inevitable for the soul to grow in godliness and God-likeness as for the plant to grow into flower and fruit. But the Scriptures and experience testify of the race, and the battle, and the climb. Up-

ward we must toil, accepting and sharing a life that lifts us out of our own, reaching up to the strong hand of loving help, winning day by day a higher level. The very sweetness of the pure air invites; the very stars are beckoning; heaven grows nearer, and, on our upward way, sometimes in stony paths and in fearful places, we leave the world below and climb to God himself for rest.

The Cathedral of the Night.

AN impressive place is the nave of a great cathedral. The interior is so much more impressive than the exterior. One who stands under the dome of the Cathedral of St. Paul, or Cologne, or Milan, feels that here is all that human architecture can do to make a place for the worship of his Maker. It is so vast and so lofty; it would gather a great multitude and point their thought and desire heavenward. It quiets and calms the breast, and imparts the awe which befits a holy place. Silence and reverence come unbidden to all men in this unworldly sanctuary.

We have stood, in the twilight, in old San Marco, at Venice, when the lights on the altars glimmered feebly, and the many swinging lamps in all the aisles one by one were lighted. The multitude of lights only show that darkness is visible, and leave deep shadows far up in every pointed arch. A cathedral at night, with its many lights that fail to illuminate, is more awe-inspiring than in the glaring light of day. The silence is more

marked and the sanctity is increased by the mystery.

But what is any man-made cathedral, however vast, or lofty, or ancient, or silent and mysterious, compared with God's vast cathedral of the night. Its spaces are so limitless, its dome so comprehensive, its blue so deep, its silence and its order so unbroken by noises of the earth. The stars are its far-swinging lamps, and somewhere, unseen of man, is its altar and throne. It was built by a divine Architect for the worship and glory of the Maker of heaven and earth.

It seems to spread the canopy of heaven over the world. It speaks of the love and care of God as covering and embracing the whole earth. It would inspire all men and invite all men to know and worship the Maker and Monarch of all. It hangs out its lights to tell us that there is no night there, and to guide the steps of those who would worship into the presence chamber. Every night its spreading, star-lit dome speaks of the safety of those, however weak and small, who hide themselves in his saving love and care.

The Ships.

HOW it is that two sails go by in opposite directions, driven by the same wind, is a marvel to the landsman! Yet this is one of the most familiar sights on the seashore. At Old Point we sat last week and saw the ships go by. Some were going out into the perils of the great and wide sea, and some, by the same wind, were coming into the safe harbor and home. It was all in the navigator's skill in setting his sails and tacking across the water.

There is no question as to the power of education. But the education that is only intellectual and secular does not determine which way the young life shall go. It drives, but the direction in which it drives is not in the education, but in the moral character on which it acts. We have seen two boys receive the same opportunities of education, and one go out into the trackless sea, with its sweeping tides, its storms and perils; and one come into the harbor laden with fruits and safe at home at the last. What is the purpose of the young navigator of the sea of life, and how has he set his rudder and his sails?

Prosperity is another great force which has no power to determine the direction. A little boat is launched in business, and soon the sail is filled. It is replaced by a schooner, and then by a great ship, and larger sails are spread. Sometimes, in the business sea, we see them go by and in opposite directions. One goes to be buffeted by storms and swept by tides and ocean streams until there is shipwreck on some strange and hopeless shore; and one comes in full-sailed and heavy laden. Character has grown strong and rich, memories are happy, good deeds have been done, the world has been made better, and a good name is to be left to honor the home and to bless a multitude.

The dealings of Providence with a human life are received with such differing spirits that by the same wind one goes in and another goes out. If the face be set to the one safe harbor, if the compass which God's truth supplies be kept in its place, and the helm be held by the one Pilot, we need not fear the rocks and shoals. Across the streams and under the storms, we shall one day come to the harbor where is safety and home forever.

"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea!"

A Large Place.

ONE reason why we like the country is that there is so much room. We have great pleasure in the sense of largeness and freedom. In the city one is shut in to very narrow limits, and crowded and jostled on every side. You only look across the street; or far up between the brick walls you see a narrow strip of blue; and the walls and the crowd so press about you that you seldom look up to the blue. Even in your home the blinds must be closed to protect you from publicity.

In the country one looks away across the fields, far over the valley, on the green hills, and up the mountain side. Everything is on a large scale. The blue is a vast canopy that comes down upon a far-stretching horizon. There is a sense of unbounded freedom. There is scope for the use of energy, and all that we are. A man is not confined by narrowing conditions. He is not crowded and hustled along through life, lest he be trodden under foot. He opens his blinds to the air and the light and the starry heavens, and the publicity is that which he desires.

One who lives in the country can hardly understand the exuberance of spirits the town man has in his summer weeks in the country. He is a man released from confinement, and set free in a large world. He wants to run and leap. He takes long walks. He climbs the mountain peaks. He wants to make the most of himself in this unaccustomed liberty and largeness. He is inexpressibly happy that he is not crowded and jostled by men. The world is a large place, and the sky is a vast universe that is all about him.

One of the joys of the redeemed, of which the Psalmist sings again and again, is that he is not only released from captivity, hard, irksome, painful, but that he is set free. "He hath brought me forth also into a large place." God's love is a vast and happy world, in which his child dwells in confidence and safety and peace. The service of Christ is a large place, engaging the best faculties, educating the noblest graces, sending offerings to the foot of the throne, looking far off into an unbounded eternity.

"He feeds in pastures large and fair,
Of love and truth divine;
O child of God, O glory's heir,
How rich a lot is thine!"

God of the Valleys.

THE mountains seem to have a great attraction for the clouds. They reach their peaks far up into the sky and draw around them the drapery of mists and hide their heads in the breast of the clouds. And on the rocks and barren slopes the rains are poured out with frequency and abundance. It is as if to make compensation for their loneliness and rocky barrenness. The clouds come to keep them company and to give freely of their rich abundance.

No doubt it is due to the mountains that the valleys also receive the rains. The mountains that have held the clouds and drawn out of their abundance freely give them to the valleys and the plains below. The plains are green and fertile and the valleys are "covered over with corn," because the mountains stand with generous friendliness to draw the clouds and persuade them to pour out their best gifts. We do not know how forsaken and barren these valleys would be but for the mountain friends who stand to guard and bless them.

It was the thought of a pagan people, accustomed to gods limited to localities, when it was told the King of Syria, "Jehovah is a god of the hills, he is not god of the valleys." His people worship him on mountains and build altars in high places. Their god must be a god of the hills. So Benhadad gathered a great army, and came down into the great plain of Esdraelon to meet the little band of Israel, "like two little flocks of kids." But Jehovah gave to Israel a great victory on the plain, to prove forever that he was a God of the valleys as well as a God of the hills.

It is a great and precious truth of our religion that God's love and care are given not to high places only among men, but to the valleys with condescension and unbounded grace. His Providence is not limited to great events, or great and important men, but descends to the level of all human affairs. There is nothing so small that it is beyond his wise government, or so insignificant that it is forgotten. There is no human interest, no humble home, no lowly child of man, no weak and helpless one, beneath his watchful care. Down into the valleys of human want and trouble he sends the same sunshine of his favor and the same showers of his blessing that ever come to any men

on mountain tops of power or fame or wealth. The Lord Jesus dwelt in the lowly valleys of our humanity, and gathered and blessed the poor, the sick and troubled ones.

The Winding Waters.

WALLAWHATOOLA, the winding waters, is the beautiful Indian name for the winding, sweeping mountain stream which the matter-of-fact, hard-pressed white settlers called plainly the Cow-pasture River. It was Dr. Samuel Brown, so long the honored pastor of Windy Cove Church, in Bath county, who, after long research in old records and yellow letters, recovered the smooth-flowing Indian title and brought it back to the river which it so finely describes, "Walla-walla-wha-toola." Certainly those painted savages had more of poetry than the white fathers of the frontier, who drove them off and took their hunting grounds for pastures for their cattle.

*Walla Walla
River.*

The river is still the same winding water. From the sides of the great wall of the Warm Spring Mountain, gathering a hundred streams, beside wooded hills, under rocky cliffs, below the Blowing Cave, by the old church and its white-marbled burying-ground, over the mill-dam, in long stretches of shimmering green, under the fairy bridge, beside the sloping lawn of perpetual ver-

ture, across the stony rapids; we do not know a more beautiful river than the Wallawhatoola, nor a more charming summer home than that which it helps to make. Happy hunting-grounds, where red Indians camped under the great elm, and brought abundance of fish and game, and still happier with the gentle home of taste and hospitality, of love and piety.

The great elm and the river have been companions for so many years. For more than two centuries we suppose the old tree has guarded the river bank, and the swift-flowing river has talked to the tree. The great elm stretches his long boughs far out and down over the lawn and nearly to the river side. And the river is never silent. It talks and laughs all day, and in the evening whispers, and all through the night sighs as if it could not rest. The elm stands for stability and the river flows for unwearied activity. The tree is for dignity and sobriety and patient contentment, but the river is for restless youth, for activity and progress, for the joy of life, singing as it goes.

We are sure there is a place for both — venerable age with its sobriety and peace, and restless youth with its activity, its progress and its song.

A home is scarcely complete where there is not something of both. All well-ordered and secure human society is made of the happy mingling of age and youth, of ambition and contentment, of activity and peace. Where are the elm and the river there is the safest and happiest home. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in quiet resting places."

The Stars and the Dawn.

HOW brilliantly the stars shine just before the breaking of the day! It is worth getting up to see. One morning this week we sat alone at a village station waiting for the train. The whole expanse of the sky seemed never so cloudless and so transparent. The stars in all their constellations had not wearied in their nightly mission of helping the world through its darkness. They were so much more splendid than when the night began. Silent and fixed and steady, they shone with surpassing beauty. All the night long they had kept their guard like heavenly sentinels over the slumbering world. We thought of Job, who knew Orion and Arcturus, and of Jacob and his ladder, of David with his father's sheep, and the shepherds of Bethlehem; of Him who alone "tellethe the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names," and how "one star differeth from another star in glory."

How they paled when far away in the east there came the roseate hue along the low horizon! It seemed that they had made their last effort in their

struggle with the night, and now withdrew reluctantly, while the one greater than they came so surely to dispel the darkness, and drive the night away. From the stars we turned to the transcendent beauty of the dawn. It was so sure in its progress, so far-reaching in its ascending grandeur, so penetrating in its growing light. Surely this was the time for worship and praise, and new and holy purpose.

"Come, my soul, thou must be waking,
Now is breaking,
O'er the earth another day;
Come to Him who made this splendor,
See thou render
All thy feeble powers can pay."

The world has had its stars. Great and holy men and women God hath made to give light in the darkness of the world. Men of lofty thought and noble deed, poets of rare vision, sages of wide comprehension, philosophers, patriots, heroes, have been among God's best gifts to the world. How dark the world would be without its men and women of character and intelligence, to be examples and leaders, teachers, prophets, singers in the night! Every child of God is sent to be a light to the world. Of him who turns many to right-

eousness it is promised that "he shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

But the stars are for the night. When the sun rises there comes the day, and the stars pale and are forgotten. When the Sun of Righteousness arose, thinkers and heroes, philosophers and poets were as nought. In an obscure land, among a conquered and despised people, in a humanity that wearied and hungered and suffered, he said, "I am the light of the world." The word he gave to men is "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God." His light can never go out. One day the Gentiles will all be "brought to the brightness of his rising." How happy are they who know "the healing of his wings," and reflect the light of his countenance!

A Cloudy Day.

NOT all our days are bright and sunny. Sometimes the clouds gather and hide the face of the sun. The heavens are hung with gloom as with the drapery of sorrow. All the world is darkened, and the spirits are depressed. Joy is confined, and happiness and confidence are banished. Apprehensions come in, and fears are felt of storm and possible destruction. We are not at our best on a cloudy day. We are troubled and beset with weakness, and our eyes cannot see afar off.

It is a cloudy day in the home when sickness threatens one of the household, and then death comes to the door. It is no time for song or music, and not the dearest friends can be entertained in the parlor. The blinds are closed, and dark badges of mourning are hung at the door. All the house is subdued and every heart is grieved. We can scarcely think how we can go on in life without the one we have loved and lost. What can we do but betake ourselves to prayer and submission to God, and petitions for grace to uphold and comfort?

It is a dark day to the American people when their President is slain by an assassin. There is not only indignation, but a keen sense of mortification. The affliction is sorely felt as the removal in the midst of his honor and usefulness of the one at the helm, directing the ship of State with a hand strong and wise. In a land of freedom and enlightenment, in a year of abundance and prosperity, when our institutions are admired and imitated, and our peace and happiness are envied in all the world, it is indeed a mysterious providence that anarchy should rise up to smite the head of the nation. And all are smitten and grieved.

The capital is in mourning. Everywhere the people assemble in their churches, and from under the cloud acknowledge the hand of God, holy and just and true in all his ways. It is not a time for mistrust, or fear, or apprehension. No one man, however strong and good, is essential to the welfare of his country. Man dies, but institutions live. Above all, beyond the clouds, God lives and rules in righteousness and wisdom and love. "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Look Up!

"LOOK UP!" we cried to the little children.

The sun had gone down, and we had been gazing at the splendors of the gloaming that with the deep red of a September evening was spreading far away to the north and the south. And the little ones looked from the gloaming to the sky above. One star was already burning softly, and at once the children cried, "There's another!" One after the other we counted the stars as they came out of the far-away blue, and seemed to draw nearer. "Where did they come from?" said the little girl; and why was one larger than the other? and how many were there in all? The children asked a hundred questions which we could not answer. In a few moments all the heavens were ablaze with beauty and splendor beyond description, and it was a revelation of glory to "look up."

It is a good motto for all — "Look up!" It is always so much better than looking down. Looking down means the mind's dwelling on ourselves and on the world; on our toil and care, our littleness and weakness, our failures and disappoint-

ments. But looking up means forgetfulness of self, aspiration and elevation, the setting before us high aims, the seeking after better things. The world around has the gloom of the twilight, but there are stars for those who look up. How much you miss any day or night if you fail to look up! There are pure ideals, and noble examples, and uplifting hands extended, and kindly voices bidding. Looking up, we grow out of our old selves, and are drawn and lifted up as if we belonged not to the darkening earth, but to the brightening sky.

There is the "look up" of faith. Unbelief is looking down, as if the world were all we had, and all our strength and courage were to come from man and the world he has made. Faith is the looking away from all human help unto God. We lift up our eyes unto One who dwells above the hills, among the stars. We look up to him who made heaven and earth. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." That is a good day to us, right and safe and peaceful, when we begin and end with the faith that looks up. "I have set the Lord always before me; I shall not be greatly moved!"

And there is the "look up" of hope. This world is not all to us. Home and work, toil and care,

tears and weariness will not last always. It will not be long until we are called away. What lies beyond? How poor and unsatisfactory our lives would be if we did not know there is a world of stars above! Look up! Some day we will come, by God's favor and according to his sure promise, to a world where there is no night, and we will see him, about whose dwelling-place the starry lights never fail, and who himself said, "I am the Bright and Morning Star!"

Autumnal Signs.

WHEREVER you go in the country now there are signs of the autumnal season. Russet colors and shades of brown are spreading over the fields. The gum tree hangs out a flaming leaf. The day is noticeably shorter, and the evening gloaming is a sombre red. The goldenrod waves its handsome plumes along the roadside and down the ditch banks, as the bright forerunner of the Prince October, or, as Lucy Larcum says, sets

“Gay bonfires blazing round the fields.”

The beauty of the fall is so much richer and riper than that of the spring. The colors are stronger and deeper, and they are given in such luxurious abundance. They make a common roadside, wild and uncultivated, a long panorama of exquisite charm, and cover the far-stretched field with a coat of many colors. In every woody hollow are the nooks of surpassing beauty. It is the ripe maturity of the summer's sun. It is the year's last effort to make the world beautiful and happy.

Autumnal marks one may see on many of his friends — silver threads are in the hair and beard,

or the crown is bare, as tree tops when the leaves have fallen. Your friend does not leap the fence nor spring into the saddle as he once did. His eye-glasses have become a necessity, and when he reads he draws nearer to the window. Life is stronger and richer, though the colors are not so gay. Intelligence is wider, judgment is better balanced, things are seen in just proportion. He has come to a maturer manhood. Much of the harvest has been gathered from the fields he worked, and in character and trained faculties have been stored the best things the world had for him.

It ought to be true with us all that when the autumnal signs gather we have come to our best days. We have not lived and toiled in vain. We have grown mature in intelligence and character, in stability and strength, in confidence and courage. We have won the esteem of a widening circle of friends. Most happy are the autumn fields of life if we have grown in grace and the image of Christ. We are not ashamed; we do not fear the marks of older years. Experience has stored its garnered fruits, and we are not troubled that there is coming a short winter, to end in the eternal spring.

"An honored life, a peaceful end,
And heaven to crown it all."

Garnered Stores.

GARNERED stores are a large part of the season's happiness. The year's planning and working have brought their fruits. There are great stacks of hay in many fields. The bins of the grain-house can scarcely hold more, and the yellow corn lies in growing heaps at the foot of the corn shocks. The red apples are on the barn floors, and the wagons are busy carrying them away to the railroad trains. The shelves of the store-room have long rows of cans and jars, of every color. The autumn has happy fields, not only because of the beauty of many colors, but because of the ingathering of the fruits of man's labor and the food secured for many months to come.

This has been a year of very large production. The grain crop is one of the very largest this country has ever produced. God's gift of bread has been most bountiful. The great cornucopia of nature is filled and overflowing. What a splendid gift to the world is the uniformity of the laws of the seasons! It is because, by the ordinance of the Supreme Ruler, the rainbow promise, that day

and night, summer and winter, continue their alternations, and "seedtime and harvest shall not fail." We have not asked in vain, "Give us this day our daily bread."

They are wise and happy who, as the years go by, do constantly add to their garnered stores. Not that which is without, but that which is within, is the most important. Not material good, but riches of the mind and of the character, are the real wealth; not what a man has, but what a man is. What a vast army of the youth of the land is now moving under the flag of education! And education has come to be well understood to be much more than accumulation of learning; rather the making of manhood and womanhood, strong, high, noble and good. Education does its best work when it sets the youth to seeking garnered stores of mental fibre and moral vigor, clear perception, sound judgments, lofty aspirations.

Old age is the crown and reward of a true and faithful life, if in character and in soul it has garnered stores. Experience and discipline have wrought moderation and prudence. Faith has grown into patience, and courage is crowned with hope. Not only have some good things been stored in memory, but the good old age knows where to

go for mental food and spiritual comfort. These many years of toil and trial have not been spent in vain. At the last God's servant is brought home, "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

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Mountain Climbing.

OF all outdoor sports, mountain-climbing has the greatest attraction for some adventurous spirits. There is the Alpine Club, which haunts the icy slopes of the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa, and talks with enthusiasm of the guides, Peter Taugwalder and Josef Perren, and of Mr. Whymper and the disaster of 1865. American climbers find something to do in conquering Mount Washington in winter, or the glaciers of Mount St. Elias in Alaska. There is the peril, and then the fame if the climber be successful. But, without the great peril and the fame, one may find on any mountain top the better things. To breathe the fresh, pure air of the great elevation, to get above the clouds and look down upon a storm, to rest awhile so far away from the world and its care and turmoil, to find wider views, and discover beauties never seen below are counted worth the toil and patient endurance, the defeat, and then the victory.

It is the manliness which we admire in the adventurous mountain-climber. The strong muscle,

the broad, full-breathing chest, the clear head, the daring of danger, the persistent courage and indomitable purpose, these are the qualities which bring him at last to the stony peak, and give him the happy sense of manly victory. The same moral courage and persistence have brought many to elevations which are better than any mountain peaks. There are elevations of character and wisdom and peace that are only reached by Christian manliness, which, with lofty motive, braces the will and nerves the continuous effort. Some things are to be cheerfully left behind. The eye is to be lifted far up above the world, and the strenuous effort made to attain the higher things.

The Christian life is always an ascent. It is a daily climb out of the past, out of the worldly and the carnal in our hearts, out of sin and ignorance, weakness and littleness, up into the life and light and love of God. The true manhood comes both by the renunciation and the upward toil. Strength comes day by day, and courage increases and faith grows into patience and flowers into the assurance of hope. There are bright and happy things on the hills for patient soul-climbers. They are above the mists and clouds of unbelief, above the storms of earth, in the perpetual sunshine of the light of

God's countenance. There is a wider view, a sweeter air, and then a rest that is everlasting.

In the old Hebrew times God's people were always "going up." Mt. Zion, the city of God, they always thought of as on a mountain. Every year three times they went up to appear before God. The Book of Psalms has an inner collection of sacred songs, called the Songs of Ascents, or of Degrees. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." So the pilgrims went up singing, until their feet stood within the gates of Jerusalem. The moving host of God's redeemed do always go up to the mountain of the Lord.

The Wireless Telegraph.

THE telegraph that is wireless is a success beyond question. Three hundred and fifty miles has been the limit, so far, of Marconi's system. A few weeks ago, out on the Atlantic, for three hours two ocean steamers paused and communicated tidings from East and West, while miles apart. What a marvel it is! Some unseen and subtle agent in the air is set vibrating by electricity, and across the waters, or over the hills and far away, those vibrations are caught by a sensitive plate and words are made in dots and dashes, as by the telegraph. Now, we hear that, as in the telephone, sounds are reproduced, the voice speaks, without the wire to carry the mysterious wave.

How much there is that we do not know! In some things we are wiser than the ancients. Along physical and material lines the world is making amazing progress. A Frenchman is flying his airship in circles over Paris. It can't be true that the progress is to come to a sudden halt. Those who come after us will know far more than we. Scientific and observant men tell us the world is full of

hints and whispers of agents and forces that are still beyond our ken. It is an unspeakable blessing to man that he is always to go forward. A splendid motive is given to mind and energy, and man grows and climbs as he pushes out into the vast sphere of the unknown.

Who can mark and measure the silent, unconscious influences of one man upon another? One passes another on the street, and the sight of one sets the other's thoughts going. What we know of the character and life of the passing man comes up with a flash, and we are impressed for good or bad. One is fighting his battle bravely and winning a victory. One is bearing patiently a sore burden. One is calm and tranquil in his duty, and another is beaming with joy over the happiness God has given him. And we are more or less affected by the silent, wireless message from his life to ours. "No man liveth to himself," the good Book says, "and no man dieth to himself."

One wireless telegraph comes into every home and every life, unseen and unheard by men. The best communication that can ever be established in our lives is that with heaven and God. We go into a closet, as a man goes to his telephone, and the Father seeth and heareth in secret. Silently

the answer steals in and covers all the heart with peace; and confidence and courage and hope spring up, and all is well! "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

Marchell, October!

WE part with October with sincere regret. There has been scarcely a cloudy day in all these weeks. A green September passed into a happy weeks. A green September passed into a golden October. The sun beamed upon the earth through long days of charm and delight, and the earth shone back to the sun with richest color of every hue. The fields were radiant with golden golden-rod, and the tree-tops flushed with scarlet and purple and gold. The geraniums in the borders and the cosmos on the fence lines have vied with the sun, and the maples and beeches, to make the earth a royal dwelling-place.

Now the beautiful leaves are falling like jewels at our feet, and all the forest is carpeted with gay figures and brilliant colors. The autumn flowers are withering from leafless stems. The frosts have been gentle in their coming, and the changes have been subtle and slow. November will not be so warm and radiant, nor its colors so gorgeous and rich. Where the roses bloomed are bunches of little red rose-apples, and only the chrysanthemums will bide awhile our ornament and comfort. The

splendid October, in its princely robes, is going away that the brown November may have its place.

But we will be thankful, and keep this October in grateful remembrance. It did its best to make us glad, and it bade us prepare for the time of leafless trees and flowerless fields. We would be mindful of its bidding of patience and courage; we will take heart of hope and brace ourselves for all the chill and cheerless days that are coming.

"How will it be when the woods turn brown,
Their gold and their crimson all dropped down,
And crumpled to dust? Oh! then, as we lay
Our ear to Earth's life, we shall hear her say,
'In the dark, I am seeking new gems for my crown,'—
We will dream of green leaves, when the woods turn
brown."

After all, this world is far from being a perfect home, and we were not made to find our truest and highest joys in its changing seasons and its transient glories. There are better things than any October can bring. What are all the beauties of colors, or lines, or landscapes, or all the pleasures of the ear or any sense, compared with the happiness which love brings, or the joys of truth, and the visions of the mind? And what are these rich and happy things compared with the peace which

faith brings, and the joy of a hope "unspeakable and full of glory." These bring the October of the Christian soul, for which there is no dull and chill November.

Fog and Sunshine.

A GREAT fog spread over the country on Monday morning. After the Sunday's preaching in a country church, we had to rise early and drive quickly to the station. But we could scarcely see the road over which we were whirled. All the coloring and beauty of the autumn fields and roadsides were lost. The trees loomed large and mysterious as we sped by. We could only hear the train across the field racing with us to the station, and could not tell whether it was a heavy freight or the fine Florida Express we must reach to bring us to the city in time for work. There was no sign of the sun. The fog shut out the day and covered all things with obscurity and mystery.

One could not be sure whether the fog also hid clouds beyond, and presaged a day of darkness. But as the morning hours passed, the dense fog lifted and drifted away, and the sun came out in all his glory. Then the colors returned, and the familiar forms, and the trees in the Capitol Square stood out in the clearest outlines. The vision of the eye went far away, and the day was all that

any one could wish. We were willing to have the fogs and mists of the morning, if they brought us an afternoon of cloudless sky, and a world filled again with light and beauty.

It is commonly true that the things which are new and at their beginning have more or less of obscurity and uncertainty. Each new enterprise is not wholly clear, and we must drive cautiously. Each new study opens the way into an unknown land, and our thoughts move slowly. We wish to be sure of each truth we attain, and we pause frequently to reflect. Each young life goes through a period of foggy days. We are anxious that the boy may not miss the way, that he be not deceived by errors that loom large by his wayside, and that he will come safely through to the day when there is an open vision of truth and duty. Then his way will be safe out into the sunny day of a strong Christian manhood.

The Christian life begins with short vision of faith and much uncertainty. First steps are not always made with confidence, and there is vagueness of understanding. Things are not seen in just relation, nor is their true character clearly understood. One of the blind men whose eyes Jesus opened "first saw men as trees walking."

When Saul of Tarsus was called of Christ, he was blind, and "saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus," and there the scales fell from his eyes. It is the just man of whom it is written that "his light shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Over the green fields of Paradise no fogs ever drift, and on the heavenly hills no mists ever rise.

Looking Up to the Hills.

ONE of the pleasures of a run to Lynchburg for the services of the Sabbath is to look up and away to the mountains. It was something to look through the haze of the Indian summer and see the long blue wall of the Ridge, and the twin sentinels of the Otter Peaks, with heads bathed in the evening sunlight. One is assured that the mountains still abide firm and steadfast, and the Peaks still send the last message of the setting sun far down over the land. We come back satisfied that some great things remain true and unmoved through all the changes of the world, and all the fogs and mists of human thought and error.

Looking up to hills and mountain peaks is a fine thing, if it be only occasionally, and from a far-off, hazy view. Some are permitted to dwell in the constant sight of the great mountains, and be always lifting up their eyes. But many others can only now and then run away from the low country, and look up through dim eyes to the heights so strong and immovable, so lofty and aspiring. We

comfort ourselves with the hope that some day we shall come back again and see these mountains with clearer eyes and a brighter atmosphere, and perhaps again climb up into the air and light of the high places.

What a difference it makes in any human life whether it be looking down or looking up! How blessed are they who have learned the habit of looking up to the high things of God's truth! It is the uplifted eye of Christian faith, that looks not upon the things which are seen and temporal, but upon the things unseen and eternal. It is the vision of Christian Hope that looks through the promises of God to the city that continues and the everlasting hills. When there is the daily looking up, the things of earth are not so important, the cares are not so heavy, the duties are lighter and the path is directed toward God's mountains.

What a fine conception that gives of the Christian life! "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Occasional views we have of the strong mountains of God, his truth, his covenant, his promise, his love. When we are troubled we go off and lift up the eyes. When we are perplexed by human thought and differing opinions, when we need to be quieted and assured,

we go up on our hills and look off at the heights of God, and peace comes back. We would wish always to live looking up to the heavenly hills and the golden city that is there established forever.

The Leaves that Fall.

THE great change in the coloring of the season is that the green is gone, and green is peculiarly the color of life. In all the plant world around us, only where there is green is there life, active life, and the marvellous process of changing inorganic into organic matter. When the green is gone, and other colors come, however beautiful to the eye, there the processes of life are ended and destruction has begun. The green of the spring is the return of life, and, with more significance than we know, we speak of "fields of living green." The green leaf which the dove brought to Noah in the ark was the first sign of a new life, changing a dead into a living world.

So these leaves of many colors which are rustling about our feet have fallen away from the trees because their life is gone. There is a wealth of ingenuity in their structure, as well as rich beauty in their color. Yet they are dropped off and cast to the winds as if they had no value. Nature perpetually sacrifices and perpetually renews her beauty. Yet these discarded leaves lived out useful

lives, and when they die, wrapped in robes of delicate texture and rarest colors, they are the very material out of which forests will grow, and for many generations to come they will continue to live in leaves of green and flowers of many hues.

The patriarch Job could not think of anything more weak and helpless than a fallen leaf, wherewith to liken his own broken and worthless life. "Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?" So he pleads. A leaf fallen from its natural place, losing its hold upon the strength of the tree, and now driven to and fro by the night winds — what a picture of weakness, impotence, uselessness! Job pleads his helpless, miserable condition as a reason for the grace and succor of God. "We all do fade as a leaf;" but faded and fallen, we may yet plead that we be not utterly cast out.

In the first Paradise, where dwelt in innocence the first Adam and his helpmeet, there was every tree "pleasant to the sight and good for food." And there was "the tree of life," the first arbor vitae. But in the second Paradise, to which the Bible comes as by a circle, when the second Adam and his bride appear, there is again the tree of life. No flaming sword now guards the way, and it is open to all. And its leaves, of uncounted multitude

and of marvellous power, are for "the healing of the nations." Are they not the truths and blessings of the gospel, set free and scattered to the four winds, freely given for the life and health and beauty of the nations? Ezekiel, in his splendid vision of the city of God, tells of a tree and "the leaf thereof is for medicine." This is the leaf that heals the sickness of sin, and brings the nations into the endless Paradise, where are "sweet fields arrayed in living green."

"Fly abroad, thou mighty Gospel,
Win and conquer, never cease!"

In the Stone-yard.

LAST week an errand took us to a stone-yard. There were heaps of huge granite boulders just from the depths of the quarry. Heavy blocks of the fine blue stone were in preparation for many various uses. Some were to go down into deep foundations, and, hidden away from sight perhaps for centuries, were to be the firm base of some lofty building. One was to be the honored cornerstone, laid with imposing ceremony, and to abide, binding together the walls above. One was to be carved into shape, and, with polished surface and deep inscription, rest on the grave of one whom it was hard to let go out of the world. And another was to be builded into the superb monument of some historic event or glorious victory.

Some of these granite blocks we found in the cutter's skillful hands, slowly growing into shape with sharp tools and heavy blows. Some inscriptions, half-engraved, began to tell the story of a life. Travellers tell of half-hewed stones in Egyptian quarries — stones that were never finished and never built into any temple. Sculptors and builders

have long mouldered and passed into oblivion, and their unfinished handiwork lies as it was when the last chisel touched it, long centuries ago, and there will they lie until the crack of doom. How much of all human endeavor is left unfinished and incomplete! How many things there are we attempt to build, and inscriptions we begin to write, which are left interrupted and disappointing when the tools fall from our hands!

Michael Angelo, when a lad, saw the rude block of marble in his master's stone-yard, and wished to "let the angel out." And with the hand of genius, young as he was, carved the beautiful young David with his sling, which is the pride of the city of Florence. Can it be that God, the sculptor of all human lives, sees the saint in each one of his children, and, with sharp tools and hard blows, hews and cuts and shapes, until he has made them meet for the city above? When he has finished his work, how perfect it will be! "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!" One day each of them, "polished after the similitude of a palace," will find a place, "without spot or blemish, or any such thing."

Great things are said of the corner-stone of the

Temple of God. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." One of the Psalms says, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner;" and Jesus quotes those words as referring to himself; and Peter, before the Jewish elders and priests, affirms that it spoke of Christ, whom they had crucified. Paul in Ephesians declares Jesus Christ the chief corner-stone, "in whom all the building groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." And Peter, in his first Epistle, not hesitating to mix his metaphors, in a glowing passage tells that, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." What a strange but splendid conception. Christ, if he be a stone, a chief corner-stone, is yet "a living stone," and "to whom coming," we have life and are builded together with him, a glorious temple for God's indwelling.

A Grey Day.

A GREY day has its own uses and its lessons. The sun does not come to the window in the morning to bid us come out. The sky is all overcast with leaden hues. There is uncertainty as to what the day will bring; the droppings of rain or the bitter dash of snow. When the morning is grey we have to brace ourselves with strength and fortitude to meet whatever may be our fortune. We are turned in upon ourselves, having no help from the sombre day, which withholds its cheer and presents a forbidding countenance.

As the sunny day is for joy, the grey day is for duty. When the sun will not shine, we have need of all our courage and manliness. We gather our tools and go bravely to our work, as those who live earnest lives. The day's task must be accomplished, whatever the sky may be. So we whistle or sing at our work because the day is grey, and we would keep up our spirits. Something we must do to make the day brighter for others. We must not leave the sick or the lonely to sad thoughts; we must make sunshine wherever we go, because

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

There are grey days in every life. Sometimes the sun shines in vain, and nothing is bright. We are sick, or weary, or anxious. One day we are burdened by our past, and another day the future is the heavy care. One day there was a disappointment, and another brought a sad letter, and yet another we went to a funeral. These times are not holidays of joy unrestrained. They are times for "the faith and patience of the saints." They bring out all the courage and purpose we have in store, and we go aside to seek the light which the sun and the world cannot give, the light which entereth into inner chambers, even "the light of his countenance."

But our grey day last week had not passed away until the western sun broke through the clouds and gave us a half-hour of radiant light. Then came a sunset of surpassing splendor. How we rejoiced that our grey day was in the end defeated and driven off the field, and the sun came to a glorious victory! It reminded us of that fine and gracious bidding, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, and he will bring it to pass!" And over all the sky was written, "At evening time it shall be light!"

The Birds' Migration.

THE birds have already made their annual moving to warmer climes. Except some hardy little sparrow, one can scarcely find a bird in orchard or forest, where a few weeks ago there were so many. These migrations are among the most interesting studies in all the world of natural life. As soon as cold weather comes whole tribes of birds are on the wing for the sunnier South. What a wise and fortunate instinct! They would surely perish if they tarried, and after a happy winter in tropic lands of warmth and plenty, they will come back again, with their beauty, and song, and restless industry. So it is best for us that they should go.

It is told of the migration of birds, that with the first cold breath of coming winter they begin to assemble, and tarrying until their numbers seem complete, and none are left behind who ought to go, they at last set forth to lands where no frosts come, and no bitter blast is ever felt. Nearly all species fly by night, as if regretfully stealing away unseen. Their leaders are the veterans who have

many times made these long journeys, and know well just where to find a refuge. Some, in great multitudes, follow the lines of mountain ridges, or pass down the great valley of the Mississippi, guided by the gleam of the sweeping waters. Cries of leaders and scouts are heard, that are not songs, but commands and warnings. Sometimes for a milder day or two they tarry on the way, and then, hurried by a frosty night, spread wings again and follow the calling leader through the night, on and on, a thousand miles or more before they find their winter home.

Some of our friends are following the birds. They dread the winter's cold and blast, and are willing birds of passage. The annual migration grows each year with the growth of means and the facilities of travel. No doubt, comfort and pleasure are secured, and with some health is restored, and useful lives are prolonged. The wealth of one section is largely dispersed over another. Local industries are helped. The social intercourse of distant sections tends to better understanding and harmony. In some places churches and schools receive the support they need, and large profit comes to all sections of the land by the winter sojourn in Georgia or Florida. May all our friends

who sojourn in the South come back with the birds, and as happy as they!

Even when we cannot go with the birds to orange groves or sunny islands, we may abide in patience. We may help to keep the home sunny and happy. We may learn how to "keep ourselves in the love of God." "They that love him, shall be as the sun when it goeth forth in its might." If we abide in his love, we have the light and the joy which are infinitely better than anything Florida or California can give. After a little while the world will grow too cold and wintry for us, and in some night of migration, with the voice of a Divine Leader, we will find the land where no storms ever come, and there will be summer forever.

The Stormy Night and the Fair Morning.

A STORMY night and a fair morning are not unusual companions. Last Saturday night the week went out with a violent storm of rain and wind. In the midnight darkness the rain fell in torrents and filled the streets and roads with seas and streams of water. The wind came with the rain and darkness, and nearly swept the belated home-comer from his feet, and shook the house on its foundations. The children were awakened by the furious storm and fled in alarm to the mother's bed. It blew and roared as if old Winter had come in a rage that he had been detained so long. We thought we would have a stormy Sunday, and it would be difficult to reach the small assemblies that would gather at our various appointments.

But when the morning came there was a long line of golden light along the eastern horizon, and the new day made its splendid way up the skies, and the sun rose all unclouded and majestic. The storm had ceased its rage, the clouds rolled back to the west, as bidden to depart, and behold the

day was fair and bright as any day could be. The air above, swept by the storm, was clean and sweet, as the streets were washed beneath, and the world was made ready for the Sabbath of the Lord. With cheerful heart we went out early and found full assemblies in each sanctuary.

How gracious is the providence of God! Wisdom and righteousness, truth and love are mingled in all his dealings with his creatures. There are nights of storm in every life. And who will dare complain? Who can say that there is wrong and injustice in any affliction that is ever sent. Job bowed his head and said, "I am vile. I abhor myself." There is no dark night of sorrow, no beating storm, no chilling blast of winter, that does not come from the hand of the Fatherly King, whose ways are always just and true. "Thou hast made summer and winter." The stormy night is sent to cleanse the air and sweep the highway, and usher in a day so bright and pure and holy, that it is as a Sabbath, God's own loving gift of sunshine to his child.

No doubt the church is passing through its night and storm. It is an age of conflict. Ignorance and unbelief make the darkness, and error and enmity bring the storms. Sometimes we are alarmed.

The church seems to tremble to its foundations. It hardly seems a safe house for those who have taken refuge there. But joy cometh in the morning. After the stormy night will surely come the fair day. The sun will rise again over all the earth. It will be the everlasting Sabbath of the Lord, and "there will be no night there."

The New Year Preferred.

BETWEEN the new year and the old, we believe we prefer the new; which seems ungrateful and somewhat strange, as we do not yet know the new year at all. The old year has been a kind and faithful friend. It gave all the time it could. Not a day nor an hour was wanting. It brought us many blessings which made life richer and happier. Among the best of its blessings were its opportunities, some of which we used. The old year treated us better than we treated it. Our memories must be mingled with regrets, and our gratitude will not be true and acceptable above unless there be also the tears of a sincere repentance.

One reason why we prefer the new year to the old is that perhaps we may do better. As the years are surely numbered out to us, and are fast slipping by, we would like to make some improvement on the past. We would wish to take time more seriously, and not let it get away without some good use. We would like to seize the opportunities with more promptness and energy. We would hope to

enjoy its blessings more gratefully and to take up its duties with more courage. The old year's page is much blurred and stained. So the unblotted, unwritten new leaf now before us gives us profound gratification. The Lord help us all to make a better record.

What a happy thing it is that we can begin again! Whatever the year past has been, we would like to do better in the new year. As we are obliged to go forward, we would like to go upward also. Some things we would leave behind forever, and some new things we would hope to attain. We should remember that the great realities that are most valuable and most enduring are not the things around us and without, but the things within us — the things of character and personal life. These best things are the gifts of God's grace. They come by asking, and by obedience, and by the growth that belongs to effort. It is the solemn and gracious bidding of the new year that we begin again.

Whatever our calling is, let us begin again. An hour of reflection would be well spent. We have a work given us to do. Let us review it, comprehend it, present it before our attention. We will see its failures, its disappointments, its shortcom-

ings, and leave them all behind. We will take up our calling again with a new prayer and a new purpose. We will put into it our life and energy and courage as never before. We will do better work. We will have a purer motive, a higher aim, a stronger will. We should come back to him who is the guide and strength of our life, and put our hands in his with a new faith and a new covenant. "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

How much we need to begin again the service of Christ! There is no obligation to be compared with the claims of our Redeemer. "Rule thou over us, for thou hast redeemed us." How many of us are really doing something for Christ in bringing others to know and trust him! What a vast amount of unconsecrated talent there is, and of unused opportunities! What strength and influence would be added if a greater number of those called Christians were occupied in the active service of Christ! And this is the time to begin. "Lord, here am I; send me!"

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