

Friendship

One of God's greatest gifts to man is his friends. He said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself for love of Me." If every man were to follow this commandment to the letter, this indeed would be a world of friends. That is just what He meant it to be. God, wishing man to be a social animal, implanted in him the ability to live in company with his fellows, the power and desire to love them.

Now our fellow man, like ourselves, is not perfect. He has his faults, sometimes apparent, sometimes hidden. One must not be in love with the exterior and superficial qualities of a friend, the front he puts on, but should know his inner self, his faults and his shortcomings, and still love him. Hence a real friend and true is defined on a motto card in a student's room as, "One who knows all your faults and loves you just the same."

The Christian must regard all people as his neighbors and love them as he loves himself. However, I do not think that this means every Tom, Dick, and Harry should be our true friends. I may respect, admire, and treat people in a Christian manner, and still not be a friend to them in the sense in which the word is here taken. Why? Simply because these persons and I are not kindred spirits; soul does not call to soul to come and bask in the sunshine of each other's presence.

We may compare friendship to a tree and ourselves to the leaves. In the spring of life friends are as many as the leaves; in summer, they begin dropping off one by one; in the fall there are only a few left, reminders of what once was. In our early youth joy and happiness are overflowing; we smile on many and think we have many friends. In middle age storms come, separating us from some of our friends and binding a few more closely to us. In old age many of our friends have turned aside and gone another way, many have died, and there are left only a few treasured ones, whose very presence should make life worth living. Then indeed have we our true friends, friends who have accompanied us through the joy and happiness of youth, weathered the storms of middle age, and are a source of comfort to us in our old age.

The above is the life of an average man, but there are some whose lives do not follow such a plan. They

have no friends, never did have any, and never will have. Very often the reason is that they have attached themselves to things rather than to persons and their hearts have never known the joys of friendship with a fellow creature. Consider, for instance, many successful business men. In youth they craved knowledge of business affairs and threw friendship out as taking too much time; as business men their selfishness in the pursuit of success resulted in offense to their associates, and they were left alone; retired, they are left to themselves, their only friends, the gold coins which they have accumulated, and money offers little consolation. In their hours of solitude such men see as in a vision the faces of those whom they might have had as friends, and they regret the stand they have taken. If you do not wish to experience such unhappiness, leave time for your friends; time given to friends makes friendship grow stronger, and on the strength of friendship depends its life. Of course, if you are cross and surly with your friends, apparently begrudging the few minutes you give them, that friendship will not grow, it will weaken. Be attentive to your friends, and be generous to them at all times. Show him that you like his company and you will bind him tightly to you with the bonds of love.

We all need friends. If the men of business to whom reference has been made had realized the value of having friends, and had allowed time for the growth of friendship they probably would never have acquired those faults that caused them to be disliked by their contemporaries and resulted in loneliness in old age. In the life of every man there comes a time when a friend is a necessity. Perhaps a man fails in an important undertaking and he is beset on all sides. He is dark and gloomy in spirit. A friend enters and by his comfort brings a ray of sunshine that dispels the darkness of despair. Then, indeed, is a friend's helping hand welcome. Many things are within the power of a friend; he can guard and watch over you, lend a helping hand, encourage you, laugh with you, and, when the occasion arises, gently admonish you.

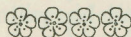
Having made a friend you should strive to keep him, and if you are to keep him you must treat him rightly; that is, as you would wish him to treat you. Go out of your way to be agreeable to him. Think up things he will like and do them. Offend him in nothing; to offend a friend once is to lose some of his friendship; to do so

repeatedly is to lose him altogether. Always be open and frank with him; yield to his opinion in small matters and he will yield to you, thus forming the basis for love and friendship. If you do this, mold your will and temperament to suit your friend's without losing your individuality, you will make and keep a friend successfully.

Friendship does not evolve of its own account. It must be teased into growth, then cared for and protected until it blooms into full glory which only death can destroy. This may sound difficult, but, then, is there anything in this world worth doing that is easy to do? So when you see someone whom you could like as a friend make him a companion, treat him rightly and you will keep him. As Shakespeare says:

*"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple to thy soul with hoops of steel."*

—J. O'H., '36.



To know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom

—Milton

What dire offence from amorous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things.

—Pope

"Suppose there are two mobs?" suggested Mr. Snodgrass
"Shout with the largest," replied Mr. Pickwick.

—Dickens

