

SOLITUDE.

Amid the trials and shortages which we are experiencing to-day, and in the whirl of noise, the agony of strifes, quarrels and petty jealousies, and in order to combat the inertia and lack of will to work, one turns one's thoughts to escape from turmoil and wonders how one can accomplish it.

Where *can* one find peace today? Not in the rising tide of belligerent Communism, nor yet in party politics. Not in opposing and rivalling organisations and not entirely in personal relationships or friendships. Where then? Perhaps in Solitude? We shall see.

By solitude one does not mean in loneliness or isolation, nor in living apart from human society; but in being able to get far beyond distant horizons or dwelling, figuratively, on mountain tops, or in deep and peaceful valleys and by calm unruffled waters. One needs occasionally to feel securely anchored in an all-embracing and abiding peace. Nurses particularly—for to be able to distribute peace amongst their pain-racked patients, they must know where to go for unlimited supplies of this great blessedness.

In solitude, blissful and healing, one really can find escape from strain and stress, and balm for deadly wounds which torture the mind and cause havoc to the spirit. When peace and stillness reign a clearer vision emanates from the soul and in its bright rays evil is shrivelled and gone beyond recall and only beauty and goodness remain.

High up amidst lofty and cool mountain peaks, the sharp edges of misery are rounded off into smooth contours and so they are less painful. Away beyond the towering heights the shimmering blue sea reaches to distant climes and bathes the shores of far-off lands, and in the vast expanses, our troubles are swallowed up and the mind is freed.

Into the green and verdant valleys we saunter. Gently the peace of wide and sunny spaces steals into our spirit and leaves its sweet caress. Wooded glens with singing birds, murmuring bees and flitting insects, mesmerise and soothe the senses and leave a feeling of well-being and happiness. Sighing winds amongst leafy trees, slightly swaying graceful grasses, lingering perfumes from glowing blossoms bring a wealth of benediction.

Down by the banks of the swiftly flowing rivers or quiet little bubbling streams sweet solitude may be wooed. Sheltered stretches and calm reaches bring utter repose and rest to anxious minds and spirits.

Solitude can be gay as well as grave for one of the great paradoxes of life is "the solitude of a crowd." Listening to the wireless; recently recording some lovely old-time melodies like "Yip-I-addy-I-ay-I-ay," and the Boston Cake-Walk song, one can sit and feel the years roll back, like turning the pages of a favourite book. In reveries one clearly sees the Wedding Party in the old song

"having sausages for tea, sausages for tea,
When we get married, we'll have sausages for tea,
sausages for tea."

The lilting air conjures up a riotous party sitting down to good, old-fashioned pork sausages, tasty, spicy and more-ish! Bride and bridegroom hilariously happy at the head of the table, old mellow wines and good English beer flowing freely and all is gay, carefree and harmless. No austerity in sausages, beer or fun.

Listen in spirit to the old song "If I could plant one tiny seed of love, In the garden of your heart." The haunting music will take some of us back a bit and many will smile gently at memories of the past and, perhaps, little unforgotten flirtations of our own youth.

Join the abandon found in "Yip-I-addy-I-ay-I-ay," and think of the glad and merry spirit that wrote the lines: "I don't care what becomes of me—For I'll sing that

sweet melody—Yip-I-addy-I-ay." Your cares are bound to flee away—if only for a while and the effect will be beneficial and tonic.

Ah, sweet Solitude! Whether you exalt us to the classic regions of pure contemplation, or whether you take us on a sweet journey into the gay past and entrance us with haunting memories, we need your healing and gentle touches now.

G. M. H.

NEW DRIVE AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

PLAN TO IMMUNISE 590,000 BABIES.

More than 400 local authorities in England and Wales are expected to organise campaigns in the late summer and autumn of this year in support of the Ministry of Health's drive to get children immunised against diphtheria before their first birthday. The slogan will be: "Diphtheria Costs Lives—Immunisation Costs Nothing."

Since 1941, when a national campaign against diphtheria was launched by the Ministry of Health, remarkable progress has been made. Figures issued to-day show that last year the numbers of cases and deaths were again the lowest ever recorded. Pre-war figures averaged about 58,000 cases and 2,800 deaths per year. The low record for deaths last year means that for every six children who died from diphtheria before the war, only one died in 1946. The number of cases has fallen by 40,000.

Last year nearly half a million children under five years of age were immunised by local authorities, bringing the total number of children immunised since the campaign began to more than 6,600,000.

The aim this year is to immunise 590,000 babies before their first birthday. It is believed that now a fairly high level of immunisation has been achieved among children, diphtheria could be eliminated as an epidemic disease if, in each year, three out of every four babies were protected before reaching their first birthday.

WHAT TO READ.

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS.

- "Three Got Through." Martin Lindsay.
- "The First Romantics." Malcolm Elwin.

FICTION.

- "Corrie." Leonora Starr.
- "Forlorn Sunset." Michael Sadleir.
- "Forever Tomorrow." Anne Duffield.
- "The Song in the Green Thorn Tree." James Barke.
- "The Launching of Roger Brook." Dennis Wheatley.
- "A Swarm of Bees." Marjorie Coryn.
- "Return Again." Anne Sholto.
- "Return to Night." Mary Renault.
- "Knock and Enter." Michael Sadleir.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- "Mountains and Men." Wilfrid R. Noyce.

SURPRISE FOR DADDY.

Little Jennifer, aged five years, had a baby brother. She was very curious to know how this baby had arrived. So mother, being very wise, told Jennifer the truth. She explained that the little baby grew in Mummy's tummy and that later on, when Jennifer was bigger, she would tell her how it all happened.

"Just now," said Mummy, "we will keep this a great secret. We will not tell the children at school, nor anybody at all, where Baby came from, but we'll keep it a secret between we two."

"Yes," said Jennifer importantly, "we won't tell anybody at all, and we won't even tell Daddy—but keep it a dead secret."

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