

"The Art of Being a Good Neighbour"

THE many readers who entered for our competition this month are unanimous in their opinion that the practical application of the Golden Rule is of primary importance if a person wishes to qualify as a good neighbour. We are indebted to "Averil," Marlborough, for the Greek version: "Do not that to a neighbour which you would take ill from her."

The first prize was awarded to "Bry," Eltham, for her comprehensive and helpful little essay, and the second prize is shared by "Homespun," Halcombe, and "Lincoln," Dannevirke. "Khorasbad," Marlborough, was commended.

First Prize

THE dictionary tells us that the word art means skill, and I think that the latter in connection with being a good neighbour implies practice in exercising the following sterling qualities of character.

1. **Kindness and helpfulness:** Both lessen our many problems, especially when the helpfulness is genuine and does not conceal the boggy of interference. Our guiding thought should be, "What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other."

2. **Loyalty:** We must be quick to defend each other from unkind words. This is a wonderful trait and finally brings a sense of reliability and trust.

3. **Tolerance:** We must learn to accept and respect different ideas on the everyday routine of running a home, and different views on bringing up a family. After all, we ourselves are not infallible.

4. **Cheerfulness:** "A good laugh is sunshine in a house"; may we not forget that cheerfulness inspires and brightens the lives of those about us.

It is essential that individuals and nations strive to become good neighbours, for the world today has an urgent need for exercise of this lovely art.—"Bry," Eltham.

Second Prize (Equal)

Of Courtesy, it is much less

*Than courage of heart or holiness,
Yet in my walks it seems to me*

The grace of God is in Courtesy.

So wrote H. Belloc. It is certainly one of the essential traits of a good neighbour. Dependent as we are on our neighbours, we should practise a code of good manners towards them.

One needs the will to give ungrudgingly when the other is in trouble: it will never be regretted. The good neighbour should borrow so seldom that it becomes a privilege for the other to lend. Her visits should be so arranged that they are always welcomed by the other.

Perhaps her greatest function, however, is to be a friend, listening, con-

soling, cheering and advising. She should show interest but not curiosity in the other's affairs. The former is appreciated, the latter resented.

Such is my ideal neighbour!

"Homespun," Halcombe.

Second Prize (Equal)

I THINK the art of being a good neighbour lies in the exercise of a spirit of kindness tempered by discretion, in good-humoured tolerance and a wise restraint of tongue. Genuine kindness will make us ready to help in many little ways, in gifts, in labour, or in sympathy, but discretion must be exercised. Steady neighbourliness is better than spasmodic bursts of generosity. To be good neighbours we must be tolerant of other people's likes and dislikes and above all never gossip.

We should live up to the command, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." If we could begin to live up to this standard and then revise our interpretation of the term "neighbour," and try to think of the whole world as our neighbour, then surely meanness and cruelty would disappear and there would be an end of war.—"Lincoln," Dannevirke.

Commended

THERE is an old Arab proverb which says, "Keep your tents separate, but your hearts together." In this maxim lies the root of the art of being a good neighbour. "Keep your tents separate" . . . in other words don't always be popping in to see your neighbour, unless you ring to say you are coming, or are invited. Surprise visits are very nice but . . . remember the time Mrs. S. dropped in when you were making your yearly expedition into the earwiggy depths of those dreadful old cupboards in the wash-house? No woman likes to be "caught" in Monday's oldest washing frock, or with her hair in curlers, or with nothing in the house but stale bread and last week's butter for afternoon tea.

But it is only when trouble, such as serious illness in the family, comes that we realise whose hearts are really with us. Not the "tut-tut-ting," curious visitors who sit sipping tea and talking maddeningly to the detriment of our overstrained nerves, but the woman who just slips in, while the lady of the house is busy in the sick room, and leaves a hot cooked dinner on the rack, who quietly collects the younger children, clothes and all, and carries them away to her own home, who feeds the fowls and ducks and pet lambs. She is our real good neighbour. So is the man who, after his own work is done, comes over to see what he can do "now poor Bob's laid up," and stays to do the milking, separating, and feeding the pigs, chops a load of wood, often not going home until nearly midnight. These men and women are worth their weight in gold as neighbours.—"Khorasbad," Marlborough.

LIVING 10 miles from the nearest little country centre, I count myself very fortunate in having such splendid neighbours. Everyone is eager to help and a general air of cheerfulness prevails. No matter when one pops in one is always made welcome. A mile and a half away lives Mrs. "Greenroof." She is a splendid housekeeper and a busy mother, yet her kindness and hospitality know no bounds. Mrs. "Red-roof," a mile to the north, is energetic and helpful—a grand friend to have. Mrs. "Tile-roof" lives in an easterly direction—what a thoughtful little person she is: I spend many a winter's evening at her fireside. Yes, I am lucky to have such good neigh-

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