**The Club Collect** by Mary Stewart

*Keep us, oh God, from pettiness;*

What we affirm in our hearts determines what we become. If we concentrate on littleness, we cannot avoid becoming petty. But if we concentrate on high thoughts and high ideals, we ourselves can achieve greatness.

*Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.*

In thought – Hold kind thoughts towards others, especially at those times when misunderstandings occur.

In word – Seek, whenever possible, points of discussion on which you and others can agree.

In deed – Be concerned for the welfare of others. Expand your sympathies to include others for a radiant sense of happiness and well-being.

*Let us be done with fault finding*

Keep a positive attitude. A wise man once said, “Conditions are essentially neutral. Your attitude determines whether they are positive or negative for you.”

*And leave off self-seeking.*

Concentrate on the work you are doing, not on yourself as the doer. Your ego can either infuse a project with energy or hinder its execution, depending on whether your give the project energy or hold the ego spinning in a circle of self-adulation.

*May we put away all pretense*

Be modest. A lot was accomplished before you were born.

*And meet each other face to face*

Every face to face encounter, regardless of how brief, leaves something of you within the other.

*Without self-pity*

Drown self-pity in the recognition that emotional self-indulgence only limits your ability to accomplish anything. Instead swim in patience, sensitive insight and determination.

*And without prejudice.*

Every person you meet knows something you don’t. In learning from them prejudice will fail to exist.

*May we never be hasty in judgment*

Never judge others. When tempted to do so, concentrate on what it is in your friends that attracts you.

*And always generous.*

Always remember, a person’s greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated.

*Let us take time for all things:*

Practice self-control in all aspects of your life. Overindulgence only wastes vitality; self-control insures a time for all things.

*Make us grow calm, serene, gentle.*

Life can be like a roller coaster ride – up one day, down the next – if you allow it to be. Act always from your inner center. Whether things go well or not, reflect: All things change. Be neither elated or depressed, for nothing in this universe remains the same forever.

*Teach us to put into action our better impulses,*

Great opportunities await those who give more than what is asked. Put the uncommon touch on even the most common task. We may never have the opportunity to do great things in a great way, but we all have the chance to do small things in a great way.

*Straightforward and unafraid.*

Develop magnetism. Project your opinions and beliefs with the energy and conviction you yourself feel for them.

*Grant that we may realize it is the little things that create differences,*

Baskin Robbins advertises thirty-one flavors of ice cream because “it is the little things that create differences”.

*That in the big things of life we are at one.*

Baskin Robbins also advertises that “I like, you like, everyone likes ice cream . . . and that is why we are a successful business venture”.

*And may we strive to touch and to know the great human heart of us all,*

Allow your heart’s natural love to unfold by renouncing selfishness, self-righteousness and pride. In doing so, your heart beat will become as one with those around you.

*And, oh Lord God, let us forget not to be kind!*

The wisdom of kindness is the greatest wisdom of all . . .

“I’ll shape you,” said the hammer to a piece of iron as his blows fell upon it. But every blow dulled the edge more and more.

“Let me change you,” said the saw as he ripped into the cold metal. However, after losing several teeth, the saw had to quit.

Next, the little flame gently said, “Let me try.” And it warmly embraced the iron and there it stayed until the hardness melted. The forging was then an easy task.

There are hearts like this. They resist blows and cuttings, but soften under the warmth of kindness.

. . . and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Proverbs 31:26

Narration by Jacqueline Pierce, GFWC President 2006-2008