

For the Torch of Reason.

Some Mental Attitudes.

BY IDA BALLOU.

"Are we cowards by nature?" Asked a philosophizing friend. "Inasmuch as nature works on the line of least resistance, are not the heroic qualities in human beings the exception rather than the rule?" Some of the mental attitudes of even our brightest and best comrades would seem to prove the saying true. Certainly we are ready enough with bold and brave words of encouragement to all others whom we are anxious to urge forward on some new and untried venture, hoping incidentally to be benefitted somewhat thereby. When one of our chiefs falters in a soul-wearying struggle, we—at least some of us—hiss "coward!" Indignant that he should pause right in the midst of the conflict and just at a crisis when strength would have meant so much.

Patience, friends; hush, do not call hard names. Even those of you who by proof of superior mental strength deem yourselves justified in denouncing the culpable weakness in a comrade—which you dignify as criticism—pause a moment and consider just what cowardice is. Was Ingersoll a coward when he humorously, yet earnestly declared that he would sacrifice even truth before suffering martyrdom, adding that he regretted martyrs should have ever been obliged to suffer for truth? Surely not; nor would it have been cowardice if like Galileo he had denied what he knew to be true to save himself from suffering. Cowardice is cruelty. Cowards are those who do an injury knowingly, wilfully. Galileo was not a coward but his inquisitors were. Our copy book used to tell us:

Cowards are cruel, but the brave
Love mercy, and delight to save.

There is too much of the moral censor in the most of us. Because some of us, owing to peculiar circumstances, or from deficient mental strength prefer to placate, or be conciliating to the enemy—somewhat in the fashion of the nursery rhyme:

There was an old woman said "How,
Shall I conquer this terrible cow?
I will sit on the stile
And continue to smile,
It may soften the heart of the cow."

We have no business to object. It is not a heroic attitude, that of smiling and waiting patiently for the cow's heart to soften, as the pain racked figure, content to suffer for truth's sake, but it is more natural and comfortable.

Yes, "nature works on the line of least resistance." "The spirit is so linked with flesh" that it wavers, bends and succumbs to suffering. When we can endure no more, we die.

"We see as in a glass darkly and only know in part." Were the mirror suddenly illumined some of the mental attitudes, that look so poor and weak to us now, might be strangely transformed. "I pray you, speak as one who considereth that which is well in others."

Comment.—The Torch appreciates the kind plea of Miss Ballou for gentle charity, especially among Liberals. We will try to cherish and apply her "sweetness and light"—while we remember what Miss Susan Wixon says in her "Right Living," the best book on practical morals ever printed: "Moral Courage is a great virtue. It has been shown in many instances in the past, where persons have suffered death by the most cruel tortures rather than to renounce their honest convictions. It is a fine quality to possess a noble courage. Call me a coward, if you will, but nothing shall turn me from the right. And it will be impossible not to respect courage, honesty, sincerity, veracity; in a word, true NOBILITY." Let us hope for the approval of both ladies, while the Torch proceeds "Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re;" and do that, "Nec timide nec temere."
T. E. W.

What is Left of Christianity?

The time was when Christianity stood for something, when there was no dispute about the faith held by Christians. The dogmas of orthodoxy were preached as Christian truths. Hell was once a burning fact, heaven an alluring reality. The devil was no myth, but an actual devil whose business of ruining souls was carried on night and day. God's wrath was a common theme of the pulpit and vicarious atonement a much better way to salvation than all the roads of good deeds ever built by toiling hands and bleeding hearts. The Garden of Eden bloomed in the field of faith as palpably as the peak of Monadnock kisses the sky, and Adam and Eve were the sculptured models of God's image carved by the divine chisel, and the whole Bible was God's word of truth to man.

When we refer to these things now we are informed that we are "behind the times," that hell and heaven are "states of existence" not places, that the devil is only "a word to express evil," that the Garden of Eden is an Eastern fable, that man is "saved by character" not by faith, that it is "an insult to God to say that he gets angry," and that "no intelligent Christian regards the Bible as all equally inspired and true," etc, etc.

With all these dogmas dead, we would like to know what there is left for Christianity.—[Boston Investigator.

Cobbler, stick to thy last!

A shoemaker found fault with an oil-painted slipper in one of the paintings of a celebrated artist, but showed the greatest ignorance in criticising the other parts of the painting. Hence has arisen the oft-quoted saying, Let the cobbler stick to his last, and let every one attend to his own business.

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DIAMONDS.

One of the rarest gifts is the talent to judge accurately a diamond in all its various qualities. As genius for music or painting must be inborn to produce the great artist, so the faculty to correctly determine a diamond in all its diversified detail and characteristics can never be acquired, unless by the rare few who are gifted in this direction. A dealer may be a good jeweler, a successful merchant and an honest man, and yet deceive you on a diamond, simply because he himself is deceived. I have been in the business forty years. I could no more be deceived on a diamond than the cashier of the Bank of England could be on a bank note. When buying diamonds I use no glasses, ask no questions except the price; my acute vision instantly detects the slightest difference in color every flaw and imperfection. Your interests will be protected if you buy of me. If you want a Ring, Pin, Stud, etc., for \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100 or up, send to me. I will send you the goods prepaid. Keep them a week or two, and if you are not satisfied that I undersell all competitors, return and get your money.

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