

without it. The want of it mars some of the ablest of the sons of men. It is an English virtue. The English character is based upon a love of truth. This love of truth is an old national characteristic. The Norman chronicler could give no higher praise of Alfred the Great than that he loved the truth, and so he gave him the distinguishing name of the "Truth-teller." The Duke of Wellington said of Sir Robert Peel, who was a type of the English statesman, "I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had a more lively confidence. I never knew an instance in which he did not show the strongest attachment to truth, and I never saw in the whole course of my life the smallest reason for suspecting that he stated anything which he did not firmly believe to be the fact." It is a German virtue, too. Bismarck, the great German statesman, the man of blood and iron, has recently borne most striking testimony to the love of truth ever displayed by his late royal master, the Emperor William. He said that in the difficult diplomatic relations in which he was concerned he could not wander from the truth without bringing a blush of shame to the face of the king, so loyal was he to the truth. The emperor could not even prevaricate; it was with him always, "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." He enjoyed that rich experience to which Bacon refers when he says: "No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth." Such men are sadly, sorely needed—

"Men who never shame their mothers;
Men who never fail their brothers;
True, however false are others;
Give us men, I say again,
Give us men."

Truthfulness, or the character of being truthful, is one mark of the soldier of Jesus Christ. He sits in the school of truth. He gains this bracing girdle for his life from Him who is the Truth. His mind is renewed, and the new man is put on "which after God hath been renewed in righteousness and holiness of truth." His life is brought into harmony with the mind of God. His heart is open to all the sanctifying power of Him whose name is Truth, and whose "word is truth."

The pursuit of truth is one of the highest forms of human endeavor, and a school of moral and spiritual discipline. The wise man said, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." The searcher from below, guided by the Spirit, finds the light above. "Seek, and ye shall find." Sometimes it breaks upon the discoverer with all the suddenness and

illumination of the lightning's vivid flash; but oftener it comes to the spiritual vision like the quiet sunrise in the east chasing away the darkness of the night, the shadows of the morning, and filling all the earth with its light and glory. But its pursuit is attended with difficulty and toil. God has given us powers which He intended us to use as seekers after truth, and He promises to crown the efforts of every earnest seeker with success, even a knowledge of that truth which alone can make us free.

The Christian soldier is to stand for the truth, no matter what the consequences. To do this demands moral courage, which is always of a higher order than physical bravery. It is the spirit of Luther, who, loyal to his conscience, could only say, "Here I take my stand. I can do no otherwise. God help me! Amen." It is the spirit of Henry Clay, who said that he would rather be right than be president. The Christian, in the service of his great Captain, knows that he is right, and that knowledge fits him for every conflict against evil, for "thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just." He stands on the side of truth and right to fight against wrong, against evil of every kind. And if he is to take his "stand" for the right and the true, he needs the girdle of truth, in order that he may be prepared for action, and able to maintain his ground.

"Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son."

W. J. ARMITAGE.

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MUSHROOMS.

A FRIEND took me into his hothouse, where he had prepared a mushroom bed: it was beaten down until hard as a stone; yet through this the apparently weak fungi would push their way. Unlike us, the harder their bed the better they like it, and I was assured that if a stone, a tile, or a flower-pot was placed above them, they would grow up notwithstanding. God's people are in their Christian life of the same sort: opposition develops faith. The Egyptians oppressed the Hebrews; but the more they did so, the more they thrived. "Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder" (Heb. xi. 36, 37); yet, though seemingly weak, they "out of weakness were made strong" (v. 34). A hard bed suits the church of God better than downy pillows.—*Selected.*

THE DIVINE HELPER.

"DEAR Son of God, that bade the little band
Cross on before Thee to the other side,
And they obeyed and went at Thy command;
Yet Thou didst let them struggle with the tide,
Until they knew

That there was nothing more that *they* could do.

"But when they ceased to battle with the storm,

And learned that all their efforts were in vain.
O Strength of Israel, then thy blessed form
Came to them, walking on that troubled main:

Thy voice was heard,
And all was calm and peaceful at Thy word.

"O Christ Divine, upon that tossing sea
We long have 'toiled in rowing,' but the wind
Is contrary, we cannot get to Thee—
Our works are naught, we have no strength, we
find;

Comes to our aid,
And says to us, 'Tis I, be not afraid!'

"Within our ship we pray Thee abide,
Thine is the power, O Master of the sea,
And Thou canst take us to the other side,
Where all the glory we will give to Thee;
And men shall know
Thou art the Healer of each human woe."

—*Selected.*

SIGNALLING FOR CHRIST.

WHEN the disabled steamship *Spree* was adrift and in imminent peril of sinking, it was the alarm-signal which blazed on her deck which brought the rescuing vessel. Had her officers not recognized their danger and kindled that signal, they would not have been saved in the way they were saved. There is many a soul that is drifting into this new year—and one twelve-month nearer eternity—which is as utterly disabled as was that imperilled steamer. Perhaps some of my readers may frankly acknowledge: "Yes, I am that person; I am not where I ought to be, or what I ought to be; I want to begin this new year with a changed life and a better one."

Well, my friend, it is a great point to feel compunction for the past, and to desire honestly to live a different life. No sinner is ever saved until he or she truly *wants* to be saved. Don't waste any time in endeavoring to stop leaks and to patch up a new character. If you stop off one sin, another will break out. The change you require is something more radical than that; you need a divine work to be wrought in you that shall make a new man or a new woman of you. "Except a man be *born anew*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And this new birth must come from some agent outside of your own self. Such eminent scientists as Spencer and Huxley admit that in the natural world no living thing was ever self-generated, and that only life can produce life. In