

that they be kept pure, healthy, well-developed. Our religion forbids anything which is according to nature ; it only forbids immorality which breeds disease, over-indulgence in meat or drink which destroys health, habits which are injurious to physical well-being. It requires nothing which is against nature ; but asks for temperance, cleanliness, systematic exercise, which are essential to bodily health. It offers no protest against manly sports ; it only forbids overtraining which endangers life, and acts of brutal violence which are inconsistent with manly courage, but it demands that we observe those habits and participate in those exercises which produce robust physical manhood.

The glory of young men is their intellectual strength. Youth takes an honest and pardonable pride in any achievements which show their superior intellects. And our religion encourages intellectual refinement. "A sound mind in a sound body" is one of the aims of Christianity. But here again some young men grasp at the shadow. They think that to be religious is to be credulous, to stifle the reason, to swallow in the lump without inquiry certain statements of the Bible and creeds of the Church. And because some inquiring men of intellectual power have been led to reject Christianity, they think that unbelief is a sign of mental strength. Skepticism is thought by some young men to be a mark of strong-mindedness ; and they who wish to be considered very intellectual, too clear-minded to be deceived by the superstitions of credulous folk, often pose as doubters of God and Revelation. Now, I readily admit that honest doubt has its place in the course of intellectual and spiritual development. It is the birth-day of the higher life. It is the outcome of independent thinking and untrammelled search for truth. The man who never thinks for himself, of course never doubts. He is content with a merely inherited traditional belief ; the faith of his fathers is good enough for

him. But the honest, fearless inquirer, the man who is dissatisfied with a creed which is other than a matter of personal conviction, the really independent thinker, can only reach the solid ground of faith by passing through the slough of doubt.

"You tell me doubt is devil-born,
I know not ; one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first.
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds.
At last he beat his music out,
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts, and gathered strength,

He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them : thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own."

Doubt, indeed, is often the mark of true faith.

"You call for faith ;
I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.
The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say,
If faith o'ercomes doubt."

Doubt is not always to be met with denunciation.

"What matter though I doubt at every pore,
Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers' ends,
Doubts in the trivial work of every day,
Doubts at the very basis of my soul,
In the grand moments when she probes herself—
If finally I have a life to show ?"

Doubt is one of the marks of the awakening of the higher manhood.