

virtue and her courage. When brought to trial she prayed, weeping: "O Jesu Christ, Lord of all, Thou seest my heart, Thou knowest my desire, I am Thy sheep, make me worthy to overcome the evil one." Her faith was constant through the most terrible tortures, and she has come down to us as a type of maidenly courage and purity, who held the truth dearer than life.

SLIPPING AWAY.

THEY are slipping away—the sweet, swift years,

Like a leaf on the current cast;
With never a break in their rapid flow,
We watch them as one by one they go
Into the beautiful past.

One after another we see them pass
Down the dim-lighted stair;
We hear the sound of their steady tread
In the steps of centuries long since dead,
As beautiful and as fair.

There are only a few days left to love;
Shall we waste them in idle strife?
Shall we trample under our ruthless feet,
Those beautiful blossoms rare and sweet,
By the dusty ways of life?

—Selected.

THE MADNESS OF YOUNG MEN.

THERE was a young Carpenter once who lived in an obscure Jewish village. He was poor, and had no Scriptures of His own, so that He had to study them in the little synagogue of Nazareth. This brought Him into constant contact with the religious authorities of His day, and the more He saw of them the less He respected them. Suddenly He became famous. Whole country-sides emptied themselves at His approach, and the multitudes so thronged Him that He often had no leisure so much as to eat. He spoke in the language of the highest poetry, and to this day His words are the most lovely which human literature records. If He had only done that, all would have gone well with Him. But He could not forget the hollowness of the popular religion, nor the hypocrisy of its exponents. He knew men who robbed widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers. He announced what He knew with uncompromising honesty. He would have nothing to do with the "worldly holy"—the sleek religiosity of the day, the powerful ecclesiastics and such like. He preferred the company of honest vice to dishonest virtue. He actually said there was more hope of good in

penitent vice than in hypocritical virtue. He rejoiced in being sneered at as the Friend of publicans and sinners. The result was that "the best people" who came to hear him out of curiosity soon got tired of Him. They said at first, "How vulgar He is! He eats with publicans and sinners." Then they said, "How rude He is! If He comes to our dinner-tables He never pays us a single compliment, and even insults us by His remarks." At last they said, "He hath a devil; He is mad." By that time they had found out that he wanted a perfect world,—*"a Kingdom of God and His righteousness."* He called it—and that was why they called Him mad. So, that they might prove forever to the world the folly of all idealism and the supreme wisdom of taking things as you find them, they accused Him falsely, and had Him crucified on Calvary; and the world has faithfully carried out the tradition ever since.

It is almost always the young men who go mad in this way. It is the privilege of youth. There is small hope of anybody going mad in Christ's way after fifty. By that time the fine fire has died out, the divine frenzy is spent, and the blood is too cool for idealism. If you intend being mad, you must get it done before thirty. Remember it is not only the privilege, it is the supreme duty of youth to be mad. The divine insanity of noble minds is possible to youth alone. Youth alone is capable of defying the cross. What God gives youth to the world for is that the world may be saved by it from corruption. It is a tide of glorious madness, of impossible ideals, of vast unreasoning enthusiasms, hopes, purposes, desires, which streams across the stagnant wastes of life, and keeps the moral atmosphere buoyant and unvitiated. All the saviours of the world have been young men. We cannot conceive of an elderly Hamlet. Most of the great poetry of the world has been written by young men; or, what is the same thing, by men who began to be poets in youth. If they had waited till they had made their fortunes, they would never have been poets. That young Carpenter of Nazareth did not wait till He had saved enough money to be beyond all peril of want in His great mission, or He would never have saved the world. Nothing great is done by the man who is not ready to risk all for an ideal, and that

form of madness must be acquired in youth, or not at all.

The youth who does not know how to be mad will never be worth much to this world. There is nothing more contemptible than caution in youth. I have read the lives of great men with some care, and I have come to the distinct conclusion that their greatness was the precise measure of their madness. No one did a madder thing than Johnson when he tramped off to London to get his bread, how he could, by literature; or Carlyle, when he took to "plain living and high thinking" at *Craigenputtock*; or Wordsworth, when he went to live in a cottage at *Grasmere*; or Browning, when he deliberately refused all common ways of getting on in life, and went on writing poetry which no one bought for thirty years, because he felt that poetry was his real mission. They dared all for a belief, and that is clearly madness. They refused chances of making money with supreme contempt, and what evidence of insanity can be more cogent than that? Coleridge was even more utterly mad than they. When he was offered \$7,500 per annum to edit a paper, he replied that he did not think any man ought to have more than \$1,500, and he dared not be encumbered with more. Yet I fancy these five names shine like fixed stars in the firmament of fame, and are not the least in the galaxy of greatness. We love them to-day for what the world jeered at then. If they had not been mad enough to dare everything on an impulse, Carlyle would have died an unknown schoolmaster, Browning a bank official, Coleridge a nameless journalist. If a youth should tell me that he finds he has a vocation in literature, I should at once ask him, "Are you mad enough for it? Are you willing to starve with Otway and Chatterton, and toil for bread in a dreary garret with Goldsmith, and write for thirty years without recognition with Browning? If you want a fixed salary before you enter on a literary vocation, you will never enter it. You are not mad enough. We shall be sorry to miss you, and will try to think of you as 'a mute, inglorious Milton'; but that is the honest truth, you are not mad enough for the position. Go, cautious brother, and be sleek and insignificant; you are not needed here."—*W. F. Dawson.*