

"BE AISY, AN' IF YE CAN'T BE AISY, BE AS AISY AS YE CAN."

Why are we always complaining, always unsatisfied? "It is too hot." "It is frightfully cold." "This is an awful climate to live in." "Then living is so high." Then the dust! the snow! the rain! the housework! the children! the mending! We are always deploring this or that. Why not take a brace and study Mark Tapleyism? Of all the types in Dickens' wonderful gallery of characters, Mark Tapley stands apart as the type of patience and cheerfulness, of unselfishness and of hopefulness. The sun never sets upon Mark. There was always a ray shining on him. Mark Tapley stands for all that is jolly and cheerful. No adversity could put him in its gloom. The worse things got, the brighter and more hopeful grew Mark. You remember that fateful day when young Martin Chuzzlewit and his faithful henchman landed in the Garden of Eden, a place full with fever, a waste land covered with burnt tree stumps, rank grass, dank weeds and frowsy underwood—and, "Martin lay down upon the ground and wept aloud."

"Lord love you, sir!" cried Mr. Tapley, in great terror, "don't do that! . . . It never helped man, woman or child over the lowest fence yet, sir, and it never will."

Brave, Mark! You don't know how you help us when we meet and shake hands with you every now and then as we journey on!

There have been other Mark Tapleys, though none quite as human and sympathetic and close to us because of it—as young Chuzzlewit's gallant servant. Goldsmith describes one in one of his letters in his "Citizen of the World." This Tapley was a soldier and a sailor, with a wooden leg, therefore a man of many experiences. He begins by saying that he could not pretend to have gone through more than others. "Except the loss of my limb," he says, "and my being obliged to beg, I don't know any reason, thank Heaven, that I have to complain; there are some that have lost both legs and an eye, but, thank Heaven, it is not quite so bad with me." Then he tells us his history, and if you are one of those (plentiful) persons who find fault with everything that happens, pray listen to it:

He was a workhouse boy, to begin with, then a farmer's apprentice, with a life dotted with working and starving. One day he knocked over a hare, and was transported to the American plantations. Over there he was sold to a planter. Having done his time, he returned to England and enlisted. He fought at Fontenoy, and was wounded; later, he was in six of the battles of the times, saved \$200, only to be press-gauged and sent aboard one of his (then) Majesty's ships. The ship was taken by the French, the man's money was also taken, and he was jailed. He escaped, and landed, after many adventures, in England, minus a leg and four fingers of the left hand. Did he grumble? He laughed, did the day's work, and hoped man," he says, "is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle, but, blessed be God, I enjoy good health, and have no enemy in the world that I know of but the French."

Through all his vicissitudes this man laughed, did the day's work, and hoped for the best. He inspired others with his own brave spirit. He was a far more sane and more sincere philosopher than men whose names come down, echoing along the corridors of Time, as the truly great of the earth. Schopenhauer was a sour little grape compared with this old pensioner, who saw God's light shining through everything.

Another of the Tapley tribe was general Sydney Smith. He had the delightful habit of always looking on the bright side of things. He would even lift the edge of the cloud to see the silver lin-

ing. When old and ill, he wrote to a friend:

"I have gout, asthma, and seven other maladies, but am otherwise pretty well." And in one of his last letters, written to Lady Carlisle, he remarked, with all his old buoyant humor:

"If you hear of sixteen or eighteen pounds of flesh wanting an owner, they belong to me. I look as if a curate had been taken out of me."

With all our "fads" and systems"—a good many of which it would be wiser in us to cast aside—why does not some apostle of Cheerfulness arise? By cheerfulness is not meant optimism. The one is sane, the other borders on Fad, on Insane-Land. Charles Dickens left with us a very Bible of cheerfulness, only we do not dip into it often enough.

There was a touch of Tapleyism in Lord Holland's remark, when, lying on his deathbed, he was told that his friend—George Selwyn—that amateur of the cadaverous and the horrible—had called to ask after him. "The next time Mr. Selwyn calls," said he, humorously, "show him up. If I am alive, I shall be delighted to see him; if I am dead, he will be glad to see me."

Why not cultivate cheerfulness! It is largely a matter of will. The day may be hot, the road dusty, the toll heavy, but there are few days without some glint of sunlight, and there is a whole lot of fun in the old world.—"Kit" in The Mail and Empire.

THE LADDER OF LIFE.

Every man living can help his fellow man in the hard battle of life. I would sum it all up in one word: If you are well up the ladder, turn and give a hand as you rest a moment, to those below you; and if you have your feet as yet only on the lower rungs, take the hand offered to you, but do not pull those above you down. For life is a ladder, because God makes it so, and the man who would convert it into a moving staircase, upon which men have merely to stand and the machinery will do the rest, has a degraded notion of life's possibilities and outcues. God would not take from his children, as some men are striving to do, the earnest hopes, the healthy fatigue, the wholesome yearning to go up, which is the greatest human joy in life. I pity, honestly and sincerely pity, the man who, because everything was done for him, never knew the glorious exhilaration which comes from his own hard striving. I honestly and sincerely commend to the man whose inherited wealth has stifled the vigor and the joy of hard labor.

To look back over years of toil which took us, step by step, wearily up the heights, to recall the tingling, thrilling sensations of every added step, to review once more from the top the burdens valiantly borne—this is the greatest joy that who has thus known the hardships of the ascent will find its truest pleasure in leaning down to those still struggling, and with cheery word and willing hand, among them to feel again what he has tasted, the joy of climbing up to rest and peace, even as a good father in his happy old age revels in the labors and struggles and the successes of his children.

Here is a knightly sympathy, for which the world is craving. Look up the ladder of life to where Christian peace sits beckoning on. At each day's close count that day lost in which you have not recorded a battle fought against selfishness, and a victory won by an act of kindness to one less happy and less fortunate. So will the sword of your Christian charity be ever shining and clear. So shall it be worthy to be laid one day upon the altar of a Christian life—bloodless but gleaming in the light of heaven's King.

A USELESS MEMBER.

"Yes," said Aunt Sarah, surveying her bandaged wrist, "the doctor says it's a bad sprain; and the minister says I know now how the church feels in not having the use of all members. The minister didn't mean that for just a joke, either; he looked at me as if he wanted to see how I'd take it. I had sense enough, too, to feel I deserved to have him say it to me. A word like that comes home pretty straight when one of your own members is useless, and worse."

"I've never thought just what being a member of the church meant before, though I've been one for thirty-five years. I've never felt obliged to do what the church wanted done. I've felt it was a favor, my doing it at all, and half the time I let some one else do it instead. When I was through with work at home, and with what things I like I to do outside, then I was willing to do something in the church—if it was just the kind of work that suited me. I guess I've been about as useless a member to the church as the sprained hand is to me, all stiff and crippled, and refusing to bend more than an inch or two."

"There's lots of things I need to do, but I can't get this member to do them—that's certain. That's the way the minister has felt about me, I guess. I've been a useless member for thirty-five years, that's the long and short of it; and, if the rest of the members had been like me, the church would have been paralyzed just as old Cousin Josiah Jones, who can't move hand or foot. I'm ashamed of myself—I truly am—and things are going to be different from now on." And Aunt Sarah nodded her head with a firm determination, as she looked at the church spire from her window.—Forward.

THE GREATEST SHORT STORIES.

(From Harper's Weekly.)

If one were called upon suddenly to mention the three most exquisitely beautiful short stories in English, one would unhesitatingly say, first, Mr. James' "The Altar of the Dead"; second, Stevenson's "Will o' the Mill," and third, Kipling's "Without Benefit to Clergy." In none of these three is there action, plot, or denouement; but each one is so shot through with beauty, rarity, individuality, that it lives in the memory of a single, wonderful gem, seen once and never forgotten. From the opening phrase of "The Altar of the Dead," "he had a mortal dislike, poor Stransome, to lean anniversaries," to the last, "but alone with him in the dusky church a great dread was upon her of what might still happen, for his face had the whiteness of death," each phrase is shot through with distinction and individuality—no word is shop worn, no phrase is shabby. The story in itself concerns nothing more exciting than a middle aged gentleman protesting against the universal flux, insisting that in a world where "all things move and nothing abides," he will at least build altars to the stable heart and enduring loyalties. He found a corner in an out-of-the-way church where he might commemorate his dead, where he might revivify and relit the old affections and lived with them, and here ultimately it comes about that through the ministrations of a kindred spirit he learns to forgive his one great enemy, among the dead, and the little rift in his exquisite piety toward humankind is mended before his death.

If you wish your children to amount to anything take them to church, though they are as full of fun as an egg is of meat. Get the church-going habit so ingrained in them that it will never wear out.—Dr. Daniel Steele, in Zion's Herald.