

A Bad Character.

There are two kinds of bad characters: the peevish and the weak. Both are ill-fitted for life's struggles; both will suffer a great deal; both will accomplish little. It is the peevish that deserves in full the stigma of the compound epithet of "bad character." They are a burden to those with whom they have to live. Their very presence inflicts pain. Gloomy, concentrated and sulky, their breath blows out the light of joy, and they crush frank expansiveness under their nervous iron heel. Hypercritical and captious, pitiless in their judgments, they notice the least little shortcomings in others, and point them out with bitterness and scorn. Any contrariety irritates them; a trifling annoyance excites their animosity. Irony, dipped in gaul, is familiar to them, and they delight in darting their arrows penned with malicious intent and steeped in venom—arrows that leave festering sores. Egotistical even to harshness, they ignore the art of pleasing. Haughty, headstrong, snobbish, snappish, brutal and vindictive, they manifest in their exterior actions a soul cankered by envy, susceptibility and pride.

Deeply imbedded within lies the loathsome disorder. At times clear patches appear in the sky of their hearts, and then are they capable of smiling benevolently and of doing deeds of disinterestedness; but, alas! very rare are those rays and quickly do they vanish. Promptly they resume their habitual dark and threatening mood.

But, be it said now, those unfortunate creatures are to be preferred to the weak, in this, that their disease is curable; and when such men are cured a great deal may be expected of them; but, nine times out of ten, the weakness of the "weak" will follow them to the grave.

Surely, a peevish character is a double misfortune to him who possess it: it is an affliction and a weakness. However painful and troublesome may they be to others, the churlish constitute themselves their own tormentors to a still greater degree. The thorns with which they are bristling are not all pointing outward; the sharpest and the longest curve their lacerating points inward and torture their own sensitive flesh. To those torments inflicted on them by their own conscience must be added the pain of seeing themselves forsaken and friendless. Bereft are they of the esteem and affection of true men, and lacking that bracing cordial, that sweet balm, the potent cure of so many moral wounds, how can they be happy? They are feared and shunned; wisely do we mis-