

THE BRIGHTER SIDE.

IT is a great mistake to suppose that people who persistently refuse to look at the best side of everything deserve sympathy and commiseration. More often they require a sharp lesson or two to teach them their error. In a sense, perhaps, they may be pitied; but universally this is not their special need. Certainly we are not all possessed of sanguine, hopeful temperaments, but many the reverse; and there can be no doubt disease does affect the health of the mind as well as that of the body. But we feel sure that by far the larger moiety of what are termed "miserable Christians" have themselves to thank for it, and themselves alone. One might well ask how it came about that the consolations of so holy a religion failed to impart joy and cheerfulness to its followers, did we not know that want of faith lies at the root. It is not the fault of the Christian faith; but the obscure and imperfect application of it to daily life and experience, which accounts for so much gloomy demeanour and soured asceticism amongst so-called religious people in our day.

It is a merciful provision of the Creator which has so providentially ordered our paths in life that there is nearly always a brighter side to every dark experience we are called on to pass through. We may be blind to it from ignorance, or we may willingly shut our eyes to its blessings, and the relief they offer; none the less it is there waiting us if we choose to look for it. There never yet was any cloud of adversity without its bright and silver lining. Now it is the faculty of our sublime religion alone that can enable us to extract the good out of the apparent evil; the joy and trust in God out of the manifest sorrow. And it is in this that the religion of Christ soars so far above all other creeds, inasmuch as it exhorts the believer to despise the trials of worldly experience, in order that he may view them as stepping-stones whereby to cross the waters of trouble and reach the other side—a haven of rest after the probation-time is over. Of all philosophies, that of Christianity is the noblest and purest, for it teaches its votaries to look at the brighter side, even where all is sad and seemingly dark as the grave itself.

We have most of us met individuals in the Christian community whom it was a vexatious trial to mix with, simply because of their inveterate habit of looking at the worst phase of everything. Their very presence seemed to throw a mantle of gloom over everything and everybody. We may affirm without hesitation that such are not fulfilling the law of Christ in spirit or letter, but merely disgracing the Gospel which Christ has taught His followers, and casting reproach on His creed and religion. They may delude their souls with the notion that sombre melancholy is necessary to a holy life; we assure them it is nothing of the kind. Our Father in Heaven has no affinity with the dismal theories of people who thus cast a stigma on the real object of Christianity, for His manifest aim has been to make us happy in this His beautiful world. Whatever of gloom, or misery, or heart-wretchedness we experience may be traced to our own folly or perversion—not to the effect of Christian ethics or Christian practice on human life; for this seeks to brighten all it touches with a high and noble resolve for the future.

We earnestly desire to impress upon our readers the fact that there is a bright side to every sorrow and trouble that may come with its black wings and hover over their homes and hearts! Oh for the faith that sees beyond the dread messenger, and looks to the Hand Divine, sending all for our benefit and blessing! Even death, the grim visitor, robbing us of our cherished joys, has a brighter side, could we brush away our many tears and pierce the dim future. Have our loved ones fled from the cosy nests in which we treasured them, leaving a desolation chill that creeps into our very souls? Look! there is a brighter side also to that dark picture, for a tie has been established between us and the departed; and we learn to look patiently for the Future which will one day unite us, never more to be severed. Does misfortune weigh heavy on our spirits, or worldly influences around us vex and harass? Ah! Christian, hope on, for as earthly props and human strength are struck away, you will see the brighter side of things heavenly and spiritual—beyond the touch of mutability. Could we breathe a fervent wish for the benefit of weary, cast-down Christians in our midst, no prayer that might be uttered would be so called for as one for their greater light and cheerfulness under affliction. To look on the brighter side is the greatest gift that can be gleaned

from all experience—a talisman which, with God's blessing, will make the soul triumphant over all the vicissitudes it may have to battle with, and render it full of confidence and thrilling hope. If we look around and about our path we shall be sure to find ample proofs of the fact that our case is by no means so dreary as that of many others, bearing themselves with heroism; and this alone throws a gleam upon what before was very dark indeed.

E. CLIFFORD.

SUMMER WINDS.

"Summer winds, summer winds,
Whence come ye, and whither going?"

"Come we from the sunset isles,
Where a dreamlike beauty smiles;
Through the fragrant forest shade,
We have wandered, we have strayed;
Come we from the orange grove,
From the witching haunts of love.

"Summer winds, summer winds,
Thence come we, and thither going,
Where the northern streamers glow—
Land of ice and land of snow—
When we breathe upon the strand,
Flora trips it o'er the land,
Brooklets laugh, and sunbeams stray,
Flow'rets greet our gentle away."

"Summer winds, summer winds,
Why thus whispering, ever sighing?"

"Earth's sad voices ever roll,
Echoing on from pole to pole,
Over mountain, wood, and dale,
Quivering on each passing gale;
Sigh we for the tears that flow,
Human sin, and human woe."

"Summer winds, summer winds,
Bear ye never tones of gladness?"
Childhood's rippling laughter swells,
And the chime of wedding bells,
Rising like a sad refrain,
Of some tender, tearful strain;
Gayer sounds wait we not ever,
List! earth's valleys answer, 'Never'!"

EMILIE SEARCHFIELD.

THE RELIABLE MAN.

OF all the qualities that combine to form a good character, there is not one more important than reliability. Most emphatically is this true of the character of the good business man. The world itself embraces both truth and honesty, and the reliable man must necessarily be truthful and honest. We see so much all around us that exhibits the truth of this crowning quality that we are tempted in our bilious moods to deny its very existence. But there are, nevertheless, reliable men—men to be depended upon, to be trusted, in whom you may repose confidence, whose word is as good as their bond, and whose promise is performance. If any one of you know such a man, make him your friend. You can only do so, however, by assimilating his character.

The reliable man is a man of good judgment. He does not jump at conclusions. He is not a frivolous man. He is thoughtful. He turns over a subject in his mind and looks at it all around. He is not a partial or one-sided man. He sees through a thing. He is apt to be a very reticent man. He does not have to talk a great deal. He is a very moderate man, not only in habits of body, but also of mind. He is not a passionate man; if so by nature, he has conquered it by grace. He is a sincere man, not a plotter or a schemer. What he says may be relied on. He is a trustworthy man. You feel safe with your property or the administration of affairs in his hands. He is a brave man, for his conclusions are logically deduced from the sure basis of truth, and he does not fear to maintain them. He is a good man, for no one can be thoroughly truthful and honest without being good. Is such a good quality attainable? Most assuredly so. It is not born—it is made. Character may be formed, of course, then its component parts may be moulded to the formation.