

mon to all men, as much so as love and hate and the other elementary emotions. Even you and I have experienced it, though of course but temporarily.

The brave man is brave because he has conquered fear. The coward is such because fear is stronger than his will. It is safe to say that no man was ever a coward from choice. The attractiveness of the role is not sufficient even to the actor himself. The greatest coward who ever lived, would, we may be sure, have preferred to have been born brave.

But, you say, a man's character is to a great extent self-formed—and this is true. A man may be constitutionally timid and yet, by the exercise of his higher powers, steel himself to perform brave acts and by so doing gradually overcome his constitutional defect. His will may assert itself in this as in other phases of conscious action. But do we, as a matter of fact stop to think when we pour out our contempt for one whose courage has proved unequal to some emergency that perhaps after all the demand was out of proportion to his strength? It is perfectly true that both in the physical and moral spheres strength comes by the exercising of our powers, but it is not less true that this development is gradual, and that to expect any sudden or spontaneous increase of strength would be contrary to reason. Is the case so different in respect of the attitude of the will towards fear? Must not the supremacy of the will in this as in all other matters be established gradually? Must not a man begin, as it were, by challenging his little fears, before venturing to assail the greater ones or, to use a different metaphor, must he not conquer the out-skirts of the realm of fear before he attempts to storm its strongholds? We are not speaking of what to borrow a figure from Science we may call compounds of cowardice. This is not a plea for the bully—the malevolent coward, or for the boaster—the vain coward, or for the sneak the selfish calculating coward. And yet after all they too may deserve some consideration—on their coward side. But we are speaking of that cowardice which results from the weakness of the will. And we put it to all fair minded persons whether there is not much that is inhuman—not to say Pharisaical and Anti-christian in the general attitude of the world towards those who manifest this form of weakness.

Not that we should make less of the nobility of courage. It is grand and glorious as is strength in all its forms, but let us not forget that the noblest exercises of strength is to be found in sympathy with weakness. He who met and overcame all fear as He underwent all suffering was ever tender in his treatment of human fear. Christianity has taught us the beauty of the gentler attributes of strength. Where it prevails, bodily infirmity and mental weakness meet with almost universal tenderness and pity. The founder of Christianity extended this tenderness to those who are under the power of sin. Is it for us to deny it to those who are as yet unable to break loose from the tyranny of fear?

*B.*