

Hope's Quiet Hour.

Coward or Hero?—Both.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice.—St. John 13:38.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee. . . when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry the whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God.—St. John, 23:18, 19.

Both these prophecies, so opposite in character, were literally fulfilled. The apostle who eagerly denied his Master—afraid of a woman's taunting laugh—bravely endured the awful death of crucifixion rather than deny that same Lord. Was St. Peter a coward or a hero? He was both. So are other people.

Elijah was brave as a lion on the mountain, when he stood alone for God before a wicked king and hundreds of heathen priests. Then, in desperate fear, he fled before the threat of a woman.

Hosea says of Jacob: "By his strength he had power with God," yet the same Jacob had stooped to deceive his blind father by low trickery, and had stolen the birthright from his twin brother.

The prophet Jonah cared more about a plant which sheltered him from the sun than he did for the lives of 120,000 little children. We are apt to call him a selfish coward, because he ran away from his duty. Yet he afterwards faced probable scorn and insult, danger and death, when he daringly proclaimed God's wrath against the wicked and mighty city, Nineveh. He walked through its streets, denouncing king and people in no measured terms. Men—on this side of the ocean—condemn the Kaiser and his advisers quite fearlessly. What have they to fear?—at this distance! But a man who ventures to loudly denounce the German emperor in the streets of Berlin is not a coward. Would you dare to do it? If not, be very careful how you speak slightly of Jonah. We are so apt to remember his running away in fear—his fear was not surprising, when you think of the daring duty demanded of him—that we perhaps forget that he afterwards preached so forcefully that the king of Nineveh and his people repented of their wickedness in sackcloth and ashes. We forget that—through Jonah's preaching—that great city was saved from destruction, for "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not."

Think of the great work God was able to accomplish through Jonah, and then look down upon him as a "selfish coward" if you dare! He may have been afraid—once. He may have complained over a trifling discomfort—once. But he was a grand hero when he marched boldly through Nineveh proclaiming his message of God's judgment on the guilty city.

These are a few instances. You know of many more. Plenty of men were far from heroic before the war; following others to evil because they were afraid of being called "goody-goody," and making a fuss over the smallest interference with their comfort or pleasure. Yet those very men have gone forward fearlessly in the midst of shot and shell, have laid down their own lives to save wounded comrades, or have endured the most awful pain with a laugh. Many of them are even now facing a cheerless future—they are blinded, maimed or helpless—facing it not only uncomplainingly but cheerily.

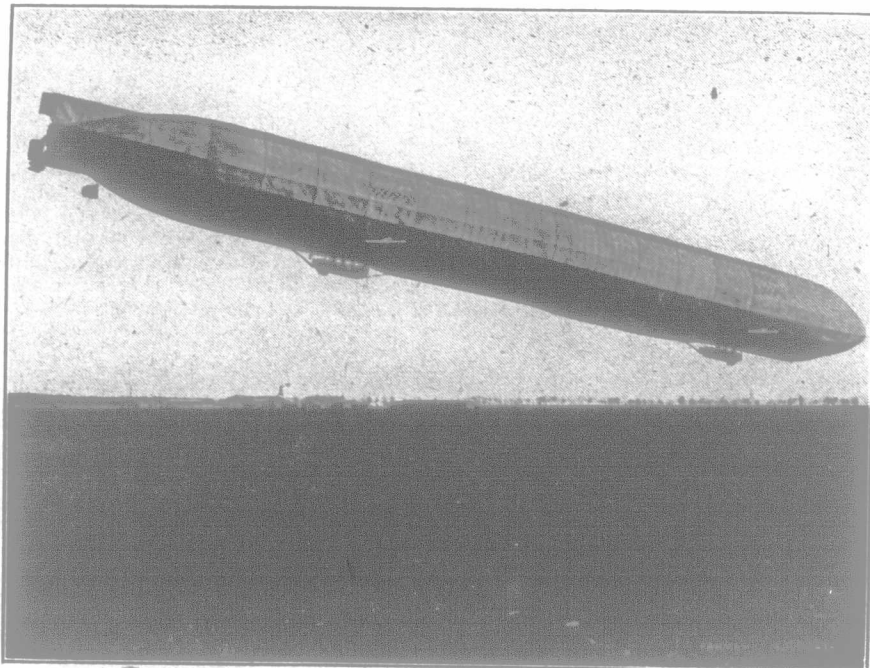
The "coward" is also a hero, the "sinner" is also a saint. Perhaps the reason we are so apt to think and speak slightly of our brothers and sisters is because we only see the weaker side of them, while God can see the glorious possibilities which may blossom and bear fruit any day.

Our Lord's first "verily verily" to St. Peter (in our text) was a loving warning, intended to arouse him to the knowledge of his danger. The second "verily verily," was intended as a needed encouragement to the discouraged

sinner whose revealed weakness threatened to drag him down to despair.

What lesson should this teach us as regards other people? I think one lesson is this—and we all need to learn it. The person we despise and condemn may one day prove himself to be far superior to ourselves. Let us not push ourselves into the highest place, lest a more honorable man appear, and we begin with shame to take the lowest place. Our continual faultfinding is not only wrong but it is a proof of our own foolishness. As Hannah said long ago: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD

brothers of apparently hardened men pray on, in radiant hope and fearless faith. God is constantly working miracles of healing redemption. Christ came to save sinners, and His earth-mission cannot be a failure. Many a man who seemed for years to be recklessly wasting his life—the life God gave him in trust—has come face to face with death and has made the great discovery, has found God and learned the priceless value of the soul he was recklessly allowing to drift to destruction. Of many an apparently commonplace man it has been said: "He has done what we would all like to do, die for England."



A Zeppelin Leaving Its Aerodrome.

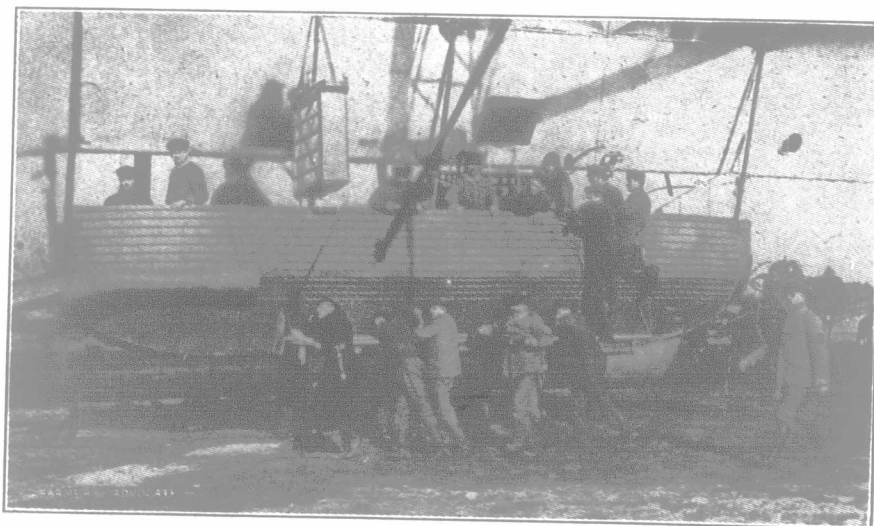
Each carries two gondolas. International Film Service, N. Y.

is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength."

Mighty Germany scornfully trampled weak Belgium under foot—yet already Belgium's name towers high among the nations. She promised unto her neighbors and disappointed them not, though it meant torture to herself. God holds her reward in His hand, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust. . . to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory. . . He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man

Wilfrid Meynell says: "We are born heroes, and born cowards; there's a saint in every sinner, and a sinner,—both him!—in every saint."

Therefore, let us not feel uplifted—like the Pharisee—nor thank God that we are not like our neighbors. Let us not look down on them as greater sinners than ourselves, nor jeer at them as "professing saints." Rather let us thankfully remember that we are as other people are. We may be cowards to-day, but God is able to make us heroic, too. We may be sinners now, falling when we try to climb, and slipping back when we should be moving forward. But God can see



The Gondola of a Zeppelin which is Just About to Ascend on One of Its "Baby-killing" Escapades.

International Film Service.

prevail. . . the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth." Those words also are taken from the thanksgiving of Hannah, the "woman of a sorrowful spirit," who took her troubles to the throne of God and found that He could turn them into great joy.

Another lesson we may learn is Hope. One who is a coward now may become a hero. One who is selfish now may lay down his life unhesitatingly for others. One who is openly irreligious now may become a loyal soldier in the army of the Great King of all the earth. Let the wives, mothers and

the germ of the saint in the heart of the sinner—how eagerly the King of Love welcomed, as His companion in paradise, a man who had been a notorious thief and robber! This story is told in a book called "Halt! Who Goes There?"

"In a scattered sortie, one of our men stooped down and possessed himself of the wrist-watch of a dead soldier. Three minutes later I saw the thief—O, well, the Good thief!—run forward under a rain of fire on the chance that he might retrieve an exposed wounded comrade. He fell prone. A little later,

the gusts of fire veering like a wind-blown shower, I went to see if the man I had just before wanted to shoot at sight could still himself be succoured. No, he was stone dead, smiling like a stone saint—perhaps he was a saint at last. . . I, who stood one moment his accuser, knelt the next his client." God has never appointed any one of us the judge of our fellows or of ourselves. We do not know the wickedness, nor the nobility, that lies hidden from sight. Judgment is placed in the hands of Christ, because He is Divine in His absolute knowledge of us and human in His sympathy and tenderness. If He can know our weakness and sin, yet still love us, there must be something worth loving in each one of us. Let us believe in the hero when we can see only the coward, let us reverence the growing saint when only the sinner is manifest; and let us never, never lose faith in the ultimate victory of righteousness. The farmer can rejoice in the coming harvest while the seed is still hidden underground, so God—who sees the end—can rejoice beforehand over sinners who will some day become saints. Our Father's beauty of holiness draws us after Him.

"Like a snowy mountain peak above us,

'Be ye perfect!' daz-les our dim eyes. Canst Thou look from Thy pure height and love us?

May our earth-clogged feet to Thee arise?

"We before the Vision veil our faces, Yet would have it not a ray less bright;

Shine into our sin's dark hiding places, Flood our lives with Thy transfiguring light."

DORA FARNCOMB.

Berry-pickers Cause Fires.

Carelessness with Fire Results in Destruction of Forest Resources.

Many causes are responsible for Canada's heavy forest fire losses. Some of the erstwhile greatest offenders have come to realize the destruction which their negligence was causing and have adopted systematic measures to overcome the loss.

Several causes of forest fires have not, however, received sufficient attention. Dr. C. D. Howe, in Forest Protection in Canada, 1913-1914, states that in the settled areas, one of the chief classes of persons responsible for fires are berry-pickers. Smouldering camp fires, or sparks caused by smoking, fall into dry grass or brush, starting small fires; fanned by a high wind the fires rapidly become uncontrollable, spreading from the berry patches to the larger timber.

With the berry season at hand, it should surely be necessary only to draw the attention of berry-pickers to the destruction which their carelessness or indifference is causing, to secure an immediate reduction in the number of forest fires for which they are directly or indirectly responsible.—From "Conservation."

Not Fatal.

A certain clergyman was much grieved to find his "special services for men only" were so badly attended. He expressed his regret to the vergers one evening when, as usual, they were the only two at the meeting.

"I really think they ought to come," he said, sadly.

"That's jest what I've zed to 'em over an' over again," said the vergers, consolingly. "I sez to 'em, I sez, 'Look at me,' I sez; 'look at me. I goes to all them services,' I sez, 'an' wot 'arm does they do me?'" —Tit-Bits.

French in the Trench.—Tommy (to Jock, on leave)—"What about the lingo? Suppose you want to say 'egg' over there, what do you say?"

Jock—"Ye juist say 'Oof'."

Tommy—"But suppose you want two?"

Jock—"Ye say, 'Twa oofs,' and the silly auld fule wife gies ye three, and ye juist gie her back one. Man, it's an awfu' easy language."—Glasgow Herald.