

friends were the devices of Satan for the stunting of Job's spiritual life, but these served to increase the stature of that life. The rustling of the broad leaves of that ancient palm-tree has inspired with faith "a great multitude that no man can number."

Such a palm-tree child of God was David, whose tribulations hung the boughs of his old age with luscious fruits. Such a palm-tree disciple was Peter, whose upbraiding of conscience outside the hall of Caraphas kindled the flaming love for the Master that blazes upon the pages of the Acts of the Apostles. Such a palm-tree Christian was Paul, who was moved to say in the face of the most fearful persecution, "I know whom I have believed." Such palm-tree heroes were the martyrs whose faith was tried by fire and rack and sword.

The records of the Church are crimson with the blood of many of these old-time worthies. Those men of past ages stood out under the sharp gales of sorrow; but the rough winds that blew among their branches sent their tops climbing to the stars. While they were pressed upon they grew.

That history is still being written,—written with tears and punctuated with sobs. But those tears shall yet sparkle as gems in the crown of a completed righteousness, and those sobs shall yet be swept from the strings of golden harps in strains of sweetest melody.

"It is a funeral procession," we say, as we see the hearse with its fluttering feathers and the long line of carriages wending their way to the silent city of the dead.

"It is a failure in business," we remark, as we hear the crash of a man's prosperity and listen to the bursting of his bubble of wealth.

"It is the suffering of pain," we declare as we look upon one lying pale and emaciated upon a couch of sickness.

"There is a skeleton in the closet," we whisper, as one passes us whose brow is furrowed with care and whose head is woven with gray threads of trouble.

This may be all true. But there is something more. These things are the pressure that quickens the growth of a palm-tree Christian. These are the boisterous winds that send his roots deeper into the soil. These are the methods employed by the Gardener for the bringing forth of the fruit of an increased trust in God.

That man's sore bereavement turned his eyes towards the eternal city where death never plants his spade for the rearing of a grave. That man's financial loss secured for him a priceless treasure, lying beyond the reach of misfortune within the pearl vaults of the bank of heaven. That man's illness brought immortal health into his soul. That man's skeleton in the closet became a living joy.

Sorrowing reader, remember these things. The ship must be torn from its moorings that it may glide towards a richer harbor. The nest of the mountain eagle must be stirred that the eaglets may spread their pinions to the breeze and wheel beneath the sun. The blackness of clouds must be piled in the east for the arching of an evening rainbow. The night must cast its shadows before we can catch the radiance of stars. So if you are afflicted, God has thus visited you that out of your trials may come a grander experience of faith and a more willing obedience to the precepts of the Lord. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—*Sel.*

IT DOES MATTER

It is often said, "It is no matter what a man believes, if his conduct is right." By parity of reason, "It is no matter on what foundation, the house rests, if it only stands." There are houses on the sand which makes as fair a show as those on the solid rock till the floods come and the winds blow, but only those on the rock will weather the storm. It is of utmost importance to the right-doing man why he is doing right; for his reasons may be such as opportunity, temptation, evil example, will silence and sweep away. And I know of no reasons that may not be disposed except those which are embodied in the therefore of the Christian faith. Loose views as to the worth of religious truth and of fixed religious beliefs are already having their inevitable results in a correspondingly loose, vacillating, and low moral standard. Morality never has subsisted, and never will subsist, without religion. As well might you attempt to raise grapes from a rootless vine.—*Dr. A. P. Peabody.*