

THE SNARES OF SOUTH WINDS
AND SMOOTH SEAS.

BY DR. CUYLER.

Sin, ever since its first entrance into this world, has owed its chief power to the fact that it presents allurements and conceals consequences. Satan, in the Garden of Eden, promised only south winds and smooth seas. "The serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not surely die; ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*" So when the woman saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat. So has it ever been from that hour to this; the power of sin lies in its *deceitfulness*. When I was in the East I saw a most attractive tree laden with blossoms of a delicate lilac tint. The beauty of the flowers attracts insects, and bees are drawn to them to gather honey. But from the blossoms the insects extract a fatal poison, and often drop dead under the branches. It is called the Judas-tree, and is a vivid emblem of the deceitfulness of sin. For sin always has two aspects; the one is that which she assumes before the deed is done, the other is that which she puts on after she has ensnared her dupe and is ministering the retribution. She approaches with her allurements as Jael came to Sisera, bringing "butter in a lordly dish;" but the hammer and the nails she keeps out of sight until her victim is fast asleep in her power. The wages of sin are paid promptly; they are *death*.

The danger with every unconverted person who reads these lines lies in this very direction. Because you see now only a smooth sea, and hear only the siren song, "There is no danger," you feel no alarm. Because God spares you and mercies are around you, and no retribution visible, you shut your eyes to the fact that God is just, and will yet punish sin and the rejection of his grace with a tremendous penalty. You do not see yet what lies behind and beyond the "Cape Matala" of the Day of Judgement. The captain of that corn ship would not believe that there was anything ahead but fair winds and a prosperous voyage to Rome. He would not heed Paul's warning. After the tempest had burst forth in its fury, and no sun or stars appeared for many days, Paul reminded him, "Ye ought to have hearkened unto me and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gotten this injury and loss." Then it was too late. And so may you

find it if you presume on the smooth seas of God's present forbearance and shut your eyes to the sure and inevitable punishment that awaits every life of impenitence.

I write in this strain from the promptings of love. There is a temptation which besets both pulpit and pen and tongue to prophesy smooth things" and shirk unpopular truths. Paul did not make himself popular in that corn ship by predicting storm and opposing a venture before a treacherous south wind. (Before the gale was over he was the most trusted and respected man on board.) There is a theology of south wind and smooth sea that is becoming very current, and it "takes" prodigiously in these days. It suits human nature exceedingly. It sets a low estimate on the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its desert of retribution. It treats very gingerly the justice of God. It hoists no storm-signals in the direction whither so many souls are heading; it practically ignores hell! Even if the voyage here be with some "loss of lading," it holds out the hope of a possible second probation in the unseen world.

However seductive or popular this un-Pauline theology may be, I do not discover it on God's charts or in his weather-tables. If I deceive a soul with any such delusions may not God hold me to a fearful account? *Love demands fidelity*. However smooth the sea, and however fair the wind before any and every soul yet out of Christ, let such soul be lovingly warned that the voyage will be with terrible loss both to lading and to life. In the penitent acceptance of Jesus Christ is the only absolute, complete, perfect and everlasting salvation. Run no risks when your soul is at stake.

Paris is the centre of this world's taste, fashion, gayety, luxury and splendor. What is its moral condition? We know something of its history, and its religion; and a religion that neglects the Bible, leads to a scepticism which rejects it. And what are the fruits? What is the harvest?

Public statistics have shown that more than one third of the children born in Paris were illegitimate. In 1863 the bodies of ten thousand infants were fished out of the public sewers of the city. In 1883 it is stated that more than three thousand children were abandoned by their parents, and were adopted and cared for by the civil authorities.—*Sel.*