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**CAPTAIN CHARITY.**

["Therefore he, the Kings' son addressed himself for this march, and taketh with him five noble captains and their forces. The third was that valiant captain the Captain Charity. His standard bearer was Mr. Pitiful, and he had ten thousand men at his feet."]

Bunyan's old story of the Holy War, or the Siege of Man-soul is not as well known as it used to be, probably it never was as well known as the Pilgrim's Progress, but there are still many to whom it will never cease to be dear. A recent English writer puts in a strong appeal on behalf of the few conservative folk who have not outgrown their love of allegory, and to whom the Bedford tinker will always be a great and intrepid champion, fighting on the side of right, goodness, purity and loving-kindness against all falsehood and tyranny and sin.

But he would make one change or addition to the story to bring it up close to modern requirements. Why, he asks, did Bunyan set this young soldier to the assault of Eye-gate?

He was needed there, no doubt, as he could ill be spared at any of the city ports; but if you or I had the writing of the story, should we not have given the command of Mouth-gate? It is curious that the author has so little to say about this entrance, which no modern Man-soul could afford to leave undefended. It was the sally-port, he tells us, the gate by which the citizens came and went, and stones were slung from it, and arrows sped from the archer's bow. The description, slight as it is, holds good to the present day. The same warfare still goes on, but the slingers and archers have grown a little more expert; the shooting is better, the aim more precise, and a good many people are hit over whose heads the stones and arrows might once have flown harmless.

It is an undisputed truth that in the two centuries since Bunyan lived, the world has learned to talk a great deal more, and to talk both foolishly and hurtfully. Is there

anything left undiscussed in our enlightened times? Is there anybody whose privacy is respected? Is there any life, the most modest and retiring, that is not in peril of being dragged into the open market and there commented on, canvassed, judged? And it stands to reason

that this old world of ours turned chatter-box must needs say many an ill-natured, spiteful, and unkind thing. Nobody who talks much but must often talk unwisely, and, indeed, if the comments were all good-natured and kind, wouldn't they lose their spice? How many society papers would

be bought and read if they lent their columns to nothing but the praise of virtue and the recording of good deeds? How many gossips would be welcomed at tea or dinner-tables if the malice were left out of the piquant little stories it is their business to circulate? They understand too well the weakness of human nature, and set themselves to please and amuse by hinting away a reputation here, exposing a foible there, pointing out the flaw in this fair surface, and forcing into the light all the mean, despicable, shabby little tricks and turns which might very well have escaped notice had they been allowed to remain in shadow.

Never was there a time when Mouth-gate stood in direr need of Captain Charity's services. Half of all this spiteful gossip, so lightly passed from lip to lip, is not meant in malice at all, and is spoken in sheer thoughtlessness; the world, even the gay and frivolous world, is good-tempered in the main, and has its generous and kindly impulses, but it wants to be amused, and it is amusing and pleasing too, to pick a neighbor to pieces and expose all his shortcomings, since it proves him to be no better than we pretend to be. We do not want him to be always towering a head and shoulders above us, and if we can pull him down to our own level, we seem already to have gained some inches ourselves.

Some years ago there lived in the city of London a young man who might have sat for Bunyan's soldier or one of Arthur's knights, "sworn to speak no slander; no nor listen to it." Foremost in his profession, and likely, as it seemed, to reap its highest honors, he was good at almost everything he attempted. Famous in his own little world as a cricketer, an oarsman, full of quiet fun, a keen observer, a wide reader—he was most loyally loved by the few who knew him well, though too quiet, too retiring, to do himself justice in a crowd. After his death, which oc-



CAPTAIN CHARITY.

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