

of spring. There is a mysterious Hand that takes away the coverlet of snow so carefully spread upon the earth during the cold and barren months of winter. It tints the grass a fresh and living green. The same Hand restores the birds to their perches and fills the woods with song. It brings the leaves to the trees and gives the whole face of nature a new form. "Awake ye that dwell in the dust," cries a Voice, "and sing a new song!"

There is also, what we may call the miracle of the sick room: it happens to-day as well as in former days. Here is one lying at the point of death. The doctor has done all he possibly can do. Friends are called in, and all look for the last at any moment. The only index of life is the heart, and each beat is weaker and fainter: they will soon cease. But suddenly a turn comes. The closed eyes open. Strength returns, and life is renewed.

Is it not a miracle that such a thing has happened? Which is greater, to snatch a life from death, or to restore it after it has been taken? Both are equally marvellous to us, because we can do neither. We are helpless either in the face of life or of death; and for us the miracles of life are passing in the world, not only yesterday, but now, and shall pass every day we live.

Sometimes men say,—God chooses the natural rather than the supernatural to make manifest His power; but the reverse is the truth, for the supernatural is the natural with Him. Not to speak of the greatest miracle of all, the regeneration of a sinful soul, God is always making someone or something from the dust, and making these sing a new song. The grass, the flowers, the trees, the sick, all awake to praise the Lord; and let everything that hath breath praise Him for His mighty acts!

St. Stephen, N.B.

The Strength That is in Joy

By Rev. Robert Laird, B.D.

Matthew Arnold says that in the words, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" there is given in "one short sentence the secret of Israel's religion and the religion of the Bible." Such a saying may not contain the whole

truth, but it reminds us vigorously of an element without which pure religion cannot be. It is the custom to count Israel a stern people, who held aloof from the lighter and fairer aspects of life. Their tragic history shows a people who first became exiles from holiness, and then exiles from their native land, passing through many deep, dark waters. But the heart of hope beat strong and full. Out of the depths men arose who spoke of "everlasting joy," and of the desert that should "rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Christ carries on to its fullness this current of joy. In His life, as in the story of His race, the shadows are dark and heavy. He knew the bitterness that lay behind both "Hosannas" and the cry, "Crucify Him." But neither suffering nor the cruel power of sin availed to break His spirit. With un-failing cheerfulness He bade His followers, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." The same spirit prevailed in His hours of deepest fellowship with them. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled."

New power would come to our religious activities to-day would we but learn with Jesus the secret of that joy in unbroken harmony with God. The morose, dark-countenanced man has little inspiring influence. The Christian life is not a dull and unattractive monotone, and we betray it when we let it drift into what is melancholy and repulsive. There is a place for the Puritan conscience, and if we had more of it there would be less compromise with evil; but sternness is not incompatible with the happy heart, and to be thoughtful and pure is not to be joyless.

Those whose duty brings them often face to face with their fellows have much need of the buoyant spirit of Robert Louis Stevenson, and his fine determination to make his life a "radiating focus of goodwill."

What cheer in these lines!

"If I have faltered more or less

In my great task of happiness;

If I have moved among my race

And shown no glorious morning face;

If beams from happy human eyes

Have moved me not; if morning skies,

Books and my food, and summer rain