

marvellous records of pain and long-suffering, and yet of persistent, noble, and useful work, that is to be found in the whole history of literature. His entire career was indeed but a prolonged illustration of the lines which he himself addressed to his deceased friend, Dr. John Reid, a like-minded man, whose memoir he wrote:

“Thou wert a daily lesson
Of courage, hope, and faith;
We wondered at thee living,
We envy thee thy death.

“Thou wert so meek and reverent,
So resolute of will,
So bold to bear the uttermost,
And yet so calm and still.”

CHAPTER VIII.

TEMPER.

“Temper is nine-tenths of Christianity.”—BISHOP WILSON.

“Heaven is a temper, not a place.”—DR. CHALMERS.

“And should my youth, as youth is apt, I know,
Some harshness show;
All vain asperities I day by day
Would wear away,

Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly-tree.”—SOUTHEY.

“Even power itself hath not one-half the might of gentleness.”

LEIGH HUNT.

IT has been said that men succeed in life quite as much by their temper as by their talents. However this may be, it is certain that their happiness in life depends mainly upon their equanimity of disposition, their patience and forbearance, and their kindness and thoughtfulness for those about them. It is really true what Plato says, that in seeking the good of others we find our own.

There are some natures so happily constituted that they can find good in every thing. There is no calamity so great but they can educe comfort or consolation from it—no sky so black but they can discover a gleam of sunshine issuing through it from some quarter or another; and if the

sun be not visible to their eyes, they at least comfort themselves with the thought that it *is* there, though veiled from them for some good and wise purpose.

Such happy natures are to be envied. They have a beam in the eye—a beam of pleasure, gladness, religious cheerfulness, philosophy, call it what you will. Sunshine is about their hearts, and their mind gilds with its own hues all that it looks upon. When they have burdens to bear, they bear them cheerfully—not repining, nor fretting, nor wasting their energies in useless lamentation, but struggling onward manfully, gathering up such flowers as lie along their path.

Let it not for a moment be supposed that men such as those we speak of are weak and unreflective. The largest and most comprehensive natures are generally also the most cheerful, the most loving, the most hopeful, the most trustful. It is the wise man, of large vision, who is the quickest to discern the moral sunshine gleaming through the darkest cloud. In present evil, he sees prospective good; in pain, he recognizes the effort of nature to restore health; in trials, he finds correction and discipline; and in sorrow and suffering, he gathers courage, knowledge, and the best practical wisdom.

When Jeremy Taylor had lost all—when his house had been plundered, and his family driven out-of-doors, and all his worldly estate had been sequestered—he could still write thus: “I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me; what now? Let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me; and I can still discourse, and, unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance and my

cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they have still left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the Gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them, too; and still I sleep and digest, I eat and drink, I read and meditate. . . . And he that hath so many causes of joy, and so great, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, who loves all these pleasures, and chooses to sit down upon his little handful of thorns.”*

Although cheerfulness of disposition is very much a matter of inborn temperament, it is also capable of being trained and cultivated like any other habit. We may make the best of life, or we may make the worst of it; and it depends very much upon ourselves whether we extract joy or misery from it. There are always two sides of life on which we can look, according as we choose—the bright side or the gloomy. We can bring the power of the will to bear in making the choice, and thus cultivate the habit of being happy or the reverse. We can encourage the disposition of looking at the brightest side of things, instead of the darkest. And while we see the cloud, let us not shut our eyes to the silver lining.

The beam in the eye sheds brightness, beauty, and joy upon life in all its phases. It shines upon coldness, and warms it; upon suffering, and comforts it; upon ignorance, and enlightens it; upon sorrow, and cheers it. The beam in the eye gives lustre to intellect, and brightens beauty itself. Without it the sunshine of life is not felt, flowers bloom in vain, the marvels of heaven and earth are not seen or acknowledged, and creation is but a dreary, lifeless, soulless blank.

* Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living."

While cheerfulness of disposition is a great source of enjoyment in life, it is also a great safeguard of character. A devotional writer of the present day, in answer to the question, How are we to overcome temptations? says: "Cheerfulness is the first thing, cheerfulness is the second, and cheerfulness is the third." It furnishes the best soil for the growth of goodness and virtue. It gives brightness of heart and elasticity of spirit. It is the companion of charity, the nurse of patience, the mother of wisdom. It is also the best of moral and mental tonics. "The best cordial of all," said Dr. Marshall Hall, to one of his patients, "is cheerfulness." And Solomon has said that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

When Luther was once applied to for a remedy against melancholy, his advice was: "Gayety and courage—innocent gayety, and rational, honorable courage—are the best medicine for young men, and for old men too; for all men against sad thoughts."* Next to music, if not before it, Luther loved children and flowers. The great gnarled man had a heart as tender as a woman's.

Cheerfulness is also an excellent wearing quality. It has been called the bright weather of the heart. It gives harmony of soul, and is a perpetual song without words. It is tantamount to repose. It enables nature to recruit its strength; whereas worry and discontent debilitate it, involving constant wear-and-tear.

How is it that we see such men as Lord Palmerston growing old in harness, working on vigorously to the end? Mainly through equanimity of temper and habitual cheerfulness. They have educated themselves in the habit of en-

* Michelet's "Life of Luther," pp. 411, 412.

durance, of not being easily provoked, of bearing and forbearing, of hearing harsh and even unjust things said of them without indulging in undue resentment, and avoiding worreting, petty, and self-tormenting cares. An intimate friend of Lord Palmerston, who observed him closely for twenty years, has said that he never saw him angry, with perhaps one exception; and that was when the Ministry responsible for the calamity in Afghanistan, of which he was one, were unjustly accused by their opponents of falsehood, perjury, and willful mutilation of public documents.

So far as can be learned from biography, men of the greatest genius have been for the most part cheerful, contented men—not eager for reputation, money, or power—but relishing life, and keenly susceptible of enjoyment, as we find reflected in their works. Such seem to have been Homer, Horace, Virgil, Montaigne, Shakspeare, Cervantes. Healthy, serene cheerfulness is apparent in their great creations. Among the same class of cheerful-minded men may also be mentioned Luther, More, Bacon, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michael Angelo. Perhaps they were happy because constantly occupied, and in the pleasantest of all work—that of creating out of the fullness and richness of their great minds.

Milton, too, though a man of many trials and sufferings, must have been a man of great cheerfulness and elasticity of nature. Though overtaken by blindness, deserted by friends, and fallen upon evil days—"darkness before, and danger's voice behind"—yet did he not bate heart or hope, but "still bore up, and steered right onward."

Henry Fielding was a man borne down through life by debt, and difficulty, and bodily suffering; and yet Lady Mary Wortley Montague has said of him that, by virtue of

his cheerful disposition, she was persuaded he "had known more happy moments than any person on earth."

Dr. Johnson, through all his trials and sufferings and hard fights with fortune, was a courageous and cheerful-natured man. He manfully made the best of life, and tried to be glad in it. Once, when a clergyman was complaining of the dullness of society in the country, saying "they only talk of runts" (young cows), Johnson felt flattered by the observation of Mrs. Thrale's mother, who said, "Sir, Dr. Johnson would learn to talk of runts"—meaning that he was a man who would make the most of his situation, whatever it was.

Johnson was of opinion that a man grew better as he grew older, and that his nature mellowed with age. This is certainly a much more cheerful view of human nature than that of Lord Chesterfield, who saw life through the eyes of a cynic, and held that "the heart never grows better by age; it only grows harder." But both sayings may be true, according to the point from which life is viewed and the temper by which a man is governed; for while the good, profiting by experience, and disciplining themselves by self-control, will grow better, the ill-conditioned, uninfluenced by experience, will only grow worse.

Sir Walter Scott was a man full of the milk of human kindness. Every body loved him. He was never five minutes in a room ere the little pets of the family whether, dumb or lipping, had found out his kindness for all their generation. Scott related to Captain Hall an incident of his boyhood which showed the tenderness of his nature. One day, a dog coming towards him, he took up a big stone, threw it, and hit the dog. The poor creature had strength enough left to crawl up to him and lick his feet, although he

saw its leg was broken. The incident, he said, had given him the bitterest remorse in his after-life; but he added, "An early circumstance of that kind, properly reflected on, is calculated to have the best effect on one's character throughout life."

"Give me an honest laughter," Scott would say; and he himself laughed the heart's laugh. He had a kind word for every body, and his kindness acted all round him like a contagion, dispelling the reserve and awe which his great name was calculated to inspire. "He'll come here," said the keeper of the ruins of Melrose Abbey to Washington Irving — "he'll come here sometimes, wi' great folks in his company, and the first I'll know of it is hearing his voice calling out, 'Johnny! Johnny Bower!' And when I go out I'm sure to be greeted wi' a joke or a pleasant word. He'll stand and crack and laugh wi' me just like an auld wife; and to think that of a man that has *such an awful knowledge o' history!*"

Dr. Arnold was a man of the same hearty cordiality of manner—full of human sympathy. There was not a particle of affectation or pretense of condescension about him. "I never knew such a humble man as the doctor," said the parish clerk at Lalehan; "he comes and shakes us by the hand as if he was one of us." "He used to come into my house," said an old woman near Fox How, "and talk to me as if I were a lady."

Sydney Smith was another illustration of the power of cheerfulness. He was ever ready to look on the bright side of things; the darkest cloud had to him its silver lining. Whether working as country curate or as parish rector, he was always kind, laborious, patient, and exemplary; exhibiting in every sphere of life the spirit of a Christian, the kindness

of a pastor, and the honor of a gentleman. In his leisure he employed his pen on the side of justice, freedom, education, toleration, emancipation; and his writings, though full of common sense and bright humor, are never vulgar; nor did he ever pander to popularity or prejudice. His good spirits, thanks to his natural vivacity and stamina of constitution, never forsook him; and in his old age, when borne down by disease, he wrote to a friend: "I have gout, asthma, and seven other maladies, but am otherwise very well." In one of the last letters he wrote to Lady Carlisle, he said: "If you hear of sixteen or eighteen pounds of flesh wanting an owner, they belong to me. I look as if a curate had been taken out of me."

Great men of science have for the most part been patient, laborious, cheerful-minded men. Such were Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and Laplace. Euler, the mathematician, one of the greatest of natural philosophers, was a distinguished instance. Towards the close of his life he became completely blind; but he went on writing as cheerfully as before, supplying the want of sight by various ingenious mechanical devices, and by the increased cultivation of his memory, which became exceedingly tenacious. His chief pleasure was in the society of his grandchildren, to whom he taught their little lessons in the intervals of his severer studies.

In like manner, Professor Robinson, of Edinburgh, the first editor of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," when disabled from work by a lingering and painful disorder, found his chief pleasure in the society of his grandchild. "I am infinitely delighted," he wrote to James Watt, "with observing the growth of its little soul, and particularly with its numberless instincts, which formerly passed unheeded.

I thank the French theorists for more forcibly directing my attention to the finger of God, which I discern in every awkward movement and every wayward whim. They are all guardians of his life and growth and power. I regret, indeed, that I have not time to make infancy and the development of its powers my sole study."

One of the sorest trials of a man's temper and patience was that which befell Abauzit, the natural philosopher, while residing at Geneva—resembling in many respects a similar calamity which occurred to Newton, and which he bore with equal resignation. Among other things, Abauzit devoted much study to the barometer and its variations, with the object of deducing the general laws which regulated atmospheric pressure. During twenty-seven years he made numerous observations daily, recording them on sheets prepared for the purpose. One day, when a new servant was installed in the house, she immediately proceeded to display her zeal by "putting things to rights." Abauzit's study, among other rooms, was made tidy and set in order. When he entered it, he asked of the servant, "What have you done with the paper that was round the barometer?" "Oh, sir," was the reply, "it was so dirty that I burnt it, and put in its place this paper, which you will see is quite new." Abauzit crossed his arms, and after some moments of internal struggle, he said, in a tone of calmness and resignation: "You have destroyed the results of twenty-seven years' labor; in future touch nothing whatever in this room."

The study of natural history, more than that of any other branch of science, seems to be accompanied by unusual cheerfulness and equanimity of temper on the part of its votaries; the result of which is, that the life of naturalists

is, on the whole, more prolonged than that of any other class of men of science. A member of the Linnæan Society has informed us that, of fourteen members who died in 1870, two were over ninety, five were over eighty, and two were over seventy. The average age of all the members who died in that year was seventy-five.

Adanson, the French botanist, was about seventy years old when the Revolution broke out, and amidst the shock he lost every thing—his fortune, his places, and his gardens. But his patience, courage, and resignation never forsook him. He became reduced to the greatest straits, and even wanted food and clothing; yet his ardor of investigation remained the same. Once, when the Institute invited him, as being one of its oldest members, to assist at a *seance*, his answer was that he regretted he could not attend for want of shoes. "It was a touching sight," says Cuvier, "to see the poor old man, bent over the embers of a decaying fire, trying to trace characters with a feeble hand on the little bit of paper which he held, forgetting all the pains of life in some new idea in natural history, which came to him like some beneficent fairy to cheer him in his loneliness." The Directory eventually gave him a small pension, which Napoleon doubled; and at length easeful death came to his relief in his seventy-ninth year. A clause in his will, as to the manner of his funeral, illustrates the character of the man. He directed that a garland of flowers, provided by fifty-eight families whom he had established in life, should be the only decoration of his coffin—a slight but touching image of the more durable monument which he had erected for himself in his works.

Such are only a few instances of the cheerful-workingness of great men, which, might, indeed, be multiplied to any ex-

tent. All large, healthy natures are cheerful as well as hopeful. Their example is also contagious and diffusive, brightening and cheering all who come within reach of their influence. It was said of Sir John Malcolm, when he appeared in a saddened camp in India, that "it was like a gleam of sunlight, . . . no man left him without a smile on his face. He was 'boy Malcolm' still. It was impossible to resist the fascination of his genial presence."*

There was the same joyousness of nature about Edmund Burke. Once at a dinner at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, when the conversation turned upon the suitability of liquors for particular temperaments, Johnson said, "Claret is for boys, port for men, and brandy for heroes." "Then," said Burke, "let me have claret: I love to be a boy, and to have the careless gayety of boyish days." And so it is that there are old young men, and young old men—some who are as joyous and cheerful as boys in their old age, and others who are as morose and cheerless as saddened old men while still in their boyhood.

In the presence of some priggish youths, we have heard a cheerful old man declare that, apparently, there would soon be nothing but "old boys" left. Cheerfulness, being generous and genial, joyous and hearty, is never the characteristic of prigs. Goethe used to exclaim of goody-goody persons, "Oh! if they had but the heart to commit an absurdity!" This was when he thought they wanted heartiness and nature. "Pretty dolls!" was his expression when speaking of them, and turning away.

The true basis of cheerfulness is love, hope, and patience. Love evokes love, and begets loving-kindness. Love cher-

* Sir John Kaye's "Lives of Indian Officers."