

ishes hopeful and generous thoughts of others. It is charitable, gentle, and truthful. It is a discerner of good. It turns to the brightest side of things, and its face is ever directed towards happiness. It sees "the glory in the grass, the sunshine on the flower." It encourages happy thoughts, and lives in an atmosphere of cheerfulness. It costs nothing, and yet is invaluable; for it blesses its possessor, and grows up in abundant happiness in the bosoms of others. Even its sorrows are linked with pleasures, and its very tears are sweet.

Bentham lays it down as a principle, that a man becomes rich in his own stock of pleasures in proportion to the amount he distributes to others. His kindness will evoke kindness, and his happiness be increased by his own benevolence. "Kind words," he says, "cost no more than unkind ones. Kind words produce kind actions, not only on the part of him to whom they are addressed, but on the part of him by whom they are employed; and this not incidentally only, but habitually, in virtue of the principle of association." . . . "It may, indeed, happen that the effort of beneficence may not benefit those for whom it was intended; but when wisely directed, it *must* benefit the person from whom it emanates. Good and friendly conduct may meet with an unworthy and ungrateful return; but the absence of gratitude on the part of the receiver can not destroy the self-approbation which recompenses the giver, and we may scatter the seeds of courtesy and kindness around us at so little expense. Some of them will inevitably fall on good ground, and grow up into benevolence in the minds of others; and all of them will bear fruit of happiness in the bosom whence they spring. Once blest are all the virtues always; twice blest sometimes."*

* "Deontology," pp. 130, 131, 144.

The poet Rogers used to tell a story of a little girl, a great favorite with every one who knew her. Some one said to her, "Why does every body love you so much?" She answered, "I think it is because I love every body so much." This little story is capable of a very wide application; for our happiness as human beings, generally speaking, will be found to be very much in proportion to the number of things we love, and the number of things that love us. And the greatest worldly success, however honestly achieved, will contribute comparatively little to happiness unless it be accompanied by a lively benevolence towards every human being.

Kindness is indeed a great power in the world. Leigh Hunt has truly said that "Power itself hath not one-half the might of gentleness." Men are always best governed through their affections. There is a French proverb which says that, "*Les hommes se prennent par la douceur*;" and a coarser English one, to the effect that "More wasps are caught by honey than by vinegar." "Every act of kindness," says Bentham, "is in fact an exercise of power, and a stock of friendship laid up; and why should not power exercise itself in the production of pleasure as of pain?"

Kindness does not consist in gifts, but in gentleness and generosity of spirit. Men may give their money which comes from the purse, and withhold their kindness which comes from the heart. The kindness that displays itself in giving money does not amount to much, and often does quite as much harm as good; but the kindness of true sympathy, of thoughtful help, is never without beneficent results.

The good temper that displays itself in kindness must not be confounded with softness or silliness. In its best form, it

is not a merely passive but an active condition of being. It is not by any means indifferent, but largely sympathetic. It does not characterize the lowest and most gelatinous forms of human life, but those that are the most highly organized. True kindness cherishes and actively promotes all reasonable instrumentalities for doing practical good in its own time; and, looking into futurity, sees the same spirit working on for the eventual elevation and happiness of the race.

It is the kindly-dispositioned men who are the active men of the world, while the selfish and the skeptical, who have no love but for themselves, are its idlers. Buffon used to say that he would give nothing for a young man who did not begin life with an enthusiasm of some sort. It showed that at least he had faith in something good, lofty, and generous, even if unattainable.

Egotism, skepticism, and selfishness are always miserable companions in life, and they are especially unnatural in youth. The egotist is next door to a fanatic. Constantly occupied with self, he has no thought to spare for others. He refers to himself in all things, thinks of himself, and studies himself, until his own little self becomes his own little god.

Worst of all are the grumblers and growlers at fortune—who find that “whatever is is wrong,” and will do nothing to set matters right—who declare all to be barren, “from Dan even to Beersheba.” These grumblers are invariably found the least efficient helpers in the school of life. As the worst workmen are usually the readiest to “strike,” so the least industrious members of society are the readiest to complain. The worst wheel of all is the one that creaks.

There is such a thing as the cherishing of discontent until the feeling becomes morbid. The jaundiced see every thing about them yellow. The ill-conditioned think all things awry, and the whole world out of joint. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. The little girl in *Punch*, who found her doll stuffed with bran, and forthwith declared every thing to be hollow, and wanted to “go into a nunnery,” had her counterpart in real life. Many full-grown people are quite as morbidly unreasonable. There are those who may be said to “enjoy bad health;” they regard it as a sort of property. They can speak of “*my* headache,” “*my* back-ache,” and so forth, until, in course of time, it becomes their most cherished possession. But perhaps it is the source to them of much coveted sympathy, without which they might find themselves of comparatively little importance in the world.

We have to be on our guard against small troubles, which, by encouraging, we are apt to magnify into great ones. Indeed, the chief source of worry in the world is not real but imaginary evil—small vexations and trivial afflictions. In the presence of a great sorrow, all petty troubles disappear; but we are too ready to take some cherished misery to our bosom, and to pet it there. Very often it is the child of our fancy; and, forgetful of the many means of happiness which lie within our reach, we indulge this spoiled child of ours until it masters us. We shut the door against cheerfulness, and surround ourselves with gloom. The habit gives a coloring to our life. We grow querulous, moody, and unsympathetic. Our conversation becomes full of regrets. We are harsh in our judgment of others. We are unsociable, and think every body else is so. We make our breast a storehouse of pain, which we inflict upon ourselves as well as upon others.

This disposition is encouraged by selfishness: indeed, it is, for the most part, selfishness unmingled, without any admixture of sympathy or consideration for the feelings of those about us. It is simply willfulness in the wrong direction. It is willful, because it might be avoided. Let the necessitarians argue as they may, freedom of will and action is the possession of every man and woman. It is sometimes our glory, and very often it is our shame; all depends upon the manner in which it is used. We can choose to look at the bright side of things or at the dark. We can follow good and eschew evil thoughts. We can be wrong-headed and wrong-hearted, or the reverse, as we ourselves determine. The world will be to each one of us very much what we make it. The cheerful are its real possessors, for the world belongs to those who enjoy it.

It must, however, be admitted that there are cases beyond the reach of the moralist. Once, when a miserable-looking dyspeptic called upon a leading physician, and laid his case before him, "Oh!" said the doctor, "you only want a good hearty laugh: go and see Grimaldi." "Alas!" said the miserable patient, "*I am Grimaldi!*" So, when Smollett, oppressed by disease, travelled over Europe in the hope of finding health, he saw every thing through his own jaundiced eyes. "I'll tell it," said Smellfungus, "to the world." "You had better tell it," said Sterne, "to your physician."

The restless, anxious, dissatisfied temper, that is ever ready to run and meet care half-way, is fatal to all happiness and peace of mind. How often do we see men and women set themselves about as if with stiff bristles, so that one dare scarcely approach them without fear of being pricked! For want of a little occasional command over one's temper, an amount of misery is occasioned in society

which is positively frightful. Thus enjoyment is turned into bitterness, and life becomes like a journey barefooted among thorns and briars and prickles. "Though sometimes small evils," says Richard Sharp, "like invisible insects, inflict great pain, and a single hair may stop a vast machine, yet the chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex us; and in prudently cultivating an undergrowth of small pleasures, since very few great ones, alas! are let on long leases."*

St. Francis de Sales treats the same topic from the Christian's point of view. "How carefully," he says, "we should cherish the little virtues which spring up at the foot of the Cross!" When the saint was asked, "What virtues do you mean?" he replied: "Humility, patience, meekness, benignity, bearing one another's burden, condescension, softness of heart, cheerfulness, cordiality, compassion, forgiving injuries, simplicity, candor—all, in short, of that sort of little virtues. They, like unobtrusive violets, love the shade; like them, are sustained by dew; and though, like them, they make little show, they shed a sweet odor on all around."†

And again he said: "If you would fall into any extreme, let it be on the side of gentleness. The human mind is so constructed that it resists rigor, and yields to softness. A mild word quenches anger, as water quenches the rage of fire; and by benignity any soil may be rendered fruitful. Truth, uttered with courtesy, is heaping coals of fire on the head—or rather, throwing roses in the face. How can we resist a foe whose weapons are pearls and diamonds?"‡

* "Letters and Essays," p. 67.

† "Beauties of St. Francis de Sales."

‡ Ibid.

Meeting evils by anticipation is not the way to overcome them. If we perpetually carry our burdens about with us, they will soon bear us down under their load. When evil comes, we must deal with it bravely and hopefully. What Perthes wrote to a young man, who seemed to him inclined to take trifles as well as sorrows too much to heart, was doubtless good advice: "Go forward with hope and confidence. This is the advice given thee by an old man, who has had a full share of the burden and heat of life's day. We must ever stand upright, happen what may, and for this end we must cheerfully resign ourselves to the varied influences of this many-colored life. You may call this levity, and you are partly right—for flowers and colors are but trifles light as air—but such levity is a constituent portion of our human nature, without which it would sink under the weight of time. While on earth we must still play with earth, and with that which blooms and fades upon its breast. The consciousness of this mortal life being but the way to a higher goal by no means precludes our playing with it cheerfully; and, indeed, we must do so, otherwise our energy in action will entirely fail."*

Cheerfulness also accompanies patience, which is one of the main conditions of happiness and success in life. "He that will be served," says George Herbert, "must be patient." It was said of the cheerful and patient King Alfred, that "good fortune accompanied him like a gift of God." Marlborough's expectant calmness was great, and a principal secret of his success as a general. "Patience will overcome all things," he wrote to Godolphin, in 1702. In the midst of a great emergency, while baffled and opposed by

* "Life of Perthes," ii., 449.

his allies, he said, "Having done all that is possible, we should submit with patience."

Last and chiefest of blessings is Hope, the most common of possessions; for, as Thales, the philosopher, said "Even those who have nothing else have hope." Hope is the great helper of the poor. It has even been styled "the poor man's bread." It is also the sustainer and inspirer of great deeds. It is recorded of Alexander the Great that, when he succeeded to the throne of Macedon, he gave away among his friends the greater part of the estates which his father had left him; and when Perdiccas asked him what he reserved for himself, Alexander answered, "The greatest possession of all—Hope!"

The pleasures of memory, however great, are stale compared with those of hope; for hope is the parent of all effort and endeavor; and "every gift of noble origin is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath." It may be said to be the moral engine that moves the world and keeps it in action; and at the end of all there stands before us what Robertson of Ellon styled "The Great Hope." "If it were not for hope," said Byron, "where would the Future be?—in hell! It is useless to say where the Present is, for most of us know; and as for the Past, *what* predominates in memory?—Hope baffled. *Ergo*, in all human affairs it is Hope, Hope, Hope!"*

* Moore's "Life of Byron," 8vo. ed., p. 483.