

he could not be himself, he hesitated a moment, when his eye rested on Mrs. Choate at the other end of the table, who was watching him with great interest in her face and suddenly replied: "If I could not be myself, I should like to be Mrs. Choate's second husband." This was as beautiful a tribute as husband ever paid to his better half, that is if he was sincere in making it, which I suppose he was. Ella Wheeler Wilcox enlarges on the same idea in this language: "I think if I were a man, above all other qualities I would select mirthfulness in a wife. The woman who sees the funny side of things is a good companion with whom to journey through checkered walks of life; she will bring sunshine out of the darkest nooks and transform tear drops into diamonds. A wife of this sort is worth all the talented and brilliant pessimists the world can hold, and will do more in evangelizing husband and children. The first step toward reform is a happy home."

Mirth and laughter tend to make men and women better and the world happier. "He who laughs," said the mother of Goethe, "can commit no deadly sin." The murders, arsons, and highway robberies are invariably traced to the sour and sore-headed members of society. No jolly, good-natured man ever stained his hands in his brother's blood. I fancy that Cain was as ugly and grum as the old fiddler of Rome himself. It is just possible that a joker might rob a bank, but if he did so it would merely be for the fun of seeing the woe-begone expression on the banker's face as he looked into his till and found it empty. The laughter may tell a lie, just for the fun of it; or beat another in a trade, merely to create a laugh, but he will never hold up a train, or plunge the deadly dagger into a human heart. The cheerful man never beats his wife, nor whips his children, nor starves his servants. A Chicago man once told me that he never saw a jolly woman in a divorce court, but that it was always crowded with the termagants, and a Chicago man ought to be an authority on the subject.