

The Psychology of Happiness.

Throughout history, like the quest of the boy for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, man has been seeking happiness, and has never yet found it in perfection. Various theories have been put forward by the sages with regard to happiness. Landon declared: "Happiness is like the statue of Isis, whose veil no mortal ever raised." Colton wrote: "There is this difference between happiness and wisdom, that he who thinks himself the happiest man, really is so; but he who thinks himself the wisest, is generally the greatest fool." According to Pope:

"Fixed to no spot is happiness sincere; 'Tis nowhere to be found, or everywhere."

John Ruskin's psychology of happiness is expressed thus: "Man's only true happiness is to live in Hope of something to be won by him, in Reverence of something to be worshipped by him, and in Love of something to be cherished by him, and cherished—forever."

Despite these and other wise words that have been written about happiness, however, we do not yet possess the universal good. Success does not always nor necessarily ensure happiness. The goddess Fortuna does not always confer it, persons upon whom fortune smiles being often harassed by cares—the burdens and entanglements of wealth itself. Happiness seems to be mainly a personal equation, to be worked out each one for himself—within himself—a mental and constitutional matter, not a nepenthe to be taken at stated intervals, nor a mantle to be assumed or discarded at will or pleasure. Joy or delight is transient; happiness is a fixed and settled condition. Joy is a limpid stream; happiness is a calm, clear, perennial fountain. In a world such as ours, it cannot be wholly independent of outward circumstances, it must inevitably be affected by turbulent currents and adverse winds, but essentially it is tranquil and dominant. There are two types of mind which seem peculiarly fitted to be happy, the one is, the go-easy, happy-go-lucky type; the other is the self-trusting, dynamic one, calm in conscious power.

"How can happiness be attained and maintained?" By resolutely and always cherishing a cheerful outlook upon life, an unwavering trust in the triumph of right, and by using our powers to the fullest to achieve this end. Live in the spirit. Rise in thought and aspiration above the clouds of doubt, despair and trouble. Live much in the pure empyrean heaven, with the stars of Reason, of Hope, of Faith and of Love, "fixed there in the firmament" as high and holy guides to ideal realms where all is happy, all is good.

The view sometimes urged, or assumed, that ideal conditions are not for the common man, is erroneous. The normal mind is ever in a state of activity; we are always thinking. Is it not better to think high thoughts than low? As our thoughts so are our ideals. "As a man thinketh . . . so is he."—Prov. 23:7. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote that an archangel thinking of a pebble could "infer the entire inorganic universe as the simplest of corollaries." So might a man thinking of a grain of wheat infer a world of life. Why not think of happy life rather than of mean or sordid life, and thus help to make a better world? Thought builds a world of its own, according to its liking—a world of misery or a world of happiness.

Since a man's thought is a reflection of himself, it follows that he who thinks basely is base, and will create base conditions; that he whose thoughts are clean and elevated is of a pure mind. "The pure in heart shall see God." Those who see God reflected in His works—who see goodness, order, beauty, truth, vastness and grandeur in nature, the kingdom without—possess also the "kingdom within." The kingdom within is happiness.

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