

(From the Odd Fellows' Offering for 1846.)

THE THREE LINKS.

BY MRS. M. L. GARDINER.

Upon a green and flowery mount,
Bright in immortal youth,
'Mid amber streams, and sparkling fount,
See Friendship, Love, and Truth.

Celestial spirits from on high,
Designed on earth to rove;
To wreath in smiles a frowning sky,
And lead the mind above.

In every land throughout the world
Where sorrow held its sway,
They flew with banners wide unfurl'd,
And chased the gloom away.

Friendship with her reviving breath,
Around the sufferer stole,
And shed, amid the vale of death,
Calm sunshine o'er the soul.

Love, sweetest of the heavenly band,
Kissed off the Orphan's tears,
And pointing to a better land,
Dispers'd the Widow's fears.

Truth, with a brow divinely fair,
Stooped from her radiant throne;
The friendless stranger sought afar,
And made his griefs her own.

These are the golden links enwrought
By the mysterious three;
That chain the hearts with virtue fraught,
In close fraternity.

SAG HARBOR, L. I., 1845.

CHARITY AND BENEVOLENCE.

TRUE charity is the offspring of benevolence, although charity, so called, the mere giving of alms, frequently has very little in common with benevolence. Giving alms, mixing with societies, and various other deeds by which some folks procure the character of being charitably disposed, frequently indicates ostentation and a love of public estimation, rather than true charity—many give without kindly feeling. It has been somewhere observed, that a certain class of people will afford a man more pleasure in refusing a favor, than others do in granting it; showing that it is not simply relieving distress that exhibits true charity. Pure charity is often felt by those to whom fortune denies the means of affording pecuniary aid, and many who give liberally have no charity. We once knew a gentleman, whose name was at the head of every charitable subscription, who passed for an angel of mercy, but who, in reality, would not give a cent unless his name was first on the list.

Charity may be exercised in our daily life in an endless variety of forms. Charitable constructions of the words and actions of others—charitable consideration for the feelings and foibles of others—and charitable forbearance from outraging the sensibility of our brethren, are only a few operations of the greatest of all virtues. In all relations of life, from the earliest to the latest period—in the highest and lowest—forbearance, the offspring of charity, secures happiness, while its absence insures misery. In the domestic circle—in home relations more especially—charity should be our constant attendant and guide—it teaches us to consider others and forget ourselves—it induces us to investigate our actions, and when about to condemn those of others,

to enquire what our own would be under similar circumstances? It teaches us to know ourselves—not to estimate too highly our own abilities—begets humility and meekness—frees us from arrogance and assumption—and makes its possessors really amiable people.

In this world of unkindness, where harsh and ill-natured constructions teem—where every action and word of doubtful tendency, invariably have the worst face put upon them by the good-natured mass, it is a positive relief to meet with a truly charitable person; one who will not readily condemn, who allows the benefit of doubt to all criminals, and believes every man innocent of a bad action and evil intention until clearly proved against him, and then thinks that there may be some excuse, some mitigating circumstances, to palliate the offence. We are all too prone to judge our fellows—we see and hear of deeds that are horrible, and unhesitatingly condemn the authors, without thinking that the temptation to sin might to ourselves have been as irresistible, as it had proved to those we condemn.

Let us endeavor to look upon all things in the best light,—this world, though a troublesome one, is not all evil. Good can be extracted from anything, provided our knowledge of alchemy be sufficient,—the bee sucks honey alike from every flower, whether odoriferous or not, and we may, if so minded, see

"Books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

To accomplish this much-to-be-desired end, true charity is essential—it engenders a kindly feeling for our fellow-creatures—softens and tones down their foibles, errors, and short-comings—renders us suspicious of, and willing and able to discover good intentions, where, without its aid, we should observe only selfishness.

Like perceives like in the human mind, and, consequently, selfish people are ever the most acute in detecting selfishness in others, while benevolent men will discover kindness and self-denial, where the worldly-minded see nothing but unmitigated love of self.

To the lovers of ease, and the believers in practical philosophy, it must be no slight recommendation to charity, that like mercy, "it is twice blessed," "it blesteth him that gives and him that receives."

Charitable constructions of other people's deeds renders us happier,—a man who is ever on the alert to discover bad intentions, is the victim of his own suspicions, whilst the opposite character is in charity with all men—happy himself—and so secured by his charitable disposition, that even the envious and malicious pass him, awed by his repose.

Charity begets charity, so that a charitably-disposed man, must inevitably partially call into operation the charitable feelings of all those with whom he associates.

We should think of the influence which our conduct has upon society, for, however insignificant atoms we may be, we still form part of the great whole, and in our sphere can do much good or evil.

PROSPERITY.

How much truth is there in the following beautiful observation from the German:—"The sun of fortune and favour changes a human being, as the sun of heaven does a plant, which faded in darkness, but now raises its drooping head in his bright beams, and penetrated by the genial warmth, opens fragrant blossoms to the light."

LIVE IN PEACE.

INJURE NO MAN: the meanest person may, once in seven years, have an opportunity of doing you much good or harm. Though we have a thousand friends, we may lack more: but one enemy is too much.