

We may also premise that under childhood we comprehend that period of our existence which lies between our birth and the day of our forsaking our school-room playgrounds. That term, no doubt, will be of very different lengths to different individuals. But a line must be drawn somewhere; and, for all practical purposes, we think our limitation a fair one, and the best that can be made. We might fix upon a certain number of years as determining when one is a child and when he is not; but a limit made upon such a principle would be more objectionable, we think, than the one we have fixed upon. With respect to years a person may be a child; while, with respect to the exertions he makes for his self-support, or, in general, with respect to what he *does*, he may, to all intents and purposes, be regarded as a man. Childhood is the period in which we have nothing to do—no domestic or business cares to wrestle with.

With these remarks we may now proceed to inquire, what grounds have we for supposing that childhood is the happiest period of our mortal life?

Many grounds, it might be answered. For instance, there is no denying that we are fuller of animal spirits—more given to romping and boisterous mirth, than at any other time of our earthly sojourn. Our early days, like those of most other young creatures, are marked by playfulness. As exuberance of life impels the catty kitten to twist itself into every conceivable form of body, and play fantastic tricks continually, or as it sends the skylark to the clouds to scatter un beholden its liquid notes of melody, so does it produce the ringing laugh which rises from the groups of merry children gathered in the play-ground, and fill with constant merriment the hearts of young humanity. When or where in after life, it may be asked, do you find so many signs of joy? All the year is full of life, and one glad holiday, compared with the graver times of manhood, or the fretful hours of senility. While men go crouching under a weight of years with regrets for the past and fears for the future; while they are plotting, and planning, and racking their brains, and consciences to boot, to the end that they may make both ends meet, and lay up for themselves a store against future contingencies,—while, by contact with the world, they may have lost that heavenly frame of mind which “thinketh no evil,” or, as they might choose to say, have lost their “greenness,” have become too knowing, and are even