

be expected to do great things in this world. Bright hopes and faith in the future give strength and animation—fit us for work and make us happy in it. Let this, then, be our excuse for asking attention to the discussion of a subject seemingly so trivial, (1), that we think the popular belief erroneous; and, (2), that like all other errors in theory or belief it must in some remote way at least, and in the long run, be injurious to life—its *tendency* must be bad.

But before entering upon the discussion of the subject, we must make a few more preliminary remarks. Our subject is "Childhood's Happiness—a Popular Fallacy;" but the question might be asked, what is happiness? how is it to be measured? and what is childhood? How do you determine when one is a child and when he is not? By years, or upon what principle? Now we shall raise no metaphysical difficulties as to wherein happiness consists, or what are the conditions of its realization,—questions which have puzzled men's brains since the very dawn of ethical speculations, and which are likely to do so till the crack of doom. We do not ask *what* one's outward circumstances must be in order to his being happy, or whether he may be happy in the midst of *any* circumstances, provided his thoughts be pure, and his acts and resolutions good and holy; we are content with understanding that happiness, as used in general conversation, and in the question asked above, vaguely denotes a kind of pleasurable state of excitement or emotion of longer or shorter duration, no matter by what causes or circumstances produced. This being the meaning of the word, it is evident that in order to come to a definite and truthful conclusion as to what is the happiest period of our life, we must take into account the *intensity* of the emotion as well as its *continuance*, or the frequency with which a subject feels it during the different stages of his history. We are perfectly well aware that feeling is one of the most immeasurable things, and that there is no proper criterion by which one man can judge of the intensity of another's pleasure; but, guided by the remembrance of what his own feelings once were, as compared with what they are now, and by carefully observing the signs of feeling shown by others at the different stages of childhood, youth, manhood and old age, any one possessed of a common amount of intelligence, we believe, may arrive at a pretty accurate conclusion as to the relative intensity of childhood's pleasures.